

PRESS RELEASE

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A New Beginning in Iraq

Nearly nine years ago the war began in Iraq, today, the US troops has completed its formal withdrawal. "Iraq is still far from sustainable stability, let alone prosperity or true pluralism. During that period 464 Iraqi academics assassinated, more than 103,000 Iraqi civilians lost their lives, 174 Journalists killed and led to hundreds of thousands of widows and orphans . It is painful to see what is happening in Iraq, the future is unpredictable." Said Jabbar Hasan of Iraqi Association in Hammersmith, London.

The Iraqi state institutions that have evolved since 2003 remain weak and characterized by political factionalism. Efforts to fight corruption, nepotism, and politicisation of the military and bureaucracy have been discarded and all of these problems are running rampant. And the daily life misery, the lack of electricity, water, security, the same things Iraqis have been complaining about since 2003 is pretty hellish for most people.

Our concern is for the internally displaced people and refugees, their crisis will not be over on December 31 when the US troops ends its withdrawal. Iraqi refugees and internally displaced people cover 20% of Iraqi population, they are displaced, either as refugees or inside Iraq. Iraqis who flee today joins other Iraqi refugees in neighbouring countries, who are struggling to survive with limited ability to exercise their basic rights. Thousands of others now live in Turkey, Lebanon, Egypt and other countries in the region.

We urge international communities to press the government of Iraq to take concrete steps to improve the situation of returnees and displaced persons inside Iraq; such steps should include developing a work plan to address the needs of displaced Iraqis and returnees, implementing effective mechanisms to promote sustainable reintegration, ensuring that the Iraqi legal framework on displacement complies with international human rights standards, and taking other steps to ensure the protection of returning refugees and displaced people.