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Promotion and protection of all human rights, civil, political, economic, social and cultural rights, including the right to development

Joint written statement* submitted by the International Youth and Student Movement for the United Nations, the Women's International Democratic Federation, non-governmental organizations in general consultative status, the International Organization for the Elimination of all Forms of Racial Discrimination, the Union of Arab Jurists, the Arab Lawyers Union, the General Arab Women Federation, the International Association of Democratic Lawyers, North-South XXI, the United Towns Agency for North-South Cooperation, the Indian Movement “*Tupaj Amaru*”, the Asian Women Human Rights Council, the Organisation pour la Communication en Afrique et de Promotion de la Coopération Economique Internationale - OCAPROCE International, non-governmental organizations in special consultative status, the International Educational Development, Inc., a non-governmental organization on the roster

The Secretary-General has received the following written statement which is circulated in accordance with Economic and Social Council resolution 1996/31.

[22 February 2012]

* This written statement is issued, unedited, in the language(s) received from the submitting non-governmental organization(s).

Children of Iraq and armed conflicts**

** The BRussels Tribunal, Arab Lawyers Association- UK, Geneva International Centre for Justice (GICJ), Association of Humanitarian Lawyers (AHL), The International League of Iraqi Academics (ILIA), The Iraqi Commission on Human Rights (ICHR), Women Will Association (WWA), Organization for Widows and Orphans (OWO), Ikraam Center for Human Rights, Belgian Peace Movement, Ligue camerounaise des droits de l'homme, Monitoring Net of Human Rights in Iraq (MHRI), Women Solidarity for an Independent and Unified Iraq, Geneva Global Media Centre, International Coalition against War Criminals (ICAWC), Medical Aid for the Third World, Association of Iraqi Diplomats (AID), The African Association of Human Rights (AAHR), Protection of Human Rights Defenders in the Arab World, Moroccan Association for the Right to a Fair Trial, Americans Against the War (France), General Federation of Iraqi Women (GFIW), The International Action Center (IAC), American Worker, Association of Iraqi Intellectuals and Academics, The International Network of Arab Human Rights NGOs, America In Solidarity, Federacion De Mujeres Cubanas, Association of Victims of American Occupation Prisons, International Anti-Occupation Network (IAON), International Lawyers.org, International Society of Iraqi Scientists, The Perdana Global Peace Foundation, Kuala Lumpur Foundation to Criminalise War, Spanish Campaign against the Occupation and for Iraq Sovereignty- CEOSI, Arab Cause Solidarity Committee, Iraq Solidarity Association in Stockholm, El Taller International, World Courts of Women, Center for Development Studies- India, Wariscrime.org, Action Center for Justice, 1% A Peace Army.org, A Bigger Tent.org, Agir contre la guerre (France), American Voices Abroad (Berlin, Germany), American Voices Abroad Military Project (Europe), Anti War Fair, Arizona Christian Peacemakers, Armbands for Peace, Arms Against War, Artists Against the War, Backbone Campaign, Be the Change, Become Active, Bike for Peace (Germany), Bill of Rights Defense Committee, Bird Dogger Org., Children of Iraq Association (UK),Bloomington Peace Action Coalition (IN), Blue State News Only, Boston Mobilization, Bring Democracy Back, Bring Them Home,Butterfly Gardeners Association, Citizens for Accountability on Iraq, California for Democracy, Camp Casey Blog, Camp U.S. Strike for Peace Campaign, Campaign Against Sanctions and Military Intervention in Iran, Canada Watch, Carolina Peace Resource Center (SC), Cartoon Free America, Catalysts of Hope, Central Colorado Coalition on the Iraq War, Chester County Peace Movement (PA), Cindy Sheehan Org., Cities for Peace, Citizens for Legitimate Government, Citizens for Peace & Justice, Human Rights for all-Morocco, Christian Clergy For Impeachment.com, Clothing of the American Mind, Coalition Against Election Fraud, Coalition for Impeachment Now (COIN), Code Pink, the Iraqi Association for Human Rights (IAHR), Al-Basa'er Media Association, Consumers for Peace.org, Dhafir Trial.org, DC Anti-War Network.org, Democracy Action, Democracy for America Meetup (Birmingham, AL), The Democratic Activist, Democracy Rising.org, Democratic Underground, Human Resources (Tbilisi, Georgia), Democratic Renewal, Democrats.com, Earth Day.org, Earth Island Institute, East Cobb Democratic Alliance (Cobb County, GA), Eastern Long Island Democracy for America (NY), ECU Peace and Justice NC, Election Solar Bus, Environmentalists Against War, Envision a New America, Foundation for the Development of Fox Valley Citizens for Peace and Justice (IL), Global Exchange.org, Global Network Against Weapons & Nuclear Power in Space, Global Resistance Network, Gold Star Families for Peace, Grandmothers Against the War, Grandmothers for Peace, Grass Roots Impeachment, Grass Roots Impeachment Movement, Grassroots North shoreWI, Green Delaware, Hawaii CD-01 Impeachment Action Coalition, Historians Against the War, Honk to Impeach, Idriss Stelley Foundation, Impeach Bush Cheney, Independent Progressive Politics Network, Impeach Bush Coalition, Impeach Bush TV.org, Impeachbush-cheney.com, Impeach Central, Impeach for Peace - Marshall, TX, Impeachable Treason, Impeach Duh, Impeachment Sunday, Inform Progressive Virginia, International Socialist Organization, Impeach Bush Cheney Net, Iraq Veterans Against the War, Iraq Veterans Against the War - Kansas City, Justice Through Music, Lake Merritt Neighbours Organized for Peace (Oakland, CA), Latinos for America, Leader of the Free Word - a great screen saver, Liberal Democracy Alliance, Liberal Kids, LIBERTY TREE Foundation for the Democratic Revolution, Los Angeles National Impeachment Centre, Louisiana Activist Network, Marijuana Policy Project, Massachusetts Impeachment Coalition, Men's Project for Peace, Michael Moore Online.org, Michigan Peace Works, Military Families Against the War (UK),

CRC : Article 20 (Children deprived of family environment) Article 22 (Refugee children) Article 33 (Drug abuse) Article 34 (Sexual exploitation) Article 38 (War and armed conflicts) Article 23 (Children with disabilities):¹

For two decades, Iraqi children have been subjected to grave violations of human rights. Due to decades of war, foreign occupation and international sanctions, Iraq has turned into one of the worst places for children in the Middle East and North Africa with around 3.5 million living in poverty, 1.5 million under the age of five undernourished and 100 infants dying every day, the UN Children's Fund (UNICEF).²

Military Free Zone, Stop the War Coalition (Bedford, UK), Plataforma Aturem la Guerra (Stop the War Catalonia), Million Musicians March, Mission Not Accomplished, Montgomery County Progressive Alliance (MD), Musicians and Fine Artists for World Peace, Muslims for Peace (Australia), National Lawyers Guild - Chicago chapter, National Lawyers Guild - Detroit & Michigan chapter, Northeast Impeachment Coalition, North Jersey Impeach Group (NJ), Northeast Georgia Peace Corner Group (Helen, GA), Northwest Ohio Peace Coalition, Northwest Progressive Institute (Pacific Northwest US), Not in Our Name.org, Not in Our Name (Aotearoa, New Zealand), Nyack Impeachment Initiative (NJ), Ohio Progressive Action Coalition, One Global Community, Olympia Citizens' Movement to Impeach Bush/Cheney (WA), One Million Reasons, Operation Cease Fire, Operation Impeachment, Orange County Grassroots (CA), Out of Iraq, Out of Iraq Bloggers Caucus, Patrick Henry Democratic Club, Patriotic Pulse, Patriots for Gore, Peace Action, Peace Action Wisconsin, Peace and Accountability, Peace Drum, Peace Majority, Peace Movement Aotearoa (New Zealand), Peace Reso.org, Peninsula Peace and Justice Center (Palo Alto, CA), People's Campaign for the Constitution, People Powered Impeachment, People's Email Network, People's Glorious Five Year Plan, Picnic to Impeach, Pixel4Peace.org, Playing in Traffic, PledgeToImpeach.org, Political Cooperative, Politics and Art, Progressive Action Alliance, Progressive Action Center, Progressive Avenues, Progressive Democrats of America, Progressive Democrats of Hawaii Project Filibuster, Project for the OLD American Century, Refusing to Kill.org, Rescue Our Democracy, Sacramento for Democracy (CA), St Pete for Peace (FL), Sampsonia Way, San Diego for Democracy, School of the Americas Watch, Sheehan for Congress, South Florida Impeachment Coalition, South Mountain Peace Action (Maplewood & South Orange, NJ), Springs Action Alliance (CO), Stop the War Coalition (UK), Students for Impeachment, Students Towards a New Direction (STAND), Summit County Progressive Democrats (OH), The Known UnKnowns, The Politically Incorrect Cabaret, The Rational Response Squad, Think Blue Dems, Time for Accountability, Toronto Coalition to Stop the War (Canada), Torture Abolition and Survivors Support Coalition International, True Blue Liberal.org, Trumansburg Impeachment (NY), Truth Empowered, Truthtelling Project, UC Nuclear, Underground Action Alliance, Unitarian Universalist Peace and Justice Group (Nantucket, MA), United Blue USA, United for Veterans (Wayne, MI), United Progressives, Upbeat Defiance, US Peace Memorial, US Tour of Duty: Iraq Veterans and Military Families Demand the Truth, Velvet Revolution, Vet Gulf March, Veteran Intelligence Professionals for Sanity, Veterans for Peace, Chapter 27, Virginia Grassroots Coalition, Voters for Peace, We the People for Peace, We the People Network, We the People Now, We The People United Bangladesh.org, Peace Surge, Peace and Justice Action League of Spokane (WA), Stop the War (UK), U.S. Peace Council, World Can't Wait.org, World Prout Assembly, Komite Internazionale- Basque, Asociación Paz, Igualdad y Solidaridad Internacional, Arab Cause Solidarity Committee, Iraq Solidarity Association in Stockholm, Málaga, Spain, Stop Fascism Action Network, The Asian Jurists Centre, Association of Human Rights Defenders in Iraq (AHRDI), The African Center for Human Rights (ACHR), Veterans for Peace, Your Declaration of Independence.org, Arab Lawyers Network-UK, Conservative Centre of Environmental & Reserves in Fallujah (CCERF), Willie Nelson Peace Research Institute, Studies Centre for Human Rights and Democracy, The Iraqi Centre for Human Rights, Association internationale des droits de l'homme, NGOs without consultative status, also share the views expressed in this statement.

¹ FACT SHEET: A summary of the rights under the Convention on the Rights of the Child http://www.unicef.org/crc/index_30228.html

² IRAQ: A bad place for children <http://www.irinnews.org/report.aspx?ReportId=93133>

This report will focus on the violations by the occupying forces and the Iraqi authorities of the Convention (IV) relative to the Protection of Civilian Persons in Time of War, Geneva, 12 August 1949³, and the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child.

Since the invasion in 2003, the US/UK occupying forces and the Iraqi authorities grossly failed to fulfil their most basic duties towards the children of Iraq in accordance with the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC), Resolution 25/ Session 44, November 1989.⁴ They should be held fully accountable for the harm they have inflicted upon the Iraqi children.

Principles of the CRC emphasized the need to protect children's rights' to life and physical, mental, moral, and spiritual development in a safe environment.

Article 20 (children deprived of family environment): Children who cannot be looked after by their own family have a right to special care.

There was a drastic increase of the number of orphans in Iraq during the war and occupation. There are five million Iraqi orphans as reported by official government statistics, urging the government, parliament, and NGOs to be in constant contact with Iraq's parentless children.⁵ About 500,000 of these orphans live on the streets without family or specialized institutions to take care of them.⁶

According to the 'Sponsor Iraqi Children Foundation', an NGO, approximately 1 in 6 Iraqi children under the age of 18 is an orphan. Many orphans beg on the streets or sell water to help poor widowed mothers or siblings. They are very vulnerable to arrest for begging as well as to recruitment or abuse by criminals, extremists and human traffickers.⁷

Article 22 (refugee children): Children have the right to special protection and help if they are refugees

On average, 75 to 80 per cent of the displaced⁸ persons in any crisis are women and children. The Iraqi Red Crescent Society estimates that more than 83 per cent of these in Iraq are women and children, and the majority of the children are under the age of 12.⁹

According to (UNHCR), Iraqi refugees in Syria extremely suffered from trauma, more intense than refugees from other recent conflicts elsewhere. Moreover is revealed that 89.5 percent suffered from depression, 81.6 percent from anxiety and 67.6 percent from Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD).¹⁰

³ Convention (IV) relative to the Protection of Civilian Persons in Time of War. Geneva, 12 August 1949. <http://www.icrc.org/ihl.nsf/full/380>

⁴ The convention was ratified by 194 United Nations countries, except the USA and Somalia.

⁵ Occupation's Toll: 5 Million Iraqi Children Orphaned <http://www.alternet.org/waroniraq/70886/?page=entire>.

⁶ Dr. Souad N. Al-Azzawi <http://www.brussellstribunal.org/pdf/IraqiChildrenSuffering2010.pdf>

⁷ DC Area Foundation Reopens Baghdad Center for Street Children <http://www.sicfiraq.org/wp/news/>

⁸ The Government reported that there are an estimated 1,343,568 post-2006 Internally Displaced Persons in Iraq as of January 2011, with Baghdad hosting the largest number of IDPs with some 358,457 persons (62,374 families). UNAMI HR 2010 <http://www.ohchr.org/EN/Countries/MENARegion/Pages/UNAMIHRReports.aspx>

⁹ Women, children and youth in the Iraq crisis: a fact sheet January 2008

¹⁰ SYRIA: UN research indicates high levels of trauma among Iraqi refugees <http://www.irinnews.org/Report.aspx?ReportId=76360>

The problems of children who were forced to migrate represent a real humanitarian issue because a large number of families had no shelter, no finances, no health care, no education, and no security of any kind.¹¹

There were 43.6% of the children's families left Iraq, 12.8% were forced to leave their residential areas, 11.7% of the children in the studied group left the country. All this due to a lack of services, security, and law enforcement and because of the fear for their lives. So 75.5% of the children in the studied group were forced to migrate from their living areas in Iraq.¹²

Furthermore 22.4% of the children could not maintain their education due to extreme financial difficulties. Iraqi refugees in Syria were unable to offer their children the free education. Other children were forced into labour in order to help their families survive.

According to figures released by UNHCR surveys in 2009 which stated that 20% of Internally displaced persons (IDPs) and 5% of returned refugees reported children to be missing. That means more than 93,500 children of internally displaced families are missing.¹³

Article 33 (drug abuse): Governments should use all means possible to protect children from the use of harmful drugs and from being used in the drug trade

Nowadays in Iraq, many children do not go to school and don't play in the streets but hide in corners to take drugs or to sell them. Experts say that many children, especially orphans, have fallen prey to drug abuse over the past few years. Prior to the 2003 US-led invasion, drug addiction among children was practically non-existent, according to Ameer Mohammad Bayat, a psychologist working with child addicts. In many cases children turn to drugs to ease the pain and sufferings inflicted by the war.¹⁴

UNICEF reports have warned that drug addiction is becoming more than a phenomenon amongst Iraqi children. There has been a 30 percent addiction increase among children since 2005 and a nearly 10% increase during the last year.

But the problem goes far beyond addiction. Many children are trapped in a thriving drugs trade in "new Iraq. Gangs usually target children who lost a beloved one or who are working in the streets."The dealers offer job and relief, easily bringing drug dependence among those innocent kids.¹⁵

Experts complain that the children drug plight is ignored by the government. "The problem is worsened as the government neglects the chaotic situation children are living in," said Bayat, the psychologist. He notes that the only help children get comes from independent aid agencies and volunteers, who usually face a tough, sometimes dangerous, mission." Security issues make it harder for volunteers to reach dependent children and offer help, as armed drug dealers can anytime take revenge against aid agents who try take children off the streets."¹⁶

¹¹ Dr. Souad N. Al-Azzawi <http://www.brussellstribunal.org/pdf/IraqiChildrenSuffering2010.pdf>

¹² Dr. Souad N. Al-Azzawi <http://www.brussellstribunal.org/pdf/IraqiChildrenSuffering2010.pdf>

¹³ Always someone's mother or father, always someone's child. The missing persons of Iraq. Http://www.brussellstribunal.org/pdf/Disappearances_missing_persons_in_Iraq.pdf

¹⁴ Iraq's Children Drug Addicts, Dealers , 25 December 2008 10:01 <http://forums.understanding-islam.com/showthread.php?7464-Iraq-s-Children-Drug-Addicts-Dealers>

¹⁵ Iraq's Children Drug Addicts, Dealers, 25 December 2008 10:01 <http://forums.understanding-islam.com/showthread.php?7464-Iraq-s-Children-Drug-Addicts-Dealers>

¹⁶ Iraq's Children Drug Addicts, Dealers , 25 December 2008 10:01 <http://forums.understanding-islam.com/showthread.php?7464-Iraq-s-Children-Drug-Addicts-Dealers>

Article 34 (sexual exploitation): Governments should protect children from all forms of sexual exploitation and abuse

The Organization for Women's Freedom in Iraq, an Iraqi NGO, estimates that about 4,000 women, one fifth of them aged under 18, disappeared in the first seven years after the war.

Innocent girls who should still be enjoying childhood under the protection of their mothers were being incarcerated for the crime of prostitution, an ordeal in which they were modern-day slaves. At this point, we even do not know if the numbers of Iraqi teenaged trafficking victims of the recent years amount in the thousands, or tens of thousands.¹⁷

The OWW reports that minor girls among the prostituted females are up to 65%.¹⁸

The invasion and instability that followed led to an environment where young women and girls became much more vulnerable to trafficking.¹⁹

The younger the girl, the more lucrative the profits—the highest demand is for girls under the age of 16. Traffickers reportedly sell girls as young as 11 and 12, for as much as \$30,000, while older “used” girls and women can be bought for as little as \$2,000. The traffickers are aided by sophisticated criminal networks that are able to forge documents and pay corrupt officials to remove impediments.²⁰ In some cases, women and girls request to remain in detention centers even after a sentence is complete, fearful that their families will kill them.²¹

No responsibility of the government

When raising this issue with the British and U.S. authorities, whose forces' presence in Iraq were a contributing factor to the problem, Iman Abou-Atta, a clinical researcher also encountered resistance.²²

The government has done little to combat trafficking in girls and women: there have been no successful prosecutions of criminals engaged in human trafficking, no comprehensive program to tackle the problem, and negligible support for victims, as noted above.²³

Women's rights groups told Human Rights Watch that trafficked women (and victims of sexual violence) often find themselves in jail. The government provides no assistance to victims repatriated from abroad. Iraqi authorities prosecute and convict trafficking victims for unlawful acts committed as a result of being trafficked. Victims are also jailed for prostitution, while authorities ignore their abusers.²⁴

¹⁷ Organization of Women's Freedom in Iraq <http://www.equalityiniraq.com/activities/117-prostitution-and-trafficking-of-women-and-girls-in-iraq>

¹⁸ In 2007 OWFI took on the challenge of investigating and documenting the extent of trafficking and prostitution within our outreach in Iraq. Listing of Prostitution and Trafficking houses Found in 2008 primarily addresses issues of prostitution and trafficking (P&T) in Baghdad and its suburbs.

¹⁹ Silent victims: Iraqi women trafficked for sex, Laura Smith-Spark, CNN November 10, 2011 -- Updated 1224 GMT (2024 HKT) <http://thecnnfreedomproject.blogs.cnn.com/2011/11/10/silent-victims-iraqi-women-trafficked-for-sex-report-says/>

²⁰ At a Crossroads, Human Rights in Iraq Eight Years after the US-Led Invasion: <http://www.hrw.org/sites/default/files/reports/iraq0211W.pdf>

²¹ At a Crossroads, Human Rights in Iraq Eight Years after the US-Led Invasion <http://www.hrw.org/sites/default/files/reports/iraq0211W.pdf>

²² Silent victims: *ibid*

²³ At a Crossroads - Human Rights in Iraq Eight Years after the US-Led Invasion, Human Rights Watch <http://www.hrw.org/sites/default/files/reports/iraq0211W.pdf>

²⁴ At a Crossroads - Human Rights in Iraq Eight Years after the US-Led Invasion, Human Rights Watch <http://www.hrw.org/sites/default/files/reports/iraq0211W.pdf>

Article 38 (war and armed conflicts): Governments must do everything they can to protect and care for children affected by war

Psychological problems

Total collapse of Iraq's economy, the sectarian violence, American troop raids on civilians, the killing of family members have deprived the children in Iraq of an innocent, carefree childhood. They have to deal with family breakdowns, poverty, and a complete lack of security. Iraqi children are being forced to assume income-generating roles because their families are suffering from hunger and poverty. They are leaving school and have to deal with adult problems such as unemployment, manual labor, etc. Exposure to violence on a daily basis has affected their psychological development and behavior²⁵. 46.8% of the studied population of children face serious health issues such as psychological and mental disorders.²⁶

According to the UN World Health Organization (WHO), the fourth leading cause of morbidity among Iraqis older than five years is “mental disorders,” which ranked higher than infectious disease.²⁷

A study by the Iraqi Society of Psychiatrists in collaboration with the World Health Organization found that 70% of children (sample 10,000) in the Sha'ab section of North Baghdad is suffering from trauma-related symptoms.²⁸

Some studies on the prevalence of mental disorders of children were completed in Baghdad, Mosul, and Dohuk. In the first study it is found that, 47% of primary school children reported exposure to a major traumatic event during the previous 2 years, 14% had post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD): boys 9%, girls 17%.²⁹

In the second study in Mosul, adolescents were screened for mental disorders. 30% had symptoms of PTSD: boys 26%, girls 32%. There was a higher rate of PTSD in the older adolescents. (92%) of the ill adolescents had not received any treatment.³⁰

A study conducted at the child psychiatric department of the general pediatric hospital in Baghdad in 2005 found : anxiety disorders (22%), behavioral problems (hyperkinetic and conduct disorders) (18%), non-organic enuresis (15%), stuttering (14%), epilepsy (10%) and depression (1.3%) (Al-Obaidi et al.).

Ibn Rushd is the only psychiatric hospital in the capital of 6 million people.³¹ Iraqi psychiatrists, like most medical professionals here, are suffering from training and funding shortages. No psychotherapy or crisis centers exist.

Of all the statistics that describe the devastation wreaked upon Iraq by the illegal war, the figures describing the plight of Iraqi children are the most troubling and heart-wrenching.

²⁵ Dr. Souad N. Al-Azzawi <http://www.brussellstribunal.org/pdf/IraqiChildrenSuffering2010.pdf>

²⁶ Dr. Souad N. Al-Azzawi <http://www.brussellstribunal.org/pdf/IraqiChildrenSuffering2010.pdf>

²⁷ WHO Eastern Mediterranean Regional Office, Division of Health System and Services Development, Health Policy and Planning Unit, “Health Systems Profile: Iraq,” 2005

²⁸ The Plight of Iraqi Children by Adnan Al-Daini / January 5th, 2012
<http://dissidentvoice.org/2012/01/the-plight-of-iraqi-children/>

²⁹ Mental health of Iraqi children Ali H Razokhi a, Issam K Taha b, Nezar Ismat Taib c, Sabah Sadik d, Naeema Al Gasseer [http://www.lancet.com/journals/lancet/article/PIIS0140-6736\(06\)69320-3/fulltext](http://www.lancet.com/journals/lancet/article/PIIS0140-6736(06)69320-3/fulltext)

³⁰ Mental health of Iraqi children Ali H Razokhi a, Issam K Taha b, Nezar Ismat Taib c, Sabah Sadik d, Naeema Al Gasseer [http://www.lancet.com/journals/lancet/article/PIIS0140-6736\(06\)69320-3/fulltext](http://www.lancet.com/journals/lancet/article/PIIS0140-6736(06)69320-3/fulltext)

³¹ PROTESTERS PLEAD FOR PEACE Civilian toll: Iraqis exhibit more mental health problem, James Palmer, Chronicle Foreign Service Monday, March 19, 2007 <http://www.sfgate.com/cgi-bin/article.cgi?f=/c/a/2007/03/19/MNG06ONMIB1.DTL#ixzz1jcDU8UiD>

These children will determine the future Iraq. Their wellbeing, or lack of it, will have impact on the lives of all Iraqis regardless their sect, religion, or ethnicity.³²

Article 23 (children with disability)³³

The distance to school, the poor state of the buildings, the absence of basic facilities, unsympathetic teachers, and lack help in understanding lessons, family protectiveness and the attitudes of society are likely to be insurmountable blocks for girls with disabilities.³⁴

Reliable data on services for children with disabilities in Iraqi is extremely limited. The UN sanction years led to a chronic lack of investment and by late 1991 all four specialised training institutions and national coordinating institutions³⁵ were closed.

The chronic lack of educational and training materials and reduced educational capacity resulted in increased economic vulnerability of families with disabled children who presented an additional financial burden.

Many children living with disabilities live in rural or remote areas that seriously impact on their ability to access available services due to cost, lack of public transportation and lack of knowledge about available services. Families from remote and rural areas may never see healthcare professionals. Even if the services are available, the cost of medical care will be prohibitive to most families.³⁶

The NGOs signatories to this statement call on the United Nations in general and the Human Rights Council in particular to:

- Ensure that all human rights violations in Iraq during the sanction and the invasion and occupation be investigated by an international independent body.
- All measures must be taken to end the current state of impunity, both within Iraq, and with regard to the culpability and responsibilities of the occupying powers in particular.
- Appoint a UN Special Rapporteur for the Human Rights situation in Iraq.
- Request the High Commissioner to present to the Council a detailed report on the Human Rights violations in Iraq since 2003 according to UNAMI and the civil society reports.
- Request the Special Representative of UN Secretary General on violence against children, and the Special Representative of the Secretary General for Children and Armed Conflict, and the Special Rapporteur on the sale of children, child prostitution and child pornography to take the situation of the Iraqi children in account in their reports.

³² The Plight of Iraqi Children by Adnan Al-Daini / January 5th, 2012 <http://dissidentvoice.org/2012/01/the-plight-of-iraqi-children/>

³³ Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD)

³⁴ Girls education in Iraq, 2010 http://reliefweb.int/sites/reliefweb.int/files/resources/A3F345FEB60FD713C12577AD00341F90-Full_report.pdf

³⁵ Referral Institutions and the National System for Disability Prevention and Early Detection)

³⁶ Cara A Study of Education Opportunities for Disabled Children and Youth and Early Childhood Development (ECD) in Iraq 2010 <https://www.escholar.manchester.ac.uk/api/datastream?publicationPid=uk-ac-man-scw:131680&datastreamId=SUPPLEMENTARY-2.PDF>