



EuroMed Feminist Initiative
مبادرة النسوية الأورومتوسطية
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Newsletter #04/2024

National Experts Roundtable – Updated 2024 Regional Index on VAWG

Baghdad, 19 February 2025

Under the patronage of His Excellency the President of the Republic of Iraq, the Department of Women's Affairs

On February 19th, 2025, the Presidency of the Republic of Iraq convened a national experts roundtable at the Peace Palace in Baghdad. This event was organized in partnership with the EuroMed Feminist Initiative and the Regional Observatory on Violence against Women and Girls (VAWG) as part of the project “Combating VAWG in Iraq – Enhancing Cross Sector Cooperation,” within the framework of the “Strengthening Participation, Peaceful Coexistence, and Equality in Iraq (SPACE)” programme, funded by the German Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development (BMZ), and supported by Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit (GIZ) GmbH.

The roundtable gathered over 40 experts in the field of combating Violence Against Women and Girls (VAWG), representatives from governmental and relevant ministries, as well as women civil society organizations (CSOs) and women's rights experts from the academia from Iraq and the Kurdistan Region of Iraq (/KR-I). The experts discussed and reviewed the updated 2024 Regional Index on VAWG with the updated sub-indicators. They further discussed the scoring process and the regional launching of the 2024 Index. The 2024 Regional Index includes 9 countries: Algeria, Egypt, Jordan, Iraq, Lebanon, Morocco, Palestine, Syria and Tunisia.

In her opening remarks, Ms Hana Gorgis, the Director General of the Department of Women's Affairs in the Presidency of Republic of Iraq, underlined the importance of adopting efficient measures and actions to combat VAWG. She emphasised that combating VAWG is a challenge worldwide and in Iraq, in particular for displaced women and survivors, and stressed the need to exert more joint efforts to ensure the protection of women and preservation of their rights. In this regard, she pointed out that of the main objectives of the Department of Women's Affairs in the Presidency of Republic of Iraq is creating an environment that enables women and girls to live in peace and dignity, in order to effectively contribute to building a society free of discrimination.

Mr Amir Kenani, Legal Advisor of the President of Iraq, underlined that the current situation required more concerned efforts and joint work to reduce VAWG. He noted that elimination of VAWG is essential for building a prosperous and stable Iraq.

Ms. Sara Allawi, Advisor to the Prime Minister for Civil Society Organisations, emphasized in her opening remarks that combating VAWG and empowering women is not limited to improving their

individual welfare, but is also a matter of enhancing the situation of the whole society, and affirmed the government commitment to develop and implement programs to provide protection and prevention from VAWG and enhance women's role in sustainable development.

Ms. Fenik Shafik, General Director of the General Directorate for Combating Violence against Women and the Family at the Ministry of Interior in Kurdistan Regional Government (KRG), stressed on the importance of adopting indicators to combat VAWG, in order to design measure and actions addressing the identified gaps. She also reminded that combating VAWG requires budgetary commitment.

Ms. Kazho Latif, Head of Component of the GIZ-implemented Programme, Strengthening Participation, Peaceful Co-existence and Equality in Iraq (SPACE), highlighted that violence against women and girls has detrimental effects on the survivors, but also on our societies as a whole. "Addressing it sustainably requires joint efforts, partnerships, reliable data and sound expertise – this is why we are all here, as specialists from parliament, judges, different Ministries and CSOs, who are committed to work jointly towards ending violence against women and girls", she concluded. Mr. Thaker Alzghool, Research Manager of the Regional Observatory on VAWG in Amman, reminded the methodology and the structure of the Regional Index on VAWG.

During the roundtable, Ms. Wathba Tayar and Ms. Narmine Ahmad, national experts from Baghdad and Erbil, introduced the updated indicators and sub-indicators of the 2024 Regional Index under each category, which was followed by a lively discussion on the situation in Iraq and KR-I under each respective category.

Experts also emphasized the importance of the Regional Index as it provides an opportunity to collect information and develop evidence-based policies and actions and enhance prevention, protection programs and measures. They stressed that this initiative represent a fundamental step in shedding light on the violations women face which requires a serious action to confront them in accordance with the international standards. Experts also underlined the importance of data collection and in this regard the need of having a specialised body, like an Observatory on combating VAWG, to unify the data on VAWG and enable effective measures and policies to combat and prevent it.

In her closing remarks Ms Borianna Jonsson, Executive Director of EuroMed Feminist Initiative underlined that the 2024 Regional Index on VAWG is tool to collect information on the ground to support the development of evidence-based policies and legislation by decision makers as well as effective advocacy actions by women's organisation and academia towards the adoption of a comprehensive approach and legal framework to combat VAWG. This will also support informed decisions to improve services and access to them for women victims or at risk of violence at local level, as legal, psychosocial and health services, and will contribute broader to the implementation of Women, Peace and Security Agenda.

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