



Security Council

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Report of the Secretary-General pursuant to paragraph 6 of resolution 1936 (2010)

I. Introduction

1. In paragraph 6 of Security Council resolution 1936 (2010), the Security Council requested the Secretary-General to report to the Council every four months on the progress made towards the fulfilment of the responsibilities of the United Nations Assistance Mission for Iraq (UNAMI). The present report is the first submitted pursuant to that resolution.

2. The report provides an update on the activities of the United Nations in Iraq since my last report (S/2010/406) of 29 July 2010. It covers key political developments and regional and international events concerning Iraq, as well as operational and security matters.

II. Summary of key political developments pertaining to Iraq

A. Political developments including the Government formation process

3. After months of political negotiations, leading Iraqi political blocs reached an agreement on 11 November on forming a “national partnership government” from the blocs elected during the national parliamentary elections held on 7 March 2010. As a result, the Council of Representatives, in its session on 11 November, elected the Speaker, two Deputy Speakers and the President of the Republic. Osama al-Nujaifi from the Iraqiya bloc was elected as Speaker, Qusai al-Suhail from the Sadrist Trend and Aref Tayfour from the Kurdistan Alliance were elected as Deputy Speakers, and Jalal Talabani was re-elected for a second term as President. After his re-election, President Talabani asked Nuri al-Maliki to form the new government as Prime Minister-designate. According to the Iraqi Constitution, Mr. al-Maliki will have to name the Council of Ministers within 30 days of the date of his designation as Prime Minister.

4. Before the political breakthrough was reached on 11 November, the Council of Representatives had remained adjourned since its opening meeting on 14 June due to disagreements over the allocation of key posts, including that of Prime Minister. At the initiative of the President of the Kurdistan Regional Government, Massoud Barzani, the leaders of all political blocs represented in the Council of



Representatives met in Erbil on 8 and 9 November. Meetings then continued in Baghdad and on 11 November a political agreement was reached on the allocation of the key positions (Speaker, President, Prime Minister-designate). The main blocs also signed a three-point agreement that consisted of the following elements: (a) the establishment of a National Council for Higher Strategies and an agreement that the necessary legislation would be adopted by the Council of Representatives; (b) following the necessary legal procedures, three prominent candidates of the Iraqiya Alliance would be exempted from the process of de-Ba'athification; and (c) the National Council for Higher Strategies would explore issues of national reconciliation and would make decisions in this regard based on procedures of the Council that have been agreed upon.

5. On 11 November, during the parliamentary vote to elect the President, members of the Iraqiya Alliance walked out in protest. They demanded the release of detainees and that the decision to disqualify three Alliance candidates under the process of de-Ba'athification be rescinded. On 13 November, members of the Alliance returned to parliament on the understanding that a committee would be set up, with all blocs represented, to ensure the implementation of the three-point agreement signed on 11 November. Discussions are expected to continue among the leaders of the Iraqi political blocs on the government agenda, the composition of the Council of Ministers and the reform of State institutions.

6. The breakthrough in the formation of the Government has been widely welcomed by the international community, including neighbouring countries. In a statement on 12 November, the Security Council welcomed the agreement to form a national partnership government and encouraged Iraq's leaders to rededicate themselves to the pursuit of national reconciliation.

7. On 3 October 2010, the Council of Ministers agreed to postpone the nationwide census, which had originally been scheduled for 24 October, to the provisional date of 5 December. This decision was prompted by the refusal of the Ninewa Governorate authorities to allow the Kurdistan Regional Government to conduct the census in some of the districts of Ninewa. The Ninewa Governorate also decided to stop training enumerators ahead of the census. An agreement was later reached between the Governor of Ninewa and the Central Organization for Statistics and Information Technology of the Ministry of Planning, allowing preparations for the census to resume in the Governorate. Arab and Turkomen leaders from Kirkuk and Sunni Arab politicians from other governorates had also asked for a postponement, citing an inadequate security environment and concerns of possible links of the census to the future of the disputed territories.

8. On 19 October, the Federal Supreme Court issued a ruling, at the request of the Government of Iraq, clarifying that the proposed nationwide census was not the same as the one mentioned in article 140 of the Iraqi constitution for the resolution of the disputed territories. While preparations for the nationwide census continue, given unresolved differences primarily related to the question of whether or not to tabulate ethnicity data, holding the census on 5 December appears increasingly difficult.

9. The threat faced by minorities was highlighted by the attack on the Catholic Church of Our Lady of Salvation on 31 October and the series of coordinated bomb and mortar attacks in predominately Christian areas of Baghdad on 10 November. An insurgent group linked to Al-Qaeda claimed responsibility for the church attack,

warning that all Christians were legitimate targets. Christian leaders and politicians in Iraq condemned the attacks and called on Christians to stay in Iraq, a message which was echoed by Prime Minister al-Maliki during his visit to the church.

10. On 2 November, there was a series of bombings targeting mainly Shia neighbourhoods in Baghdad. At least 15 blasts, many of them caused by car bombs and mortar strikes, left at least 76 people dead and more than 200 injured. On 8 November, two car bombs targeting buses carrying mostly Iranian pilgrims in Karbala and Najaf killed at least 10 people and wounded many more. The bomb attack in Najaf took place just 150 metres from the shrine of the Imam Hussein, one of the holiest sites in Shia Islam.

B. Regional developments pertaining to Iraq

11. To gain political support from neighbouring countries, Iraqi political leaders travelled extensively to countries in the region. During his regional tour, Prime Minister al-Maliki met with President Hosni Mubarak of Egypt, Supreme Leader Ayatollah Ali Khamenei and President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad of the Islamic Republic of Iran, King Abdullah Bin Al-Hussein of Jordan, President Bashar Al-Assad of the Syrian Arab Republic, and Prime Minister Recep Tayyip Erdoğan of Turkey. Mr. Allawi of the Iraqiya Alliance separately visited Amman, Cairo, Damascus and Riyadh.

12. On 24 September, on the margins of the United Nations General Assembly in New York, Iraqi Foreign Minister Hoshiyar Zebari and Syrian Foreign Minister Walid Al-Moualem confirmed that Iraq and the Syrian Arab Republic had agreed to restore full diplomatic relations by dispatching their respective ambassadors back to their posts. On 10 October 2010, the Iraqi Ambassador to the Syrian Arab Republic, Ala'a Hussain al-Jawadi, resumed his duties in Damascus after a year-long absence. Egypt and Jordan announced their intention of opening consulates in Erbil before the end of 2010.

13. On 22 September, the seventh meeting of the Ministers of Interior of countries neighbouring Iraq was held in Bahrain. It was attended by representatives from Bahrain, Egypt, Iran (Islamic Republic of), Iraq, Jordan, Kuwait, Saudi Arabia, the Syrian Arab Republic, Turkey, the League of Arab States and the Organization of the Islamic Conference. UNAMI was in attendance as an observer. The issues discussed related to terrorism and illegal cross-border activities affecting Iraq and the region. Participants emphasized that security in Iraq was a key contributing factor to stability in the region and pledged the full support of their respective Governments for the sovereignty and territorial integrity of Iraq.

14. Iraqi President Jalal Talabani and his accompanying delegation arrived in the Libyan Arab Jamahiriya to take part in the League of Arab States Extraordinary Summit in Sirte on 9 October. Mr. Talabani also took part in the Arab-African summit that took place in Sirte on 10 October. The Iraqi Ministry of Foreign Affairs has begun preparations for hosting the next Arab summit in Baghdad in March 2011. The Deputy Secretary-General of the League of Arab States, Ahmed Bin Hilli, announced that the main theme of the summit would be "solidarity with Iraq".

15. On 13 August, the Kurdistan Workers' Party (PKK) announced a unilateral ceasefire and renewed it again on 1 November. On 27 September, it was reported

that Iranian Revolutionary Guards had killed 30 militants of the Free Life Party of Kurdistan (PJAK) near the Iran-Iraq border. This came after an alleged bombing by the Free Life Party a week earlier of a military parade in the Iranian border city of Mahabad in which 12 people were killed.

16. Further to discussions on 26 October between my Special Representative for Iraq, Ad Melkert, and Iraqi government officials, the Government of Iraq had as yet to confirm its readiness to continue the Iraq-Kuwait Boundary Maintenance Project, mandated by Security Council resolution 833 (1993), and contribute its share of the additional funding required in the amount of \$600,000, in order to maintain the level of readiness of the project. This would include retaining project staff and services to commence field operations by March 2011.

17. On 30 October, King Abdullah Bin Abdulaziz Al Saud of Saudi Arabia invited Iraqi political leaders to Riyadh to help end the impasse over the formation of the new government. The League of Arab States was also invited to assist in facilitating the talks. While the initiative generally received positive support among major blocs in Iraq, some leaders and parliamentarians expressed their desire to see the process of forming the government being resolved in Iraq.

C. International developments pertaining to Iraq

18. On 10 November, the United Nations Controller presented to the Security Council the third report of the Secretary-General pursuant to paragraph 3 of resolution 1905 (2009), on the arrangements for depositing the proceeds from oil and gas export sales into the Development Fund for Iraq. The third quarterly report of the Government of Iraq pursuant to paragraph 5 of the same resolution was presented by the President of the Iraqi Committee of Financial Experts, Abdul Basit Turki Saeed, who briefed the members of the Council on the Iraqi proposal to extend the immunity for the Development Fund for Iraq for a further year.

19. On 27 September, my High-level Coordinator on the issue of missing Kuwaiti and third-country nationals and the repatriation of Kuwaiti property, Gennady Tarasov, travelled to Kuwait to meet, among others, the Under-Secretary of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Kuwait and the Acting Chairman of the Kuwaiti National Committee for Missing Persons and Prisoners of War Affairs. Kuwaiti officials reaffirmed their desire for good relations with Iraq and emphasized that the new Government of Iraq should make concrete and tangible progress on the ground in finding missing Kuwaiti and third-country nationals and archives. The High-level Coordinator intends to travel to Baghdad and Kuwait in the latter half of November to continue his consultations with the Iraqi and Kuwaiti authorities.

III. Activities of the United Nations Assistance Mission for Iraq

A. Political activities

20. During the reporting period, my Special Representative met frequently with Iraqi leaders to encourage progress on government formation and offer United Nations assistance if required. In particular, since the first session of the Council of Representatives in June, emphasis has been placed on the need for an all-party

meeting at the appropriate moment to register agreements necessary for an inclusive and sustainable government. UNAMI also continued to facilitate efforts aimed at addressing issues of national reconciliation, particularly on improving Arab-Kurdish relations and resolving disputes over internal boundaries. The delay in forming a new national government has significantly hampered progress on this front, although it has provided the stakeholders with the opportunity and space to explore different scenarios by which to advance these critical issues.

21. UNAMI has continued to be actively engaged in facilitating and supporting dialogue between the Arab and Kurdish sides in Ninewa Governorate with a view to ending the boycott of the Provincial Council and administration by the Ninewa Fraternal List, a local Kurdish party. During the reporting period, UNAMI facilitated several rounds of talks between the various parties in Ninewa, including local Arab and Kurdish leaders, as well as representatives of the Kurdistan Regional Government and the Government of Iraq. A number of committees have been formed and tasked with developing plans to enhance the security of minority populations, improve access to services and education, and secure political, cultural, religious and administrative rights. Discussions also focused on concerns related to power-sharing, security issues, confidence-building measures through the exchange of detainees, and the provision of services in the Governorate. It is hoped that the parties will finalize their negotiations once a new government is formed.

22. In response to the concerns and needs expressed by the ethnic and religious communities in northern Iraq, and as part of ongoing political dialogue between the Arab and Kurdish parties in Ninewa, a Committee on Ethnic and Religious Communities was established in Mosul. UNAMI continued to facilitate meetings of the Committee focused on addressing the security of the various ethnic and religious minorities and the protection of their legal, political and socio-economic rights. Members of the Committee include representatives of the Ninewa administration, the Kurdistan Regional Government and the Government of Iraq. The Committee has since been meeting regularly and has formed subcommittees on security, education and services, and political, religious, cultural and administrative rights. These subcommittees have submitted a set of recommendations to be discussed by the Committee at its next meeting. Upon endorsement, the recommendations are expected to be shared with relevant government authorities for consideration.

23. UNAMI continues to engage with the leaders of the major parliamentary blocs regarding the status of the constitutional review process in the forthcoming legislative session. It is envisaged that once the new government is formed, draft constitutional amendments, as enumerated in previous legislative discussions and reports, may be among the priorities of the new parliament once it resumes its regular business. Constitutional amendments to be considered include issues pertaining to the powers of the Iraqi Presidency and the formation of the Federation Council; the distribution of powers between the central government and the governorates; mechanisms for revenue-sharing, including from hydrocarbons; constitutional provisions regarding the status of internally disputed territories, including the city of Kirkuk; and the reform of State institutions.

24. My Special Representative travelled to Kuwait from 26 to 28 October and met with the Kuwaiti Prime Minister, His Highness Sheikh Naser Al-Mohammad Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah, as well as the Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Foreign Affairs Sheikh Mohammad Al-Sabah Al-Salem Al-Sabah, among others. The issues

under discussion related to developments in and the way forward on implementation of relevant Security Council resolutions pertaining to the normalization of relations between Iraq and Kuwait, particularly with respect to border maintenance, compensation and missing persons and property.

B. Electoral assistance activities

25. Since the certification of the election results in June 2010, UNAMI, in collaboration with the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), the United Nations Office for Project Services (UNOPS) and the International Foundation for Electoral Systems, has facilitated a series of events for the Iraqi Independent High Electoral Commission aimed at assessing the way in which the parliamentary elections were conducted and developing recommendations for improving future elections. The review process looked at technical aspects, such as how to facilitate the issuance of certified results, as well as examining the impact of the environment in which elections are held, including cooperation with external stakeholders and the applicable legal framework. As an example of how findings from this ongoing review are being implemented, the Electoral Commission is in the process of establishing permanent offices at district level throughout the country, which will allow voters to register on an ongoing basis and will support training and outreach activities. This will represent a change from the current practice, in which facilities for voter registration are opened only for a brief period before an electoral event takes place.

26. In September 2010, the Steering Committee of the Iraq Trust Fund, administered by the United Nations, approved an institutional development project in support of the Electoral Commission in the amount of \$24.8 million. The project, which will be implemented by UNDP and UNOPS under the overall coordination of UNAMI, represents a strategic approach to continuing the development of the Commission into a sustainable, professional and independent institution over the next three years, as well as strengthening the environment in which elections take place. The project objectives are based on capacity needs identified by the Commission in consultation with UNAMI, UNDP and UNOPS, as well as on lessons learned from the elections for the Council of Representatives.

27. In August 2010, the Electoral Commission expressed its readiness to the Kurdistan Regional Government to organize the governorate council elections planned to be held in the region. The Commission provided an operational concept, a timeline and an estimated budget for the regional elections. It also identified issues that require further clarification before an election can be held, such as the source for estimating population figures to determine the number of seats in each governorate council. The Commission has stated that an election should be held at least 180 days after its announcement and the allocation of the necessary resources. No date has yet been set. UNAMI has continued to support the Commission in maintaining operational readiness for such electoral events. A draft law which would establish an independent Kurdistan regional election commission to conduct and oversee regional elections was tabled in the Kurdistan Regional Parliament in July 2010. The draft law is still under discussion. In the event that a separate regional election commission is established, close coordination with the Electoral Commission will be required to clarify their respective roles.

C. Technical preparations for the census

28. Together with United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA), UNAMI has supported preparations for the planned nationwide census in Iraq. UNFPA has provided technical assistance to the Government of Iraq in planning and organizing the census, including by conducting a large-scale capacity-building programme for the Iraqi census team. The technical preparations for the census, including plans, questionnaires, tools, manuals and forms, were completed by 22 September 2010 and endorsed by the International Technical Advisory Board for Iraq Census, which is co-chaired by representatives of the United Nations Statistical Division and the Ministry of Planning and facilitated by UNFPA.

29. On 22 September, at the invitation of the Ministry of Planning, UNAMI and UNFPA attended a meeting with relevant government ministers and chaired by Prime Minister al-Maliki, to consider criticism of the census and to examine ways to address the concerns raised. In preparation for the meeting, UNAMI and UNFPA submitted suggestions for a code of conduct for the census and emphasized the importance of consultation with all parties to secure political consensus.

D. Humanitarian assistance, reconstruction and development

30. Despite the delay in the formation of a government, the United Nations has continued to focus on key national development initiatives. In particular, I welcome the work that UNAMI and the United Nations country team have been undertaking in the areas of private sector development and employment generation, which are important pillars of progress towards a better future for Iraq. In September, thanks to the joint efforts of UNAMI, UNDP, the World Bank and the United Nations Industrial Development Organization (UNIDO), a “roadmap for State-owned enterprise restructuring” was finalized and endorsed by the Government of Iraq. This step represents the start of the most significant economic reform after seven years of instability. In addition, I wish to commend the efforts of the World Food Programme (WFP) in expanding its cash-for-work programme to reach more than 11,000 vulnerable people in the areas most affected by violence and insecurity in Iraq. The scheme provides beneficiaries with short-term employment in agricultural infrastructure projects with the long-term aim of ensuring that they do not remain without food.

31. As of 30 September 2010, the United Nations Development Group Iraq Trust Fund portfolio stood at \$1.43 billion, based on total donor commitments of \$1.36 billion and \$71 million in Fund and agency-level interest earnings. In July 2010, the European Commission deposited €2.8 million which represented the final outstanding donor contribution to the Fund. An independent review of the multi-donor Trust Fund was conducted by PricewaterhouseCoopers. Preliminary findings confirm that the Fund has greatly facilitated resource mobilization and coordination between the Government, United Nations organizations and development partners.

32. Some 2,000 new Iraqis are registered by offices of the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) in the region each month, the majority in the Syrian Arab Republic. At the same time UNHCR has recorded some 1,300 refugee returns in September, which is the lowest return figure for 2010. Ongoing violence, the lack of employment opportunities and public services,

compounded by delays in forming a new government, have been stated as reasons for the slower rate of return and further displacements. Concurrently several European States forcibly returned Iraqis to Iraq against the UNHCR eligibility guidelines. UNHCR also welcomed the ruling by the European Court of Human Rights that prevents the deportation of failed Iraqi asylum-seekers. Under the leadership of my Deputy Special Representative and Resident/Humanitarian Coordinator for Iraq, the humanitarian country team continued its work with partners and local authorities to ensure that needs are met.

33. On 3 October, the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) launched a scientific survey of groundwater in Iraq to improve the capacity of the Government to address water scarcity in the country. The project will provide the Government of Iraq with a wealth of new data on the status of groundwater, enabling it to efficiently address water shortages in the worst-affected areas. The project will also improve planning of new agriculture projects and enable sustainable management of underground aquifers. UNESCO and the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) launched the first national workshop for education as part of the joint Iraq public sector modernization programme funded through the European Union. The workshop, organized in Erbil, brought together for the first time ministry advisors, presidents of universities and heads of Directorates of Education.

34. The Iraqi Council of Ministers approved a national school feeding programme for Iraq during the reporting period. To mark the partnership with WFP, the Government of Iraq contributed \$17 million to kick-start the project, which WFP will implement for the 2010-2011 academic year, targeting the most vulnerable districts of Iraq, while building the capacity of the Ministry of Education.

35. The work of the United Nations in Iraq was highlighted through a number of global days celebrated during this period. My Deputy Special Representative and Resident/Humanitarian Coordinator for Iraq marked World Humanitarian Day in her capacity as Humanitarian Coordinator by delivering a speech in Erbil and Dahuk. She also represented the United Nations at an International Peace Day event in Erbil — an occasion held for the first time in Iraq — attended by the President of the Kurdistan Regional Government. On International Literacy Day UNESCO called on national institutions and civil society to join forces to promote literacy as a tool for inclusive and sustainable development in Iraq. The Ministry of Construction and Housing in Iraq marked World Habitat Day by launching the Iraq National Housing Policy, which was developed with the support of the United Nations Human Settlements Programme (UN-Habitat).

E. Human rights

36. The security situation in Iraq continues to affect the civilian population, mostly through acts of insurgent and extremist terrorism and violent crimes perpetrated by criminal gangs. Additionally, civilians are sometimes affected by counter-insurgency and anti-terrorism operations.

37. Targeted assassinations also persist across the country. On 7 September a presenter from Al-Iraqiya television channel was shot dead by an unidentified armed group in Baghdad. In two similar incidents on 7 and 8 September, respectively, two presenters of a religious programme on Al Mosullia satellite channel were killed by

armed gunmen in Mosul. On 2 October, improvised explosive devices were detonated near the motorcades of three government officials, all of whom survived the assassination attempt.

38. UNAMI has observed some improvement in the conditions of detention facilities in the Kurdistan Region over the past ten months, including better living conditions and access to medical services in the facilities run by Asayesh in Sulaymaniyah and Dahuk. There was also a marked improvement in the holding periods for detainees awaiting charges, with no reports of detainees being held beyond the legal limit in those facilities. However, there was little improvement in conditions inside prisons and detention centres under the authority of the Ministry of Interior. In prisons under the authority of the Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs in Erbil and Sulaymaniyah, UNAMI observed considerable overcrowding and detention in cells with no ventilation or natural light. In other parts of Iraq, notably Basra and Baghdad, UNAMI continues to experience access problems to State-run prison and detention facilities.

39. In its efforts to strengthen the monitoring of all detention facilities and prisons, UNAMI held a series of meetings between September and October with senior government officials, lawyers, and non-governmental organizations (NGOs) monitoring prisons and detention centres. The latter two groups alleged that Iraqi domestic law and international human rights standards are being systematically violated, citing allegations of torture, ill-treatment and rape of detainees to extract confessions in both State and non-State illegal detention centres. UNAMI is currently working to secure unconditional access to all places of detention and prisons across Iraq, and encourages the Government of Iraq to ensure respect for the rights of detainees and to investigate allegations of illegal prisons and detention centres.

40. UNAMI notes with concern an increase in reported incidents of harassment and intimidation against internally displaced persons in Kirkuk, including threats of forced eviction, and continues to monitor the situation closely. This issue was noted particularly by my Representative on the human rights of internally displaced persons, Walter Kälin, during his visit to Iraq from 25 September to 3 October 2010. During his stay, Mr. Kälin met with the Prime Minister, the Deputy Minister of Displacement and Migration, the Implementation and Follow-up Committee for National Reconciliation, the Minister of Human Rights, the Deputy Prime Minister, the Minister of Interior, and the Minister for Foreign Relations of the Kurdistan Regional Government, as well as representatives of the international community. He also visited internally displaced persons living in settlements around Baghdad and in the Kurdistan region. Mr. Kälin called for stronger efforts by the Government and the international community to protect the human rights of displaced persons, to address their immediate needs and to find durable solutions to end their displacement. This can only be achieved on the basis of an inclusive and comprehensive strategy that accounts for all communities affected by displacement, including host communities and those in areas of return.

41. The situation in Camp Ashraf continues to be of concern since the departure of United States Forces in Iraq on 2 July 2010. Citing security concerns, the Government has banned a number of items from entering the camp, such as building materials, metal pipes and plumbing supplies, herbicides, insecticides and poisons for pest control. Additionally, a number of checkpoints have been established within

the camp and more loudspeakers installed in the east and south of the camp to broadcast messages to the residents. The camp leadership maintains that such measures are intended to tighten control in preparation for their relocation, something they have repeatedly resisted. The Iraqi authorities have declared that the situation in Camp Ashraf will not be allowed to continue indefinitely and that they will notify UNAMI and the International Committee of the Red Cross when the time comes to relocate the inhabitants. Several small disputes between residents and local Iraqi officers reportedly turned violent several times in October and some residents sustained injuries. UNAMI has called for restraint on both sides, respect for human rights and humanitarian standards, while respecting Iraqi laws and recognizing Iraqi sovereignty in further decision-making, taking into account relevant provisions of international law.

F. Security, operational and logistical issues

Security assessment during the transition

42. While Iraq continues to make progress in improving its capacity to address security within the country, many challenges still remain. Armed opposition groups continue to demonstrate the ability to conduct operations such as the series of orchestrated bombings on 3 November in Baghdad, which left 91 dead and over 380 injured. On 8 November twin bombings targeting Shia pilgrims killed at least 13 people, many of them Iranian nationals, in Karbala and Najaf.

43. It is noteworthy that on 19 October there was an improvised explosive device attack on the convoy carrying my Special Representative in Iraq, on his way back from an important meeting with Grand Ayatollah Ali al-Sistani and United Nations staff members outside Najaf, which suggests that the United Nations remains a high-profile target. While no United Nations staff members were injured, unfortunately a member of the Iraqi security forces protection detail was killed and several were injured as a result of the incident.

44. While violence is sharply lower than the levels witnessed during the peaks of 2006 and 2007, the activities of armed opposition groups continue, concentrated in the northern, north central, western, central and upper south central areas of the country. Al-Qaida in Iraq remains active, particularly in the Governorate of Diyala. Despite several security operations in the vicinity of Baqubah against Al-Qaida in Iraq, their capability remains intact. In Anbar Governorate, there were several high-impact attacks targeting the Iraqi security forces in Ramadi and Fallujah. In addition, improvised explosive device attacks targeting Iraqi police officers in Fallujah occurred on an almost daily basis. In the south of the country, aggression by Al-Qaida in Iraq against the Shia population was exemplified by a multiple vehicle-borne improvised explosive device attack on a crowded market in Basra on the evening of 7 August 2010, resulting in at least 43 people killed and over 180 others injured.

45. The withdrawal of the United States Forces in Iraq is likely to have a short- to medium-term effect on the security situation, as the central Government attempts to assert itself over the security situation in the country. Since United States Forces are no longer exposed to attacks to the same degree as previously, it appears that armed opposition groups have changed tactics, relying more on longer-range weapons that target indiscriminately. This will continue to have an effect on the United Nations

presence in locations such as Baghdad, Kirkuk and Mosul. For example, since 1 October, there have been 24 indirect fire attacks against Forward Operating Base Warrior in Kirkuk which is an operating location for UNAMI. Due to the frequency of these attacks, UNAMI has temporarily downsized its staff until new security mitigation measures are in place. Armed opposition group activity will also continue to pose significant risks to the conduct of United Nations operations within the country. Indirect fire attacks targeting the international zone have seen a marked increase since last year, from 29 in 2009 to over 50 thus far in 2010.

Operations and logistics

46. In view of the drawdown of the United States Forces in Iraq and the subsequent reduction in security and logistical support provided to the mission, UNAMI has identified and commenced implementing alternative arrangements in order to operate more independently. United Nations Headquarters and UNAMI continue to hold regular meetings with representatives of the United States to ensure a smooth transition during the drawdown.

47. UNAMI has formally approached the Government of Iraq seeking its support for the allocation of real estate in Baghdad and for the establishment of a regional office in Kirkuk. Options for the establishment of a regional office in Basra are currently being explored.

IV. Observations

48. I commend all political blocs and their leaders for engaging in a collective process and reaching agreements that appear to have ended the deadlock in the government formation process. The breakthrough represents a major milestone in democratic progress for Iraq and should pave the way for the first peaceful transition between elected governments under full Iraqi sovereignty. I congratulate President Talabani on his re-election, as well as Mr. Al-Nujaifi on his election as Speaker and Messrs. Qusai al-Suhail and Aref Tayfour, on their election as Deputy Speakers. I also welcome the nomination of Mr. al-Maliki as Prime Minister-designate. Further challenges lie ahead, including the need for an agreement on other key government posts, ministerial portfolios and the adoption of a national programme that gives the Iraqi people hope for the future. Political leaders are now expected to honour the agreements that were reached in recent months and ensure that all communities feel that they have a stake in the political process. In the same spirit of partnership and national unity, I encourage Iraqi leaders to move swiftly to complete the formation of the new government and work to ensure that it is inclusive, broadly participatory and has the support of the Iraqi people. Progress in this regard will help put the country on the path towards democracy, national reconciliation and long-term stability.

49. I also commend President Barzani of the Iraqi Kurdistan Region for hosting all-party talks in Erbil and then in Baghdad, which gave the government formation talks new momentum. The agreements reached by the main political blocs are a clear example of how the leaders of the country can cooperate and serve the collective interest of the Iraqi people. This is a powerful signal for the future direction of the country and I hope it will give the leaders a new impetus to resolve the many political, socio-economic and security challenges facing the country. This

includes the resolution of disputed internal boundaries, particularly the status of Kirkuk, the sharing of the country's natural resources, a national revenue-sharing mechanism, hydrocarbon legislation, agreement on how relations between the federal, regional, and provincial governments are governed, the constitutional review and the strengthening of the institutions of governance, the rule of law, and respect for human rights. In consultation with the new Government of Iraq, UNAMI will continue to support efforts to resolve these outstanding issues.

50. While I welcome the recent political developments, the prolonged process of government formation over the last eight months has been accompanied by a sense of insecurity. The recently increasing number of security incidents throughout Iraq, particularly in the north and in Baghdad and attacks against the Iraqi security forces and innocent civilians in particular, remain a major concern. I was particularly shocked and saddened by the attack on the Catholic Church of Our Lady of Salvation in Baghdad, which left many dead and scores injured. It underscores the fact that Christians and minorities in the country continue to face daily threats of violence and intimidation. I also condemn the heinous attacks on Shia pilgrims in Karbala and Najaf. I urge the Government of Iraq to bring the perpetrators to justice and ensure that all Iraqis, regardless of their religious beliefs, are provided with adequate protection and are able to practice their faith in peace.

51. Improving Arab-Kurdish relations in northern Iraq should also be a matter of priority as it could have wider implications for the rest of the country. I welcome the ongoing political dialogue in Ninewa and urge all concerned to work to end the Kurdish boycott of the Ninewa Governorate Council which could help ease tensions throughout the disputed areas. UNAMI will continue to help the parties to find mutually acceptable solutions.

52. Accelerating the pace of development and reconstruction in the country, as articulated in the National Development Plan, will be another priority concern. The formation of a new government will mean very little to ordinary Iraqis unless they begin to see tangible improvements in their lives, particularly in the delivery of essential services and the creation of new job opportunities. To this end, the United Nations is committed to advising and supporting the new government in meeting the needs of the Iraqi people and working to achieve the Millennium Development Goals. Furthermore, the formation of governance structures essential for the implementation of the United Nations Development Assistance Framework is under way and is expected to be finalized once the government formation is completed. There have been positive discussions with the Prime Minister's Office and the Ministry of Planning and I look forward to reporting on the launching of the United Nations Development Assistance Framework Trust Fund in my next report.

53. While the focus in Iraq is shifting to long-term development, there are still many humanitarian needs to be addressed, particularly with respect to internally displaced persons and refugees. The lack of resources in this regard remains a concern, as no significant new contributions have been received in support of the Iraq Humanitarian Action Plan. While thanking the donor community and the Government of Iraq for the support received to date, I reiterate my request for increased resources to allow the United Nations and its partners to continue their support of the vulnerable populations of Iraq.

54. It is my hope that once the new government is formed, Iraq will expeditiously fulfil its outstanding obligations arising from Security Council resolutions,

particularly issues related to Kuwait, including the return of missing Kuwaiti nationals and property. As an important confidence-building measure, I also encourage Iraq to reaffirm its commitment to Security Council resolution 833 (1993) with respect to its land and maritime boundary. I firmly believe that progress on these fronts would enable the Security Council to take up my report (S/2009/385) of 27 July 2009 pursuant to Security Council resolution 1859 (2008) and consider the steps that need to be taken for the full normalization of the international status of Iraq. I also strongly encourage regional neighbours to make it a priority to engage the new government of Iraq in addressing issues of mutual concern. In this regard, I welcome the decision by Iraq and the Syrian Arab Republic to restore full diplomatic relations and send their respective ambassadors back to their respective posts. The initiative by Saudi Arabia in support of the process of government formation and reconciliation is also a welcome signal. Such positive engagement will contribute to greater stability, not only in Iraq but in the region as a whole.

55. It is my sincere hope that with the formation of a new government, the security situation in the country will improve. However, Iraq will still remain a challenging operating environment in the foreseeable future. The recent attack on my Special Representative's convoy near Najaf, as well as the increased level of indirect fire attacks in Kirkuk and Baghdad where United Nations facilities are located, are stark reminders of the dangers that United Nations personnel face in Iraq every day.

56. Beyond the challenging security environment, the ongoing United States military drawdown is making it more difficult for the United Nations to carry out its operations in Iraq. While there has been gradual progress over the past several years in making the United Nations more self-reliant in Iraq, certain security and logistical arrangements still being provided by the United States will need to be replaced. While steps are being taken in this regard, this will only be possible with strong financial support from Member States, on the basis of the proposals put forward by UNAMI as part of its budget submission for 2011.

57. I would like to take this opportunity to reiterate my personal commitment to seeing the United Nations continue to assist the people and Government of Iraq in accordance with its mandate under resolution 1936 (2010). I would like to thank my Special Representative, UNAMI staff, both national and international, and the personnel of United Nations agencies, funds and programmes, for their tireless efforts and determination to build a better future for the Iraqi people.