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Implementation of resolution [2631 \(2022\)](#)

Report of the Secretary-General

I. Introduction

1. The present report is submitted pursuant to Security Council resolution [2631 \(2022\)](#), in which the Secretary-General was requested to report every four months on progress made towards fulfilling the mandate of the United Nations Assistance Mission for Iraq (UNAMI). The report covers key developments relating to Iraq and provides an update on the activities of the United Nations in Iraq since my previous report of 26 September 2022 ([S/2022/714](#)) and the briefing given to the Security Council by the Special Representative for Iraq and Head of UNAMI on 4 October 2022.

II. Summary of key political developments

A. Political situation

2. On 13 October, the Council of Representatives elected Abdullatif Jamal Rashid as President of Iraq. The election marked an essential constitutional step towards the formation of a government following the national parliamentary elections held on 10 October 2021. After taking the oath of office, the President appointed Mohammed Shia' al-Sudani Prime Minister-designate, tasking him with forming a government within 30 days. Mr. Al-Sudani had been put forward by the Shia Political Coordination Framework as its nominee for the premiership on 25 July.

3. Prior to the parliamentary session to elect the President, the Security Media Cell under the Prime Minister's Office reported that nine rockets had been targeted at the International Zone in Baghdad and its surroundings, and that several civilians and members of the security services had been injured as a result. In response, the caretaker Prime Minister, Mustafa al-Kadhimi, reaffirmed previous directives to the security forces to provide the protection necessary for conducting the parliamentary session and rejected any attempts to undermine the democratic process.

4. In the run-up to Mr. Rashid's election as President, political efforts were made to reach a consensus on a presidential candidate among the political parties of the Kurdistan Region of Iraq. On 8 October, the Coordination Framework and its political partners (grouped under the name "State Administration Coalition") issued a statement in which they urged the Kurdistan Democratic Party and the Patriotic Union of Kurdistan to come to an agreement about a presidential candidate. On 10 October,



the Speaker of the Council of Representatives, Mohammed al-Halbousi, leading a delegation to Erbil that comprised State Administration Coalition members and Mr. Al-Sudani, met with the President of the Kurdistan Democratic Party, Masoud Barzani. According to a statement issued by the office of Mr. Barzani, participants had agreed to find solutions to “the sensitive issues” of choosing a candidate for President and on government formation prior to the relevant parliamentary sessions. On the day of the presidential vote, the Kurdistan Democratic Party announced the withdrawal of its candidate for the presidency and its subsequent support for the nomination and election of Mr. Rashid, a member of the Patriotic Union of Kurdistan who was presented as an independent candidate.

5. The outgoing President, Barham Salih, and the caretaker Prime Minister were among the first to congratulate the President and the Prime Minister-designate. Congratulatory messages from most major political parties followed. Muqtada al-Sadr, in a statement delivered by his representative, noted the failure of “efforts to form a national majority government” and rejected the participation of any of his “affiliates” in the formation of a new government under the Prime Minister-designate.

6. After the parliamentary session of 13 October, the Prime Minister-designate held consultations with political blocs on the development of the government programme and the allocation of ministerial portfolios. In a statement issued on 21 October, the Prime Minister-designate noted that the political blocs would have an opportunity to present ministerial candidates and that he would select candidates on the basis of their competence, integrity and ability to manage. On 23 October, the Office of the Prime Minister-designate announced that ministerial candidates would be interviewed by a “specialized committee” that the Prime Minister-designate would chair. The same day, the Prime Minister-designate stated that his priority was the formation of a “strong government capable of facing challenges”.

7. On 27 October, the Prime Minister-designate presented his government programme and his 21 ministerial candidates to the Council of Representatives for a vote of confidence, leaving two cabinet posts vacant for the time being. All ministers put forward by the Prime Minister-designate received a parliamentary vote of confidence and were sworn in together with him. The remaining two cabinet seats (Minister of the Environment and Minister of Construction, Housing, Municipalities and Public Works) were confirmed at a parliamentary session held on 3 December. The Prime Minister’s cabinet includes three women: the Minister of Finance, the Minister of Communication and the Minister of Migration and the Displaced.

8. Introducing his programme on 27 October, the Prime Minister-designate noted the “economic, social, humanitarian and environmental impacts” of the crises facing Iraq and affirmed his future government’s responsibility to address them. In his government programme, the Prime Minister further highlighted as priorities: combatting corruption; addressing unemployment and creating work opportunities; supporting vulnerable and low-income groups; reforming the economic and financial sectors; and enhancing public services. The Prime Minister-designate reminded parliamentarians of the importance of resolving issues between Baghdad and Erbil; increasing the capacity and effectiveness of local government; returning internally displaced persons to their places of origin; addressing human rights and women’s empowerment; supporting the security forces; preserving judicial independence; and promoting the regional role of Iraq.

9. In his government programme, the Prime Minister also underlined the keenness of the “national political powers” to form a “service government” based on the “principles of national partnership” and noted that agreements reached by “the political blocs” formed an “integral part” of the programme. These initial agreements included an amendment of the Council of Representatives Election Law (2020); the

holding of provincial council elections and setting a date for them; conducting parliamentary elections within a year; and the redeployment of troops outside cities with their security assigned to the police.

10. Since its inauguration, the Government has focused its work on key priorities laid down in its programme. In line with the government programme, following a statement by the Commission of Integrity issued on 16 October about the theft of 3.7 trillion Iraqi dinars (approximately \$2.5 billion) from government funds, the Prime Minister held separate meetings on 30 October with the President of the Supreme Judicial Council and the head of the Commission of Integrity, and, on 31 October, with the Governor of the Central Bank of Iraq, to discuss the mandates of these oversight bodies in countering corruption. During his meeting with the head of the Commission of Integrity, the Prime Minister stressed that there were no “red lines” when pursuing those involved in corruption and announced his intention to enact further measures to support counter-corruption efforts. On 16 November, the Prime Minister ordered the Commission to form a supreme committee for combating corruption that would have “exceptional authority” to expedite the investigation of major corruption cases, extradite those wanted on corruption charges and return stolen public funds. In the order, the Prime Minister highlighted that the committee would follow due process in its work, in particular with regard to human rights. On 27 November, the Prime Minister announced the recovery of 182.7 billion Iraqi dinars (approximately \$125 million). He also affirmed that the Government would continue to pursue all those involved in the theft of public funds, whether inside or outside Iraq. On 3 January, at a press conference, the head of the Commission of Integrity announced the recovery of another 4 billion Iraqi dinars (approximately \$2.8 million).

11. On 2 November, the Prime Minister established a committee to draft a plan to transfer security responsibilities in cities from the Ministry of Defence to the Ministry of Interior. During a meeting chaired by the Prime Minister on 7 December, the National Security Council agreed to start the handover in Muthanna, Qadisiyah and Wasit Governorates.

12. During the same meeting of 7 December, the National Security Council discussed events that had occurred at a protest held that same day in Nasiriyah, Dhi Qar Governorate, which, according to information verified by UNAMI, led to the death of three protesters. Participants stressed “the need to preserve the lives of peaceful demonstrators and prevent any party from interfering by politicizing demonstrations or exploiting them for personal purposes”. The Council ordered a high-level security committee to be sent to Dhi Qar Governorate to investigate events that had “caused casualties and injuries among the demonstrators and the security services”. On 15 December, the spokesperson of the Commander-in-Chief reported that the committee had found that an “individual affiliated with the security services” had been responsible for the incident and referred the investigative file to the Legal Department of the Ministry of Defence. The committee had also suggested measures to prevent the repetition of such an incident in the future.

13. A crucial element in the government programme is the passage of the 2023 federal budget law. The Prime Minister reiterated this during a meeting on 26 November with the Minister of Planning and the Minister of Finance, calling for the draft budget law to be submitted to the Council of Representatives for approval and to be brought into force “without delay”.

14. During a regular meeting held on 28 November, the Council of Ministers approved the establishment of a public company linked to the Popular Mobilization Commission with a capital of 100 billion Iraqi dinars (approximately \$69 million).

15. Parliamentary elections for the Kurdistan Region of Iraq were initially scheduled for 1 October. In the absence of an agreement on the electoral framework

and on the reactivation of the Region's high electoral commission, however, the Parliament of the Kurdistan Region voted on 9 October to extend its four-year term until the end of 2023. The Kurdistan Parliament announced that the aim of the extension was to prevent "a legal ... vacuum", ensure continuity of the region's institutions, guarantee public interests and allow for the completion of preparations for the planned legislative elections of the Kurdistan Region of Iraq. Of the 111 members of the Kurdistan Parliament, 80 voted in favour of the extension, with many opposition members not attending the meeting.

B. Relations between Baghdad and Erbil

16. In the new government programme, the Prime Minister expressed a commitment to resolving outstanding issues between the federal Government and the Kurdistan Regional Government pursuant to the Constitution, including the adoption of a hydrocarbon law. Other outstanding issues reflected in the programme included the establishment of a federation council, the implementation of the Sinjar agreement and the re-establishment of a high committee for the implementation of article 140 of the Constitution (which pertains to disputed internal boundaries).

17. In that light, the President of the Kurdistan Region of Iraq, Nechirvan Barzani, met in Baghdad with the President, the Prime Minister and other political leaders on 22 and 27 November. The Office of the President of the Kurdistan Region of Iraq reported that the participants had emphasized the need for cooperation, thereby supporting the new federal Government in implementing its programme. They also discussed resolving pending issues between Baghdad and Erbil through dialogue and in accordance with the Constitution, including the implementation of article 140 of the Constitution, budget and financial entitlements for the Kurdistan Region of Iraq, the status of Sinjar, and other issues facing the country. The statement furthermore emphasized the intention of Baghdad and Erbil to work together, including with neighbouring countries, to protect the borders of Iraq.

18. As a next step, the federal Government and the Kurdistan Regional Government established delegations tasked with addressing outstanding issues between them. The delegations met in Baghdad on 30 November to discuss the 2023 federal budget, the hydrocarbon law and other issues. The federal Ministry of Planning issued a statement on the same day in which it noted that further meetings would be held. It also announced the formation of joint technical committees.

19. The delegation of the Kurdistan Regional Government then met, on 12 December, with the Ministerial Council for the Economy in Baghdad to discuss the draft 2023 federal budget law, and on 13 December with the federal Ministry of Oil. Meanwhile, on 13 December, the Council of Ministers approved the disbursement of 400 billion Iraqi dinars (approximately \$275 million) to the Kurdistan Region of Iraq. The payment was to be contingent on the completion of an audit of oil and non-oil revenues by the Federal Board of Supreme Audit and a calculation of revenues by the federal Ministry of Oil, both to be conducted in coordination with the relevant bodies of the Kurdistan Region of Iraq.

20. On 14 November, a delegation of the Ministry of Peshmerga Affairs of the Kurdistan Regional Government met separately with the Prime Minister, the federal Minister of Interior and the federal Minister of Defence to discuss strengthening security cooperation. On 22 November, the delegation held a meeting with officials of the federal Ministry of Interior and the federal Ministry of Defence with a particular focus on reinforcing border security. The pending allocation of funds for two joint brigades was also discussed during visits to Baghdad conducted in November.

C. Security situation

21. Da'esh continued to conduct asymmetric attacks, primarily in Anbar, Baghdad, Diyala, Kirkuk, Ninawa and Salah al-Din Governorates. From 4 October to 31 December, 116 attacks, mostly targeted at Iraqi security forces, were attributed to Da'esh. Prominent among those were attacks claimed by Da'esh in Kirkuk Governorate on 18 December, which resulted in the deaths of nine policemen, and others in Albu Bali village in Diyala Governorate on 19 December, in which eight civilians died. Iraqi security forces continued their counter-terrorism operations in response to Da'esh activity.

22. Throughout the reporting period, the Ministry of Defence of Türkiye reported ongoing ground and air operations against Kurdistan Workers' Party (PKK) targets in northern Iraq. The reports indicated that over 120 PKK "terrorists" had been "neutralized" during that period, while separate reporting by the Ministry of Defence announced the loss of at least 18 Turkish service personnel. Türkiye has reiterated in the past that it has been exercising its "inherent right of self-defence as outlined in Article 51 of the United Nations Charter" and that "measures taken ... are in compliance with its obligations under international law". Türkiye also stressed that the "utmost sensitivity and attention is accorded to protect the properties and lives of the civilian population and the environment".

23. Military operations were also reported to have been conducted by Iranian armed forces. In a letter dated 10 October 2022 addressed to the President of the Security Council ([S/2022/748](#)), the Permanent Representative of the Islamic Republic of Iran to the United Nations noted that the Armed Forces of the Islamic Republic of Iran had "conducted several military operations on 28 September 2022" against the groups based in the Kurdistan Region of Iraq. Iranian State media reported another attack that had taken place on 4 October. In addition, the Counter-Terrorism General Directorate of the Kurdistan Region of Iraq reported that further attacks had taken place on 14, 21 and 22 November, and that two people had died and eight had been wounded during the actions of 14 November.

24. On 8 October, the Council of Representatives discussed Iranian military operations in the Kurdistan Region of Iraq. Members of parliament, inter alia, called on the Government to protect Iraqi sovereignty, prohibit the establishment of foreign military bases in Iraq and take diplomatic measures in response to attacks in Iraq. The Minister for Foreign Affairs subsequently gave a briefing to the parliamentary foreign relations committee on 10 October on Iranian and Turkish military operations in the Kurdistan Region of Iraq.

25. Iranian and Turkish operations in the Kurdistan Region of Iraq were condemned by both Baghdad and Erbil. On 14 November, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Iraq issued a statement condemning Iranian military operations that day as a "blatant encroachment" on Iraqi sovereignty and noted that it would take "high-level diplomatic measures" to preserve Iraqi sovereignty and security. The Kurdistan Regional Government echoed these messages in a statement on 21 November. The same day, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs condemned the attacks and noted that repeated attacks carried out by Iranian and Turkish forces were a violation of Iraqi sovereignty and contravened "international covenants and laws that regulate relations between countries".

26. The Minister for Foreign Affairs of the Islamic Republic of Iran, Hossein Amir-Abdollahian, relayed his Government's position during a phone call with the Minister for Foreign Affairs of Iraq, Fuad Hussein, on 7 October. According to Iranian State media, the Iranian Minister highlighted his country's concern over the national security threat posed by armed groups on Iraqi soil and requested Iraqi cooperation

to disarm them. On 14 November, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Iraq stated that, in another phone call on the same day, its Minister had stressed to his Iranian counterpart the importance of dialogue, emphasizing the danger posed by “the continuation of these unilateral actions”.

27. On 23 November, the Prime Minister chaired a meeting of the National Security Council during which the Council agreed to establish a plan for the deployment of border guard forces along the borders of Iraq with the Islamic Republic of Iran and Türkiye and stressed the need for coordination with the Kurdistan Regional Government and its Ministry of Peshmerga Affairs to unify efforts to protect the borders of Iraq.

28. On 8 October, the Counter-Terrorism General Directorate of the Kurdistan Region of Iraq reported that multiple rockets had been fired at a military base hosting Turkish troops in Ba’shiqah subdistrict in Ninawa Governorate. The Shia group calling itself the “Islamic Resistance Ahrar al-Iraq Brigade” claimed responsibility for the attack. No damage or casualties were reported. Similar attacks were reported by the media to have taken place on 3 and 4 December, with again the “Islamic Resistance Ahrar al-Iraq Brigade” claiming responsibility for the attack of 3 December and no group claiming responsibility for the attack of 4 December.

D. Regional and international developments

29. In his government programme, the Prime Minister underlined the importance of fostering relations with other countries, in particular neighbouring countries, members of the Gulf Cooperation Council and other Arab countries. It was his Government’s intention to promote Iraqi sovereignty and to strengthen the role of Iraq in Arab, regional and international organizations. He emphasized that climate change was a foreign relations issue requiring international cooperation.

30. During a press conference on 8 November, the Prime Minister discussed the issue of water scarcity resulting from a lack of rain and a reduction in the flow of the Tigris and Euphrates Rivers, and stated that the position of the Government of Iraq on this matter had been conveyed to the Governments of the Islamic Republic of Iran and Türkiye. The President raised the regional aspects of water management during the summit meeting of the League of Arab States held in Algiers on 1 and 2 November. On that occasion, the President drew attention to the responsibility of the Government of Iraq to promote better understanding with the Islamic Republic of Iran and Türkiye with regard to water issues. During separate meetings with a range of Arab leaders, the President discussed bilateral relations, regional security and other issues.

31. The President represented the Government of Iraq at the twenty-seventh Conference of the Parties to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change, held in Egypt from 6 to 18 November. In his address to the conference on 7 November, he described water issues as the “most prominent” climate change challenge facing Iraq. He highlighted national efforts towards sustainable water management and referred to ongoing dialogue with the Islamic Republic of Iran and Türkiye on this issue. The President also attended a meeting to discuss the Eastern Mediterranean and Middle East Climate Change Initiative, as well as the Middle East Green Initiative summit.

32. At the Manama Dialogue forum of the International Institute for Strategic Studies, held in Bahrain from 18 to 20 November, the Minister for Foreign Affairs reiterated his country’s goal of supporting regional dialogue and bilateral talks between the Islamic Republic of Iran and Saudi Arabia. He also highlighted areas of enhanced cooperation with international partners on legal, judicial and security issues as well as on counter-terrorism efforts.

33. On his first foreign visit since taking office, the Prime Minister travelled to Jordan on 21 November and met separately with King Abdullah II, the Prime Minister, Bisher Khasawneh, and the Minister for Foreign Affairs, Ayman Safadi. The discussions were focused on regional developments, counter-terrorism efforts and bilateral cooperation. Bilateral relations and cooperation, including in the areas of investment and trade, were the main topics of discussion during the Prime Minister's visit to Kuwait on 23 November, where he met separately with Crown Prince Sheikh Meshal al-Ahmad al-Jaber al-Sabah, the Prime Minister, Ahmad Nawaf al-Ahmad al-Sabah, the Speaker of the Kuwait National Assembly, Ahmed Abdulaziz al-Sadoun, and other Kuwaiti officials.

34. On 29 November, the Prime Minister travelled to the Islamic Republic of Iran on a two-day official visit. He met separately with the country's Supreme Leader, Ayatollah Ali Khamenei, the President, Ebrahim Raisi, the First Vice-President, Mohammad Mokhber, the Minister for Foreign Affairs, Hossein Amir-Abdollahian, and other Iranian officials. The Office of the Prime Minister subsequently stated that the focus of the discussions had been on bilateral relations and cooperation, including in the areas of (border) security, trade, energy and investment. During the meeting with the President, climate change and its economic impact, as well as water issues were also raised.

35. On 4 December, Iraq hosted the sixth ministerial meeting of the Ancient Civilizations Forum, attended by representatives of Armenia, Bolivia (Plurinational State of), China, Egypt, Greece, Iran (Islamic Republic of), Iraq, Italy and Peru, as well as by the High Representative of the Secretary-General for the United Nations Alliance of Civilizations, Miguel Moratinos, and delegations of regional and international organizations. In a joint statement, participating member States highlighted the importance of the forum as a platform for dialogue and cultural cooperation, and reaffirmed their commitment to the protection of cultural heritage.

36. On 7 December, the Minister for Foreign Affairs met in Jordan with his Egyptian and Jordanian counterparts, Sameh Hassan Shoukry Selim and Ayman Safadi, respectively. In a statement, Jordan noted that the ministers had affirmed their willingness to strengthen the tripartite cooperation mechanism, which was aimed at enhancing, inter alia, political, economic and security coordination.

37. On 9 December, the Prime Minister attended the Arab States-China summit for cooperation and development held in Riyadh. In his address, the Prime Minister described the summit as an opportunity for regional economic integration and further cooperation with China. In Riyadh, the Prime Minister also met separately with the President of China, Xi Jinping, the Crown Prince of Saudi Arabia, Mohammed bin Salman Al Saud, other regional leaders, the Secretary-General of the League of Arab States and the Secretary-General of the Gulf Cooperation Council.

38. The second Baghdad Conference for Cooperation and Partnership took place on 20 December. It was hosted by Jordan in coordination with France and Iraq. The Prime Minister participated alongside the Heads of State of Egypt, France and Jordan; the Prime Minister of Kuwait; the Foreign Ministers of Bahrain, Iran (Islamic Republic of), Oman, Qatar and Saudi Arabia; and representatives of Türkiye and the United Arab Emirates. The Secretary-General of the Gulf Cooperation Council, the Secretary-General of the League of Arab States and the Secretary-General of the Organization of Islamic Cooperation, the High Representative for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy of the European Union and the Special Representative of the Secretary-General for Iraq and Head of the United Nations Assistance Mission for Iraq, also attended.

39. In a final statement, Conference participants recognized ongoing efforts to support the security, stability and sovereignty of Iraq, its democratic and

constitutional processes and the promotion of dialogue to overcome regional differences. They highlighted the importance of the trilateral cooperation framework between Egypt, Iraq and Jordan and stressed the importance of joint projects between States members of the Gulf Cooperation Council and Iraq. The participants agreed to hold a third Conference in 2023.

40. On the sidelines of the event, the Prime Minister also took part in a “five-way summit” with the representatives of Egypt, France, Jordan and Kuwait, and a trilateral meeting with Egypt and Jordan.

III. Update on the activities of the Mission and the United Nations country team

A. Political activities

41. During the reporting period, the Special Representative engaged broadly with the federal President, the federal Prime Minister, the Speaker of the federal Council of Representatives and their counterparts in the Kurdistan Region of Iraq, as well as with leaders of political parties, officials, representatives of women’s groups and others. During her meetings, the Special Representative emphasized, inter alia, the need for good and transparent governance and for addressing systemic corruption. She also stressed the importance of delivering adequate services to all citizens, diversifying the economy, tackling environmental challenges, promoting accountability, ensuring the meaningful participation of women in the political process and establishing an institutionalized, predictable mechanism for the comprehensive, holistic and durable resolution of all outstanding issues. She furthermore reaffirmed the steadfast commitment of the United Nations to supporting the Government in its efforts to address these challenges.

42. Against the backdrop of continued military operations in northern Iraq, condemned by the federal Government as well as the Kurdistan Regional Government as violations of Iraqi sovereignty, the Special Representative emphasized during her meetings that internal unity and cooperation were essential to ensuring Iraqi stability. In statements and meetings, the Special Representative also called on neighbouring countries to settle issues, including security concerns, by established diplomatic means.

43. On 30 October, the Special Representative met in Erbil with a group of women representatives of various political parties and civil society organizations in the Kurdistan Region of Iraq. The group raised its concerns over repeated violations of Iraqi sovereignty and sought support from UNAMI in addressing the issue. The Special Representative elaborated on the mandate of UNAMI, including its good offices and advisory role in support of the Government and people of Iraq. She reiterated that dialogue was crucial to achieving good-neighbourly relations as well as Iraqi unity. The next day, the Special Representative marked the twenty-second anniversary of Security Council resolution [1325 \(2000\)](#) on women and peace and security with a statement in which she welcomed the increase in women’s parliamentary representation in Iraq. She also urged parliamentarians to fully address women’s concerns, referring to the need to pass the anti-domestic violence law, and called on the new Government to accelerate progress on women’s empowerment and gender equality.

44. On 24 November, in anticipation of the 16 Days of Activism against Gender-based Violence campaign starting the next day – the International Day to End Violence Against Women – the Special Representative participated in an event organized by the Social, Educational and Economic Development Foundation, a women-led organization in Erbil supporting the recovery and reintegration of

survivors of violence. She discussed with Kurdish women, former politicians and civil society representatives ways in which women could expand their participation in all sectors of life and, in particular, the political sphere.

45. On 7 December, the Special Representative accompanied the High Representative for the United Nations Alliance of Civilizations, Miguel Moratinos, to a meeting in Najaf with Grand Ayatollah Ali al-Sistani. They exchanged views on the importance of dialogue, and commended the Grand Ayatollah for his consistent appeals for mutual respect and unity to prevail in support of diversity and peaceful coexistence. The High Representative also presented the Grand Ayatollah the United Nations Plan of Action to Safeguard Religious Sites, which he had previously presented to Pope Francis and the Grand Imam of Al-Azhar, Sheikh Ahmed al-Tayyib.

46. During his briefing to the Informal Expert Group on Women and Peace and Security of the Security Council on 10 October, the Deputy Special Representative for Political Affairs and Electoral Assistance emphasized the importance of women's participation in the new Government and the need to finalize pending legislation, including the draft anti-domestic violence law.

47. From 21 to 24 November, the Deputy Special Representative conducted a visit to the Islamic Republic of Iran, meeting with Iranian officials in Tehran to discuss Iraqi-Iranian relations, including support for the stability of Iraq, the issue of Iranian military operations in the Kurdistan Region of Iraq and cooperation on climate change responses, as part of efforts to support stability in Iraq.

B. Electoral assistance

48. UNAMI continued its capacity-building activities in support of the Independent High Electoral Commission. Those included trainings in Baghdad, Basrah, Erbil, Kirkuk, Mosul and Sulaymaniyah on election reporting, training methodology, electoral systems, logistical planning and management. On 16 November, UNAMI supported the Commission's Kirkuk office in completing gender mainstreaming training for 35 staff, including 9 women.

49. UNAMI provided technical assistance and advisory support to the Commission in upgrading its biometric voter registration system, developing criteria for the redistribution of voter registration centres, registering newly eligible Iraqi voters, addressing issues related to the automated voter fingerprint identification system, updating electoral constituency maps and developing an election materials inventory system.

50. UNAMI continued to provide legal expertise for the review of mechanisms to resolve electoral disputes and facilitated study visits for the President of the Federal Supreme Court, members of the Electoral Judicial Panel and the Commission's Chairperson aimed at improving the handling of electoral complaints and appeals in future elections.

51. Throughout October, UNAMI continued to support the activities of the Commission's women empowerment team, including through workshops held in Erbil, Najaf and Basrah. Participants discussed issues encountered by women electoral staff and efforts to promote increased participation by women in voter registration and public outreach activities.

52. In October and November, UNAMI held workshops in Sulaymaniyah and Dahuk with civil society organisations to promote the electoral participation of women, young people, minorities and persons with disabilities.

53. On 4 October, the Federal Supreme Court published its ruling of 27 September, in which it had declared unconstitutional the provision in the law granting exclusive authority to the Independent High Elections and Referendum Commission of the Kurdistan Region of Iraq to organize parliamentary elections in the Region. The Court had found that the provision violated the constitutional articles on the powers of the federal Independent High Electoral Commission. The ruling implies that the federal Commission should be the central authority to set the rules and regulations of any electoral process in the Region. Following the ruling, UNAMI met with the federal Commission's Chairperson, its legal committee and the President of the Federal Supreme Court on 4, 5 and 11 October, respectively. Discussions with Commission representatives were focused on the implications of the Federal Supreme Court ruling, including the need to promote increased cooperation and procedural consistency among electoral institutions.

54. On 4 December, the Prime Minister hosted a meeting with the Speaker of the Council of Representatives and the Chairperson of the Commission on the requirements for organizing provincial council elections within the timeframe indicated in the approved government programme. On 15 December, the Commission sent a letter to the Prime Minister indicating the budgetary requirement and other support needed for holding the elections. The Commission also indicated that the budget needed to be appropriated by 4 January 2023 and the possible amendments to the electoral law finalized by 1 February 2023 to proceed with the electoral preparations.

C. Human rights and rule of law developments and activities

55. From 1 September to 31 December, UNAMI documented 32 incidents resulting in at least 84 civilian casualties (28 dead, including 11 children and 2 women, and 56 injured, including 14 children and 8 women). The majority of the civilian casualties were caused by indirect mortar and rocket fire, explosive remnants of war and improvised explosive devices.

56. During the same period, the country task force on monitoring and reporting verified 42 grave violations against 38 children, primarily incidents of killing and maiming, but also the recruitment and use of one girl and two boys by PKK; one sexual violence-related violation against one girl by Da'esh; and one attack on a school by the Iranian Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps.

57. From 12 to 24 November, a delegation of the Committee on Enforced Disappearances visited Iraq at the invitation of the Government, meeting with government officials, victims' families, civil society organizations and members of the diplomatic corps. At the end of the visit, the delegation published its preliminary findings after sharing them with the Government, calling on Iraq to take urgent action to include enforced disappearance as an autonomous offence in national legislation.

58. In October and November, UNAMI and the Iraqi Women Journalists Forum conducted 18 online dialogues with at least 150 women journalists, young influencers and bloggers to promote understanding of the gender dimensions of the challenges they face in their work. From 18 to 21 November, UNAMI held a four-day train-the-trainer course for 19 participants focused on gender mainstreaming and the online and offline safety of women journalists.

59. On 2 November, to commemorate the International Day to End Impunity for Crimes against Journalists, UNAMI held a round table in Baghdad with 13 journalists, including two women, to discuss the challenges facing members of their profession and media workers and to strategize about advocacy options to increase respect for the right to freedom of expression.

60. On 31 October, UNAMI released a manual on online protection and digital security for human rights defenders in partnership with the Iraqi Network for Social Media, a non-governmental organization promoting digital rights. The guide provides users of digital technology, particularly human rights defenders and journalists, with practical information on how to mitigate online risks, protect their privacy and data, and preserve their rights and freedoms online. Given its global relevance and technical applicability, the manual and training package has also been shared with other United Nations human rights field presences.

61. In October and November, UNAMI conducted workshops in Baghdad, Basrah, Mosul and Najaf with civil society activists, journalists and human rights defenders on improving digital security and recognizing and countering hate speech online. The workshops were attended by 126 participants, including 54 women. In addition, UNAMI organized a train-the-trainer workshop in Sulaymaniyah aimed at expanding the network of experts in enhancing protection from online threats.

62. In November and December, UNAMI held workshops in Baghdad, Basrah and Najaf with the human rights committee of the Iraqi Bar Association to increase the capacity of pro bono lawyers to conduct advocacy and provide effective legal assistance to journalists and civil society representatives. A total of 60 participants, including 22 women, attended the workshops.

63. During the reporting period, UNAMI, in cooperation with the United Nations Development Programme and with the support of the federal Supreme Judicial Council and of the Judicial Council of the Kurdistan Region of Iraq, initiated a trial programme to monitor investigative hearings in major corruption cases. The aim of the programme was to identify lessons learned and promote best practices in improving judicial accountability for corruption by formulating evidence-based recommendations to the Government.

64. To promote the protection of the human rights of ethnic and religious minorities and enhance social cohesion, UNAMI held workshops in Baghdad, Basrah, Erbil, Kirkuk and Mosul, attended by 75 young people, including 25 young women, from various religious and ethnic groups. The participants were trained in a range of visual media techniques that can be used to promote human rights advocacy and awareness.

65. To launch the year marking the seventy-fifth anniversary of the Universal Declaration on Human Rights, UNAMI, in collaboration with minority community representatives, linguistic experts, academics, civil society organizations and human rights defenders, completed the translation of the Declaration into eight minority languages, namely Avestan, Faili Kurdish, Kaka'i (Mancho), Sabeian Mandeian, Shabak, Sumerian, Turkmen and Yazidi. On 10 December, UNAMI also facilitated celebrations with civil society across the country to mark Human Rights Day.

66. On 18 December, to mark the thirtieth anniversary of the adoption of the Declaration on the Rights of Persons Belonging to National or Ethnic, Religious and Linguistic Minorities, UNAMI held a high-level discussion on safeguarding the rights of minorities in Iraq accompanied by a cultural exhibition on diversity and the preservation of minorities' heritage. Participants included government officials, religious leaders, media representatives and representatives of component groups.

67. In line with efforts to implement Security Council resolutions [1325 \(2000\)](#) and [1820 \(2008\)](#) on women and peace and security, in October and November, UNAMI conducted focus group discussions with more than 110 women survivors of conflict-related sexual violence in camps hosting internally displaced persons in Dahuk Governorate to better understand their living conditions and empower them to rebuild their lives and support other survivors.

D. Humanitarian assistance, stabilization and development

68. The humanitarian country team in Iraq worked on the development of a humanitarian transition strategy for 2023, focusing on the remaining humanitarian needs while work on the transition from humanitarian to development aid continued. In that context, the United Nations country team advocated for the federal Government and the Kurdistan Regional Government to take over services in camps for internally displaced persons as part of a durable solutions strategy. As a first step towards ensuring that internally displaced persons receive the same services as Iraqi citizens, the International Labour Organization, the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) and the World Food Programme held consultations with the Government on social protection reform aimed at including internally displaced persons into the social safety net.

69. On 31 December, approximately 1.17 million persons remained internally displaced in Iraq, including 180,000 persons hosted in 25 camps administered by the Kurdistan Region of Iraq and one camp in Ninawa Governorate, while others lived in informal (camp) settings. Approximately 990,000 people (internally displaced persons and returnees) were in acute need of humanitarian assistance.

70. In October and November, humanitarian partners reported five access-related incidents, all of which were categorized as administrative restrictions on the movement of humanitarian organizations. This represents a 38 per cent decrease in the number of reported access restrictions in comparison with the previous reporting period, and an 80 per cent decrease in comparison with the parallel two-month period in 2021 (five incidents compared with 25 incidents).

71. On 31 December, the 2022 humanitarian response plan was 67 per cent funded, having received \$267 million out of the \$400 million required to meet the needs of the 990,000 people in acute need of humanitarian assistance.

72. Members of the United Nations country team continued to support the Government-led repatriation of Iraqi nationals from camps in the north-east of the Syrian Arab Republic. In October, a group of 158 Iraqi families (659 individuals), the majority of whom were women, children and elderly persons, arrived from Hawl camp to the Jad'ah 1 camp in Ninawa Governorate. Since May 2021, a total of 914 households (3,742 individuals) have been relocated to Jad'ah 1 camp. Between July and November 2022, 204 households (803 individuals) departed Jad'ah 1 camp to return to their areas of origin or other out-of-camp locations, predominantly in Anbar, Kirkuk, Ninawa and Erbil Governorates. In addition, the International Organization for Migration (IOM) completed site expansion works at Jad'ah 1 to accommodate an additional 500 households, while the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees and its partners continued to facilitate the issuance of civil and legal documentation to Jad'ah 1 camp residents. At the end of November, a total of 259 civil identification cards, 30 nationality certificates and three marriage certificates had been issued by the Government of Iraq, while 110 birth certificates, 20 marriage certificates and 275 unified identification cards were being processed.

73. From 30 October to 1 November, the first meeting of the technical working group for implementation of the Global Framework for United Nations Support on Syrian Arab Republic and Iraq Third Country National Returnees was held by the Government of Iraq and, for the United Nations, Co-Chairs IOM and UNICEF. The Working Group facilitates collaboration across and between the Government of Iraq and the United Nations on all aspects related to the return of Iraqi nationals from the north-east of the Syrian Arab Republic. The working group has four task forces on, respectively: (a) legal protection for children; (b) security and accountability for adults; (c) rehabilitation and transitional services; and (d) reintegration. The task forces are chaired by Government counterparts and, respectively, UNICEF, the Office

of Counter-Terrorism, IOM and the United Nations Development Programme. They held their first working meetings as part of the same event.

74. IOM continued to support the provision of primary health-care services to internally displaced persons in eight locations (six camps and two out-of-camp facilities), through operational support, the procurement of essential medicine and capacity-building for medical staff.

75. Meanwhile, the Deputy Special Representative, Resident and Humanitarian Coordinator, together with relevant members of the United Nations country team, continued to underline that any closure of camps for internally displaced persons should occur in a phased and well-managed manner, and only if the conditions for voluntary, durable returns are met, including physical safety and security, access to basic services and livelihood opportunities.

76. The Mine Action Service cleared a total of 1,281,587 square metres and rendered safe 7,072 explosive ordnance devices in Anbar, Basrah and Ninawa Governorates. The Service continued to build national mine action capacity, enabling two national organizations to gain full accreditation to conduct clearance operations with 25 per cent of the staff consisting of women. The Service continued to support national mine action authorities in reaching a stage at which they could fully manage a nationally led mine action response. Going forward, an Iraqi government mine action budget for clearance activities that is transparently spent and allocated will be crucial for the sector as a whole and for continued progress, as international funding is declining.

77. UNICEF engaged with partners to improve governance, financing and accountability of water, sanitation and hygiene services, providing more than 2 million people with access to safely managed water services and half a million people with access to safely managed sanitation services.

78. The United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) and the University of Mosul organized a conference entitled “Education for peace in Iraq” under the project “Gendered approach to preventing violent extremism”, which is funded by the Government of Canada. The conference saw the launch of the UNESCO Chair on Preventing Violent Extremism and Fostering a Culture of Peace at the University of Mosul. The conference brought together more than 500 education stakeholders to deliberate on the peacebuilding role of education. The proceedings will inform the forthcoming report of UNESCO on the state of education for peace in Iraq.

79. In the course of four weeks in October and November, UNESCO held workshops with technical universities and schools to develop new curricula. Between 22 and 26 November, UNESCO, in cooperation with the International Labour Organization and the United Nations Human Settlements Programme (UN-Habitat), and with the participation of Iraqi universities, held a workshop to strengthen higher institutions of technical education in Iraq, attended by 57 participants.

80. On 27 December, the Council of Ministers adopted a legal decree to recognize Yazidis’ land rights in Sinjar District. The decree, which was drafted jointly by the Prime Minister’s Office and UN-Habitat, grants land ownership and property rights in 11 collective townships (mujamma‘at) in Sinjar District that were allocated to the Yazidi minority in 1975 but never formalized. The decree will facilitate the registration of Yazidi land rights and will convert the occupancy certificates of Yazidis to full land ownership titles issued by UN-Habitat.

81. Meanwhile, the United Nations Environment Programme continued to support Iraq in combating climate change, loss of biodiversity and pollution. Among other initiatives, the Programme provided support to Iraq in declaring its first two protected

areas, developing its national adaptation plan, implementing multilateral environment agreements through an integrated environmental information system and developing its national strategy for environmental pollution reduction.

82. In order to assist the Government of Iraq in its fight against corruption, UNAMI and the United Nations country team submitted a joint paper to the Office of the Prime Minister in December with proposals for increased United Nations support in that area. Potential avenues of assistance included strengthening the existing anti-corruption architecture, providing additional investigative capacity, reinforcing efforts made by Iraq to recover illicitly acquired assets, enacting essential anti-corruption legislation and promoting e-governance.

IV. Security and operational issues

A. Update on security arrangements

83. To enable United Nations operations, the Department of Safety and Security continued to carry out its monitoring activities, adjust security measures and contingency plans, liaise with host Government authorities and disseminate advisories to inform staff of changes in the security environment.

84. The Department supported an average of 45 field missions per day across the country, all at risk levels assessed as medium or high. Close coordination with the host Government continued to ensure the necessary security support for United Nations operations.

B. UNAMI facilities, logistics, aviation, financial and legal issues

85. Refurbishment work at the regional offices in Erbil was completed on 11 December, while projects at other regional offices and the United Nations Guard Unit camp continued, all under strict health and security protocols.

86. UNAMI completed its coronavirus disease (COVID-19) vaccination campaign and made arrangements with a local hospital in Baghdad for the administration of additional booster doses for staff.

87. Furthermore, UNAMI adopted an environmental programme for 2022–2023 to minimize the carbon footprint of UNAMI-managed compounds in Iraq. The aim of the programme is to increase the use of renewable energy by 50 per cent.

V. Observations

88. I welcome the formation of a new Government in Iraq and the new Government's intent to address long-standing challenges facing the people of Iraq. The prioritization of much-needed reforms aimed at delivering concrete, sustainable and inclusive solutions is an important step towards promoting stability, which will be vital when responding to the demands and aspirations of the people of Iraq. I therefore reiterate my call on all political actors to support reform efforts, including by addressing corruption, fostering the rule of law, ensuring accountability and implementing key reform measures without further delay.

89. The appointment of three women to the Government is an important step towards inclusive governance. I urge the Government of Iraq to build on this momentum to further broaden the meaningful participation of women in political decision-making, including by appointing more women to leadership positions. I am

encouraged by the emphasis placed on women's empowerment in the government programme and hope that that agenda will be endowed with the appropriate resources.

90. I welcome the recent steps taken by the federal Government and the Kurdistan Regional Government to address outstanding issues between them. Building on these first steps, it will be important to regularly engage in an institutionalized and structured dialogue to reach durable and constitutionally based agreements. The United Nations stands ready to support such a dialogue.

91. The holding of timely elections is a basic democratic principle and an essential element in meeting public expectations for a peaceful and orderly transfer of power. I therefore encourage the authorities of the Kurdistan Region of Iraq to prepare the ground and create an environment conducive to the conduct of regional parliamentary elections in the interest of the peoples of the Kurdistan Region.

92. I appreciate the efforts made by the Government of Iraq to build on previous initiatives to foster Iraqi security and stability through regional dialogue. Full respect for the principles of sovereignty and territorial integrity of States and the principle of good-neighbourly relations is essential at all times. It is incumbent upon all concerned to create an environment conducive to such a dialogue by exercising maximum restraint and avoiding regional escalation.

93. Iraq has shown itself to be an advocate for domestic and international efforts to mitigate, or to adapt to, the impact of environmental challenges and climate change. As that impact does not stop at borders, I strongly encourage strengthening regional dialogue and cooperation within that context. The United Nations remains prepared to provide advice, support and assistance.

94. The visit to Iraq of the Committee on Enforced Disappearances demonstrated the Government's commitment to addressing the issue of enforced disappearances. I encourage the Government to act promptly on the Committee's recommendations, in particular by adopting legislation criminalizing enforced disappearance, carrying out search efforts to locate disappeared persons and securing justice and reparations for victims.

95. I call on the Council of Representatives to accelerate its consideration of the draft anti-domestic violence law, which, if adopted, would be an essential tool for preventing and responding to domestic violence, as well as for promoting accountability.

96. I commend the continued commitment of the Government of Iraq to repatriating its citizens from the north-east of the Syrian Arab Republic. Systematic and constructive engagement on this issue, by all relevant actors, remains critical to the long-term success of that Iraqi-led process. To achieve sustainable reintegration, it is important to create better livelihood conditions for repatriated men, women and children, including with regard to education, health, and child protection.

97. The United Nations remains committed to addressing residual humanitarian needs, and the transition from humanitarian to development assistance continues. This is best achieved through inclusive, sustainable development, as set out in the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. I call for a renewed commitment to and investment in the United Nations Sustainable Development Cooperation Framework 2020–2024 for Iraq.

98. Lastly, I would like to thank my Special Representative for Iraq and Head of UNAMI, Jeanine Hennis-Plasschaert, and the United Nations staff in Iraq for their continued dedication to implementing the Organization's mandate under challenging circumstances.