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Joint Submission to the UN Universal Periodic Review

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1. Introduction

1.1 The Gulf Centre for Human Rights (GCHR) is an independent, non-profit civil society organisation (CSO) founded in April 2011. GCHR provides support and protection to human rights defenders in the MENA region to promote human rights, including the rights to freedom of association, peaceful assembly and expression.

1.2 INSM for Digital Rights, established in 2011, advocates for a free, open, diverse, and safe internet in Iraq. As a non-profit CSO, they empower Iraqis to navigate the digital landscape securely. Their mission is to ensure citizens can freely express themselves online without unwarranted surveillance or restrictions, envisioning a future of digital empowerment and privacy.

1.3 The Iraqi Observatory for Human Rights (IOHR) is a non-profit, Iraq-based organisation with a large network of 70 volunteers including activists, journalists, and human rights advocates in all governorates of Iraq. It was founded in 2014.

1.4 FIDH - International Federation for Human Rights is an international human rights CSO federating 192 organisations from 117 countries. Since 1922, FIDH has been defending all civil, political, economic, social and cultural rights as set out in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights.

1.5 CIVICUS is a global alliance of CSOs and activists dedicated to strengthening citizen action and civil society worldwide. Founded in 1993, CIVICUS has members in more than 180 countries around the world.

1.6 Metro Center for Defending Journalists' Rights was established in 2009 by a group of journalists and human rights advocates, supported by the Institute for War and Peace Reporting (IWPR), aiming at monitoring the free press situation in the Kurdistan Region of Iraq.

1.7 In this submission, the authors examine the Government of Iraq's compliance with its international human rights obligations to create and maintain a safe and enabling environment for civil society. Specifically, we analyse Iraq's fulfilment of the rights to the freedoms of association, peaceful assembly, and expression, and its unwarranted restrictions on human rights defenders (HRDs) and civil society since its previous UPR examination in November 2019. We assess Iraq's implementation of recommendations received during the 3rd UPR cycle and provide follow-up recommendations.

1.8 During the 3rd UPR cycle, the Government of Iraq received 26 recommendations relating to civic space. All 26 recommendations were accepted.[1] An evaluation of a range of sources in this submission demonstrates that the Government of Iraq has not fully implemented recommendations relating to civic space. Severe implementation gaps were found regarding the rights to freedom of opinion and expression and peaceful assembly, and there is an acute lack of accountability, in particular for grave violations committed during 2019 and 2020 nationwide protests.

[1] See Annex: Assessment of implementation of civic space recommendations under the 3rd cycle

1.9 We are deeply concerned by the level of extrajudicial killings, enforced disappearances and targeted harassment of HRDs, often carried out with impunity.

1.10 We are further alarmed by existing and proposed laws restricting the rights to freedom of opinion and expression and peaceful assembly, the misapplication of laws on defamation and insult, and the continued targeted harassment of journalists.

1.11 As a result of these issues, civic space in Iraq is currently classified as CLOSED by the CIVICUS Monitor, indicating the existence of severe civic space restrictions.[2] This submission examines Iraq's implementation of UPR recommendations and compliance with international human rights standards related to the following:

- Section 2 concerns freedom of association.
- Section 3 concerns the protection of HRDs, civil society activists and journalists.
- Section 4 concerns freedom of expression, media freedom and access to information.
- Section 5 concerns freedom of peaceful assembly.
- Section 6 contains recommendations to address the concerns raised and advance implementation of recommendations under the 3rd cycle.
- Section 7 contains an annex on the implementation of 3rd cycle UPR recommendations related to civic space.

2. Freedom of association

2.1 During Iraq's examination under the 3rd UPR cycle, the government received 5 recommendations on the right to freedom of association and creating an enabling environment for CSOs. Among other recommendations, the government committed to ensuring that it would: "Adopt measures to protect freedom of assembly and association… (Italy)," and "Respect the right to freedom of peaceful assembly and association… (Switzerland)." Of the recommendations received, the government accepted all five. However, as evidenced below, the government has failed to take adequate measures to realise these recommendations.

2.2 Article 38 of the Iraqi Constitution guarantees the right to the freedom of association.[3] Article 22 of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR), which Iraq ratified in 1971, also guarantees freedom of association. Despite these commitments, the government has failed to protect civil society activists from targeted harassment.

2.3 The government unduly restricts the activities of civil society. The NGO Directorate, affiliated with the General Secretariat of the Council of Ministers, is in charge of all aspects of the work of CSOs in Iraq, including registration.[4] In recent years it has placed increasing restrictions on the work of CSOs in Iraq, including putting some independent

[2] CIVICUS Monitor: IRAQ, https://monitor.civicus.org/country/iraq/

[3] Iraq 2005 Constitution, see https://www.constituteproject.org/constitution/Iraq_2005

[4] See https://www.ngoao.gov.iq/ and (in Arabic) details about registration here: https://www.ngoao.gov.iq/PageViewer.aspx?id=38

CSOs on a blacklist for speaking out about certain human rights violations.

2.4 Some Iraqi CSOs fear reprisals if they put their names on submissions to Iraq's UPR. There have been statements by politicians and defamation campaigns against CSOs, including calls to amend the NGOs law to give the NGO Directorate the authority to dissolve any CSOs if they touch upon the sovereignty of the state and national security.

2.5 The government's arbitrary bans on certain language and terms have negatively affected CSOs, in particular those working on LGBTQI+ and women's rights. For example, in August 2023, Iraqi Communications and Media Commission (CMC) banned media outlets, social media companies, and phone and internet companies from using the terms "homosexuality" and "gender".[5]

3. Harassment, intimidation and attacks against human rights defenders, civil society activists and journalists

3.1 Under Iraq's previous UPR examination, the government received nine recommendations on the protection of HRDs, journalists and civil society representatives. The government accepted all these recommendations including to "Revise the Protection of Journalists Law No. 21 of 2011 with a view to removing all restrictions on the freedom of the press and ensuring full protection of journalists and other media workers (Denmark);'' and to "Guarantee freedom of expression and opinion by protecting the action of journalists, media professionals and human rights defenders from all use of violence and threats by security forces (Argentina)." Despite accepting these recommendations, the government has failed to fully implement them.

3.2 Article 12 of the UN Declaration on Human Rights Defenders mandates states to take the necessary measures to ensure the protection of HRDs. The ICCPR guarantees the rights to freedom of association, peaceful assembly and expression. In spite of these protections, civil society actors in Iraq have been consistently targeted for their work since Iraq's last UPR.

3.3 The following sections give examples of enforced disappearances, extrajudicial killings, attempted killings, torture, ill treatment and harassment of civil society actors in Iraq.[6]

Enforced Disappearance

3.4 The UN Committee on Enforced Disappearances reported in 2023 that following its visit to Iraq in 2022, it "remained deeply concerned that the practice of enforced disappearance has been widespread in much of the territory of Iraq over different periods, and that impunity and revictimisation prevail."[7] The UN Human Rights

[5] Iraq: Authorities must immediately reverse media ban on the terms "homosexuality" and "gender", Amnesty International, 9 August 2023, https://www.amnesty.org/en/latest/news/2023/08/iraq-authorities-must-immediately-reverse-media-ban-on-the-terms-homosexuality-and-gender/.

[6] For further examples, see GCHR's 32 Reports on human rights violations in Iraq that it has published since 2019, available here: https://www.gc4hr.org/ar/iraq/

[7] Report of the Committee on Enforced Disappearances on its visit to Iraq under Article 33 of the Convention, CED/C/IRQ/VR/1 (Findings), Committee on Enforced Disappearances, 19 April 2023, para 33.

Committee recommended in 2022 that Iraq: "Ensure the swift adoption of the bill on the protection of persons from enforced disappearance, and take all necessary measures to ensure the cessation of this practice."[8] However, the practice has continued since Iraq's last UPR. GCHR has documented the following cases:

- On 29 March 2020, civil society activist **Abdulmasih Romeo Jean Sarkis** was arbitrarily arrested near Al-Khilani Square and remains missing.[9]
- On 19 September 2020, civil society activist **Sajjad Al-Iraqi** (**Al-Mushrifawi**) was kidnapped in Nasiriyah.[10]
- On 24 October 2021, civil society activist and journalist **Bassem Al-Zaak** was kidnapped while broadcasting a demonstration against the election results, and remains missing.[11]

Extrajudicial Killings and Attempted Killings

3.5 Numerous extrajudicial killings were highlighted in Iraq's last UPR cycle on 11 November 2019. However, on 21 August 2020, 18 diplomatic missions in Iraq expressed "deep concern" about the escalation of violence against civil society activists, "in particular the assassinations that targeted activists in the city of Basra and Baghdad under a systematic campaign of overt threats and intimidation."[12] Since 2019, assassinations and impunity have continued, as documented by GCHR:

- On 25 November 2019, student civil society activist **Zahra Ali Al-Qarralucy** was kidnapped and severely tortured by unknown perpetrators. She died in hospital the next day.[13]
- On 15 December 2019, **Thaer Karim Al-Tayeb,** a leading protest organiser in Diwaniah, was severely wounded when his car was attacked. He died on 24 December 2019.
- On 20 January 2020 in Almara, human rights defender, producer and actor **Abdulqudus Qasim** and human rights lawyer **Karar Adel** were assassinated.[14]
- On 06 July 2020, **Dr. Hisham Al-Hashemi** was assassinated in Baghdad. His killer was sentenced to death in May 2023. The Federal Court of Cassation annulled

[8] UN Human Rights Committee, Concluding Observations on Iraq, 16 August 2022, CCPR/C/IRQ/CO/6
[9] GCHR's 29th Report on Human Rights Violations in Iraq, GCHR, 22 August 2023, https://www.gc4hr.org/gchrs-29th-periodic-report-on-human-rights-violations-in-iraq/
[10] Ibid.
[11] Ibid.
[12] These were Australia, Belgium, Bulgaria, Canada, Croatia, the Czech Republic, Finland, France, Germany Hungary, Italy, the Netherlands, Poland, Romania, Spain, Sweden, the United Kingdom, and the European Union. See: 'GCHR's 8th Report on Human Rights Violations in Iraq, GCHR, 24 September 2020, https://www.gc4hr.org/eighth-periodic-report-on-violations-during-popular-demonstrations-part-1/ and UNAMI, 21 August 2020, https://news.un.org/en/story/2020/08/1070742
[13] A common pattern emerges of kidnapping and assassinating peaceful protesters, civil society activists and human rights defenders, GCHR, 20 December2019, https://www.gc4hr.org/a-common-pattern-emerges-of-kidnapping-and-assassinating-peaceful-protesters-civil-society-activists-and-human-rights-defenders/
[14] The Iraqi constitution and the current human rights situation in the country, GCHR, 18 May 2024, see https://www.gc4hr.org/the-iraqi-constitution-and-the-current-human-rights-situation-in-the-country/

the sentence and referred the case to the Central Investigation Court.[15]

- On 19 August 2020, human rights defender **Dr. Riham Yaqoub** was assassinated following a massive online hate campaign against her.[16]
- On 10 March 2021, poet **Jaseb Al-Heliji**, father of human rights lawyer Ali Al-Heliji, (who was kidnapped in October 2019 and remains missing,) was assassinated in Al-Amara.[17]
- On 30 June 2022, civil society activist **Jamil Suleiman Ailo Al-Zarro** was assassinated in Sinjar following threats. He had called for the removal of all armed forces from Sinjar.[18]
- On 16 October 2023, civil society activist **Ali Mahmoud Abboud Al-Sabawi** was assassinated in Baghdad.
- On 07 December 2023, **Fadel Al-Marsoumi,** founder of Al-Da'i Party, a party demanding reform, was assassinated.[19]
- On 15 February 2024, transgender blogger **Salam Musafer** (**Simsim**) was fatally stabbed in Diwaniyah after returning from Turkey to visit family.[20] On 21 February 2024, the Diwaniyah Police announced the arrest of a suspect.[21]
- On 22 February 2024, writer, journalist and publisher **Fakhri Karim**, President of Al-Mada Foundation for Media, Culture and Arts, survived an assassination attempt.[22]

Torture and Ill Treatment

3.6 In 2022, Iraq came under the scrutiny of the UN Committee Against Torture, which concluded that torture remains a widespread and systematic practice. In October 2022, GCHR published "Patterns of Torture in Iraq"[23] with the following examples:

- On 01 February 2023, prominent environmental activist **Jassim Al-Asadi** was kidnapped and tortured. He was released weeks later.[24]
- On 12 February 2021, four masked gunmen kidnapped civil society activist **Ali Naseer Allawy** and tortured him while interrogating him about protesters**.**[25]

Targeted Lawsuits and Harassment Against Human Rights Defenders

[15] Ibid.
[16] Ibid.
[17] Ibid.
[18] Ibid.
[19] GCHR's 31st Report on Human Rights Violations in Iraq, GCHR, 12 January 2024, https://www.gc4hr.org/gchrs-31st-periodic-report-on-human-rights-violations-in-iraq/
[20] GCHR's 32nd Report on Human Rights Violations in Iraq, 20 March 2024, https://www.gc4hr.org/gchrs-32nd-periodic-report-on-human-rights-violations-in-iraq/
[21] https://web.facebook.com/photo/?fbid=430844005938494&set=pcb.430844065938488
[22] GCHR's 32nd Report on Human Rights Violations in Iraq, 20 March 2024, https://www.gc4hr.org/gchrs-32nd-periodic-report-on-human-rights-violations-in-iraq/
[23] Gulf Centre for Human Rights launches report on "Patterns of Torture in Iraq", GCHR, 6 October 2022, https://www.gc4hr.org/gulf-centre-for-human-rights-launches-report-on-patterns-of-torture-in-iraq/
[24] GCHR's 27th Report on Human Rights Violations in Iraq, 27 March 2023 https://www.gc4hr.org/gchrs-27th-periodic-report-on-human-rights-violations-in-iraq/
[25] The Iraqi constitution and the current human rights situation in the country, GCHR, 18 May 2024, https://www.gc4hr.org/the-iraqi-constitution-and-the-current-human-rights-situation-in-the-country/

- Journalist **Yasser Al-Hamdani,** who reports on corruption and documents attacks against journalists**,** was taken into custody on 21 February 2023 and charged with 'defaming an Iraqi official', but was acquitted and released on 30 May 2023. He was rearrested for five days and mistreated in custody in October 2023.
- On 9 July 2023, environmental activist and artist, **Ali Abbas (Larry),** was illegally arrested and forced to sign a pledge to cease his activities.[26]
- Since the start of the popular movement in October 2019, women's human rights defender **Sarah Jassim Mohammed** received repeated threats to kill or disfigure her in order to prevent her from continuing her women's rights work.[27]
- In December 2023, the Iraq Center for Human Rights announced[28] that a judicial summons was issued against its president, **Ali Al-Abadi**, under Article 433 of the Iraqi Penal Code[29] regarding defamation, due to public statements he made about torture in Iraqi prisons.[30]
- On 07 March 2024, civil society activist **Karar Al-Zirjawi,** prominent in the national protest movement, was arrested in Nasiriyah due to a defamation lawsuit filed against him by a Member of Parliament. The lawsuit was later dropped and he was released.[31]
- According to a survey published in 2023, 41% of women journalists have been subjected to harassment while working. As a result, 15% of those surveyed changed their jobs, and 5% left their profession permanently.[32]

4. Freedom of opinion and expression, media freedom and access to information

4.1 Under the 3rd UPR cycle, the government received nine recommendations relating to freedom of expression, media freedom and access to information. For example, the government pledged to "Ensure that the rights of freedom of expression, freedom of the press, and peaceful assembly are fully respected and protected, both online and offline (Canada)'' and "Guarantee freedom of peaceful demonstration, opinion and expression and freedom of the press by removing restrictions on access to the Internet and local

[26] GCHR's 29th Report on Human Rights Violations in Iraq, GCHR, 22 August 2023, https://www.gc4hr.org/gchrs-29th-periodic-report-on-human-rights-violations-in-iraq/

[27] GCHR's 28th Report on Human Rights Violations in Iraq, 4 July 2023, https://www.gc4hr.org/gchrs-28th-periodic-report-on-human-rights-violations-in-iraq/

[28] https://www.facebook.com/photo/?fbid=331229623000821&set=a.229384979851953

[29] https://www.refworld.org/docid/452524304.html Article 433 of the Iraqi Penal Code states: (1) Defamation is the imputation to another in public of a particular matter which if true, would expose such person to punishment or cause him to be scorned by society. Any person who defames another is punishable by detention plus a fine or by one of those penalties. If such defamation is published in a newspaper or publication or other press medium it is considered an aggravating circumstance. (2) Such person is not permitted to establish the proof of his imputation unless that imputation is directed at a public official or agent or public deputy or he is carrying out an act in the public interest or if such imputation is connected with the office or employment of the aggrieved person but if he establishes the proof of all imputations made, then there is no offence.

[30] GCHR's 31st Report on Human Rights Violations in Iraq, GCHR, 12 January 2024, https://www.gc4hr.org/gchrs-31st-periodic-report-on-human-rights-violations-in-iraq/

[31] GCHR's 32nd Report on Human Rights Violations in Iraq, 20 March 2024, https://www.gc4hr.org/gchrs-32nd-periodic-report-on-human-rights-violations-in-iraq/

[32] GCHR, Women Journalists under the Guillotine in Iraq, media directors mastering harassment, GCHR, 2 November 2023, https://www.gc4hr.org/women-journalists-under-the-guillotine-in-iraq-media-directors-mastering-harassment/

and international news sites and by releasing any person detained for the exercise of these rights (France)". All recommendations received were accepted. However, the government did not take effective measures to implement these recommendations.

4.2 Article 19 of the ICCPR guarantees the right to freedom of expression and opinion. Furthermore, Article 38 of Iraq's Constitution guarantees the right to the freedom of expression. However, both in law and in practice, the right to freedom of expression in Iraq is significantly restricted.

4.3 A key threat to freedom of expression in Iraq is the Draft Law on Freedom of Expression and Assembly, still before Parliament as of July 2024. It was first tabled in March 2023. CSOs consider this a repressive law that seeks to "restrict the public freedoms of citizens,"[33] specifically freedoms of expression, the press and assembly, as guaranteed by Iraq's Constitution. In 2023, GCHR supported Iraqi CSOs to launch a policy paper containing recommendations to amend Articles 1, 3, 5, 7 and 13 of the law based on extensive consultations with civil society and government representatives across Iraq, which proved fruitful.[34] However, the law remains of significant concern, and a new Coalition to Defend Freedom of Expression was established on 12 February 2024 to campaign for a better law.[35] In February 2024, the Human Rights Committee in the Iraqi Parliament revealed that the law was to be renamed the "Freedom of Assembly and Peaceful Protest" law, removing the term "freedom of expression." [36]

4.4 The restrictive draft Cybercrimes law was re-introduced in Parliament in November 2022. If adopted, the law would, in Article 21(3)(b), impose fines or imprisonment on "whoever infringes on any of the religious, moral, family, or social principles or values, or the sanctity of private life, in any way, through the information network or computers." Article 6(1) of the law imposed huge fines or even life imprisonment for "harming the reputation of the country", without specifying what this entails.[37] This broad language is clearly incompatible with the right to freedom of expression. The Government has indicated an unwillingness to amend the law by withdrawing it from the Committee tasked with amendments.

4.5 A number of articles in the 1969 Iraqi Penal Code criminalise expression, in particular, Articles 433, 434 and 226 on defamation and insult, which would result in fines and

[33] GCHR's 28th Report on Human Rights Violations in Iraq 4 July 2023, https://www.gc4hr.org/gchrs-29th-periodic-report-on-human-rights-violations-in-iraq/

[34] Policy Paper, Iraq's Draft Law of Freedom of Expression and Peaceful Assembly, SAMA Organisation, AL-NIDAL Association for Human Rights, October 2023, Iraqi-policy-paper-draft-law-Oct-2023-English.docx.pdf (gc4hr.org)

[35] Coalition for the Defense of Freedom of Expression in Iraq, Iraqi Observatory for Human Rights (IOHR), 26 February 2024, https://iohriq.org/ar/158-.html

[36] The Parliament Reveals the Latest Developments in the "Freedom of Assembly and Peaceful Demonstration" Law, Shafaq News Website, February 15, 2024. https://shafaq.com

[37] Why Iraq's cybercrimes draft law must be amended, Euro-Med Monitor, 8 January 2023 https://euromedmonitor.org/en/article/5506/Why-Iraq%E2%80%99s-cybercrimes-draft-law-must-be-amended

imprisonment.[38] Article 433 provides that when defamation is published in a newspaper or other publication, it is considered an aggravating circumstance. Article 434 states "Insult is the imputation to another of something dishonourable or disrespectful or the hurting of his feelings." This language is both far too broad and too subjective to conform to the right to freedom of expression. Insulting public officials, including the National Assembly, the government, the courts, armed forces, or other statutory bodies is punishable with a prison sentence of maximum seven years or a fine, according to Article 226.[39] Furthermore, authorities have used Article 403 of the 1969 Iraqi Penal Code, which criminalises publications that violate 'public integrity or decency', to stifle freedom of expression. In March 2023, GCHR, INSM and other CSOs condemned the use of Article 403 to crack down on free expression, after 14 people were prosecuted for publishing "indecent" or "immoral" content on social media since January 2023. Sentences ranged between six months to two years.[40]

4.6 In 2023, following a visit to Iraq, the High Commissioner for Human Rights, Volker Türk, expressed serious concerns about "a series of actions taken by people in positions of power – for example, bringing criminal defamation suits against journalists and civil society actors" that has created a chilling effect on freedom of expression. Türk further noted "reports of violence, intimidation and death threats against environmental activists, including by armed elements, stifling the open space for discussion that is so crucial to addressing these issues."[41]

4.7 The UN Human Rights Committee expressed similar concerns in 2022 about reports of free expression violations during demonstrations in 2019 and 2020, "including through repression of the coverage of the demonstrations by closing down media outlets and slowing down Internet speed;" and that "journalists and media workers were subjected to attacks and intimidation by both State and non-State actors, and were prevented by

[38] The full text of these articles are as follows: Article 433 states: "Defamation is the imputation to another in public of a particular matter which if true, would expose such person to punishment or cause him to be scorned by society. Any person who defames another is punishable by detention plus a fine or by one of those penalties. If such defamation is published in a newspaper or publication or other press medium it is considered an aggravating circumstance. (2) Such person is not permitted to establish the proof of his imputation unless that imputation is directed at a public official or agent or public deputy or he is carrying out an act in the public interest or if such imputation is connected with the office or employment of the aggrieved person but if he establishes the proof of all imputations made, then there is no offence. Article 434 states "Insult is the imputation to another of something dishonourable or disrespectful or the hurting of his feelings even though it does not include an imputation to him of a particular matter. Any person who insults another is punishable by a period of detention not exceeding 1 year plus a fine not exceeding 100 dinars or by one of those penalties. If such insult is published in a newspaper or publication or medium it is considered an aggravating circumstance."
Article 226 states: "Anyone who publicly insults the National Assembly, the government, the courts, the armed forces, or other statutory bodies, public authorities, official or semi-official departments or departments shall be punished by imprisonment for a period not exceeding seven years, imprisonment, or a fine."

[39] https://www.gc4hr.org/campaign-to-promote-freedom-of-expression-law-receives-boost-from-members-of-parliament/

[40] Joint Statement: Iraqi Authorities must Cease Chilling Crackdown on Free Speech by Access Now, Amnesty International, ARTICLE 19, Electronic Frontier Foundation (EFF), Gulf Centre for Human Rights (GCHR), Human Rights Watch, IFEX, INSM for Digital Rights in Iraq, Kandoo, Masaar- Technology and Law Community, SMEX, Pen Iraq, 7amleh, 3 March 2023, see https://www.amnesty.org/en/documents/mde14/6511/2023/en/

[41] UN Human Rights Chief Ends Visit to Iraq, August 2023, https://www.ohchr.org/en/statements/2023/08/un-human-rights-chief-ends-visit-iraq

security forces from covering stories."[42]

4.8 On 22 May 2023, the Minister of Culture and Youth published in the official Kurdistan Gazette 17 articles entitled No. (01) of 2023, which the Metro Center for Journalists' Rights and Advocacy criticised as designed to "restrict freedom of expression" because it contradicts the Press and Information Law and its strategic plan to protect human rights.[43]

4.9 According to a 2024 statement by the Coalition to Defend Freedom of Expression, the Acting Speaker of the Parliament Mohsen Al-Mandalawi issued a directive to the Parliament's Legal Department, encouraging lawsuits against any institution or individual that 'offends' the legislature or its members. The Coalition expressed concern that the loose term 'offends' will be misused and that this Directive was a "a clear indication that there are systematic attempts to undermine the freedom to express opinions."[44]

4.10 GCHR criticised new Regulations issued by the Presidency of the Iraqi Parliament in January 2024, which require journalists to wear uniforms, and states: "It is forbidden for them to roam in the corridors of the Council building or to conduct press interviews or photography."[45]

4.11 GCHR has documented the following examples of violations of freedom of opinion and expression and the targeted harassment of journalists and other civil society activists:[46]

- In October 2023, INSM network for Digital Rights published a report entitled Digital Violence against Women in Iraq, which found that women are disproportionately affected by digital violence in Iraq, including instances of threats, blackmail, and defamation, and that this particularly affects "women activists in the public sphere and human rights defenders."[47]
- In January 2023, the Ministry of Interior launched a platform called "Balgh" to report "harmful content" without specifying its definition, leading to arbitrary arrests of bloggers and content creators.[48]
- The Iraqi government exercises control over internet infrastructure and regularly restricts connectivity during times of protests or unrest. Iraqi authorities have admitted in the past to cutting internet access during national exams, elections,

[42] UN Human Rights Committee, Concluding Observations on Iraq, 16 August 2022, CCPR/C/IRQ/CO/6, para 32. https://tbinternet.ohchr.org/_layouts/15/treatybodyexternal/Download.aspx?symbolno=CCPR%2FC%2FIRQ%2FCO%2F6&Lang=en

[43] GCHR's 28th Report on Human Rights Violations in Iraq, GCHR, 4 July 2023, https://www.gc4hr.org/gchrs-28th-periodic-report-on-human-rights-violations-in-iraq/

[44] GCHR's 32nd Report on Human Rights Violations in Iraq, GCHR, 20 March 2024, https://www.gc4hr.org/gchrs-32nd-periodic-report-on-human-rights-violations-in-iraq/

[45] Ibid.

[46] For further examples, see GCHR's 32 Reports on human rights violations in Iraq that it has published since 2019, available here: https://www.gc4hr.org/iraq/

[47] Asia Abdelkarim Anwar, Walaa Ali Farhan, Tara Aziz, Digital violence against women in Iraq, IDRC INSM, Secdev Foundation, October 2023, https://insm-iq.org/en/publication/digital-violence-against-women-in-iraq

[48] Freedom on the Net 2023, IRAQ, Freedom House, June 2023, https://freedomhouse.org/country/iraq/freedom-net/2023

and mass demonstrations.[49]

- In February 2024, the first reading of the draft access-to-information law took place. The draft was considered by observers to be narrowing the proposed scope of freedom to access and disseminate information.[50]
- In February 2024, Irish Iraqi blogger and online activist **Yasser El-Juboori** was arrested without a warrant, beaten, and charged with violating Article 226 of the Publication Law. However, following a campaign that included pressure from the Irish Government, he was released on 29 February 2024.[51]
- On 14 January 2024, an armed group arrested political analyst **Mohammed Na'na Hassan** due to a complaint made against him by the Prime Minister linked to criticism he made on television.[52]
- The Ultra Iraq news website has been blocked inside Iraq since 28 November 2023.[53]
- On 12 September 2023, Najaf Guide newspaper denounced the threats directed at its editorial board member **Ahmed Al-Silawi** by a person associated with one of the political parties in Najaf Governorate.[54]
- On 24 August 2023, a journalist critical of corruption, **Islam Kashani,** was arrested at home in Zakho with no judicial warrant, and released on bail the next day.
- In December 2022, the Al-Rusafa Criminal Court sentenced civil society activist **Haider Hamid Finjan Al-Zaidi** to three years in prison under Article 226 of the Iraqi Penal Code.[55]
- On 02 June 2022, the Supreme Judicial Council issued an arrest warrant under Article 226 of the Iraqi Penal Code against writer and journalist **Sarmad Al-Taei**, after he criticised the judiciary in a talk show.[56]
- In July 2021, the Arabic Russia Today (RT) channel announced that security forces briefly arrested its correspondent, **Ashraf Mohammed Al-Azzawi**, on the pretext that RT's license in Baghdad had expired, and closed its office. His arrest was related to a social media post by RT's principal presenter **Salam Mosafir**, in which he said Iraqis "are grieving for electricity cuts and fires of corruption and neglect."[57]
- On 02 April 2020, the Media and Communications Commission suspended the license of Reuters News Agency for three months and fined them $21,000 for

[49] Ibid.
[50] https://www.newarab.com/news/iraqi-draft-law-under-fire-over-curbs-freedom-speech
[51] GCHR's 32nd Report on Human Rights Violations in Iraq, GCHR, 20 March 2024, https://www.gc4hr.org/gchrs-32nd-periodic-report-on-human-rights-violations-in-iraq/
[52] Ibid.
[53] GCHR's 31st Report on Human Rights Violations in Iraq, GCHR, 12 January 2024, https://www.gc4hr.org/gchrs-31st-periodic-report-on-human-rights-violations-in-iraq/
[54] GCHR's 30th Report on Human Rights Violations in Iraq 9 November 2023 https://www.gc4hr.org/gchrs-30th-periodic-report-on-human-rights-violations-in-iraq/
[55] GCHR's 25th Report on Human Rights Violations in Iraq, 16 December 2022 https://www.gc4hr.org/gchrs-25th-periodic-report-on-human-rights-violations-in-iraq/
[56] GCHR's 23rd Report on Human Rights Violations in Iraq, 24 June 2022 https://www.gc4hr.org/gchrs-23rd-periodic-report-on-human-rights-violations-in-iraq/
[57] GCHR's 16th Report on Human Rights Violations in Iraq 15 July 2021, https://www.gc4hr.org/gchrs-16th-periodic-report-on-human-rights-violations-in-iraq-during-the-popular-protests/

breaching media broadcasting regulations, after Reuters published a report that "The actual number of Coronavirus cases in Iraq exceeds the announced by thousands."[58]

5. Freedom of peaceful assembly

5.1 During Iraq's examination under the 3rd UPR cycle, the government received 16 recommendations on the right to the freedom of peaceful assembly. Among other recommendations, the government committed to "Cease and thoroughly investigate the use of excessive force by security forces and any other armed actors during the recent protests, including the killing of protesters, and ensure perpetrators are accountable (Canada);" "Ensure independent, transparent and impartial investigations into violence against and killings of civilians in the context of the ongoing protests (Germany);" "Adopt measures to protect freedom of assembly and association, in particular ensuring investigations into the cases of violence that have occurred during the ongoing demonstrations within the country (Italy);" and "Respect the right to freedom of peaceful assembly and association, investigate all alleged cases of excessive use of force and bring those responsible to justice (Switzerland)." All recommendations were accepted but, as evidenced below, the government has not implemented them.

5.2 Article 38 of the Iraqi Constitution guarantees the right to the freedom of peaceful assembly.[59] Article 21 of the ICCPR also guarantees this right.

5.3 As noted above, CSOs have expressed considerable concern about the draft law on freedom of expression and assembly. In relation to freedom of assembly, it restricts the rights of protesters to raise banners, chant slogans, or to make statements "contrary to public order of public morals" (Article 8); it denies school and university students to right to protest (Article 9) and it gives security forces the right to use force to disperse demonstrations if they "destabilise security".

5.4 After protests in October 2019, Iraqis continued to protest against poor living conditions due to corruption, lack of services, the proliferation of weapons, and the militia's control. Freedom of peaceful assembly is severely undermined by the use of excessive and lethal force by security forces, the arrest and judicial prosecution of protesters and protest organisers, and intimidation and harassment of protesters.

5.5 In its 2022 Concluding Observations on Iraq, the UN Human Rights Committee expressed concern that the right to peaceful assembly was "violated in the context of the demonstrations of 2019 and 2020, including through the use of excessive force against protestors by security forces, resulting in injuries and deaths, and alleged enforced disappearances" and it noted "with concern reports of reprisals against activists advocating for accountability and against judges and investigating officers involved in cases relating to violence in the demonstrations."[60]

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[58] GCHR's 4th Report on Human Rights Violations in Iraq, 10 April 2020, https://www.gc4hr.org/fourth-periodic-report-on-violations-during-the-ongoing-popular-demonstrations/

[59] Iraq 2005 Constitution, https://www.constituteproject.org/constitution/Iraq_2005

[60] UN Human Rights Committee, Concluding Observations on Iraq, 16 August 2022, CCPR/C/IRQ/CO/6, https://tbinternet.ohchr.org/_layouts/15/treatybodyexternal/Download.aspx?symbolno=CCPR%2FC%2FIRQ%2FCO%2F6&Lang=en

5.6 On 30 May 2021, the UN Assistance Mission for Iraq (UNAMI) issued its 6th report on demonstrations which concluded that there was "a lack of accountability with respect to the crimes perpetrated against protesters and critics by various armed elements." [61]

5.7 GCHR documented the following examples of violations of peaceful assembly:[62]

5.7.1 In March 2024, dozens of graduate engineers demonstrated in the city of Amara. The security forces used excessive force, beating people with batons to disperse the peaceful demonstration, resulting in the injury of a number of protesters.[63]

5.7.2 In February 2024, riot control forces in Basra Governorate attacked women engineers peacefully demonstrating and severely beat them with batons.[64]

5.7.3 In November 2023, dozens of educational and teaching staff working in the Kurdistan region demonstrated in Al-Tahrir Square in Baghdad. That day, security forces prevented a large number of teachers from crossing checkpoints in order to prevent them from participating in the demonstration.[65]

5.7.4 In October 2023, protesters gathered again throughout the country to call for accountability for the killing of protesters in October 2019 protests. However, security forces dispersed demonstrations, including in Al-Tahrir Square.[66]

5.7.5 In September 2023, four people were killed during protests in Kirkuk.[67]

5.7.6 In September 2021, police assaulted and arrested engineers during a demonstration in Al-Amarah, before releasing them that day. GCHR previously documented a similar attack on protesting engineers in October 2020.[68]

5.7.7 In June 2020, security forces fired live bullets and teargas at a demonstration in Hilla, wounding protesters.[69]

5.7.8 In March 2020, peaceful demonstrator **Ahmed Hassan Al-Lami** was fatally shot in the face by riot police with hunting rifles, in Al-Khilani Square.[70]

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[61] See https://iraq.un.org/sites/default/files/2021-05/UNAMI_Report_Accountability_for_Human_Rights_Violations_and_Abuses_300521.pdf All country reports from UNAMI can be accessed here: https://www.ohchr.org/en/documents-listing?field_entity_target_id[1365]=1365&sort_bef_combine=field_published_date_value_DESC

[62] For further examples, see GCHR's 32 Reports on human rights violations in Iraq that it has published since 2019, available here: https://www.gc4hr.org/ar/iraq/

[63] GCHR's 32nd Report on Human Rights Violations in Iraq, 20 March 2024, https://www.gc4hr.org/gchrs-32nd-periodic-report-on-human-rights-violations-in-iraq/

[64] Ibid.

[65] GCHR's 31st Report on Human Rights Violations in Iraq, GCHR, 12 January 2024, https://www.gc4hr.org/gchrs-31st-periodic-report-on-human-rights-violations-in-iraq/

[66] GCHR's 30th Report on Human Rights Violations in Iraq, 9 November 2023, https://www.gc4hr.org/gchrs-30th-periodic-report-on-human-rights-violations-in-iraq/

[67] CIVICUS Monitor, https://monitor.civicus.org/explore/atleast-4-killed-in-protests-amid-ethnic-tensions/

[68] GCHR's 18th Report on Human Rights Violations in Iraq, 14 September 2021 https://www.gc4hr.org/gchrs-18th-periodic-report-on-human-rights-violations-in-iraq/

[69] GCHR's 6th Report on Human Rights Violations in Iraq, 3 July 2020, https://www.gc4hr.org/sixth-periodic-report-on-violations-during-popular-demonstrations/

[70] GCHR's 3rd Report on Human Rights Violations in Iraq, 9 March 2020, https://www.gc4hr.org/third-periodic-report-on-violations-during-the-ongoing-popular-demonstrations/

5.7.9 In March 2020, an official source at the High Commission for Human Rights in Iraq stated that 561 people were killed since 01 October 2019, including 17 members of the security forces, while the number of wounded and injured reached over 24,000, mostly protesters, and 3,000 detainees, most of whom were released. However, CSOs reported that the number of activists, journalists and demonstrators killed exceeded 700, while those injured, suffocated, severely beaten and tortured exceeded 30,000, in addition to hundreds of detainees in secret places in various Governorates.[71] Mass impunity remains for these violations.

6. Recommendations to the Government of Iraq

GCHR, INSM, IOHR, FIDH, CIVICUS and Metro Center for Defending Journalists' Rights call on the Government of Iraq to create and maintain, in law and in practice, an enabling environment for civil society, in accordance with the rights enshrined in the ICCPR, the UN Declaration on Human Rights Defenders and Human Rights Council resolutions 22/6, 27/5 and 27/31.

At a minimum, the following conditions should be guaranteed: the freedoms of association, peaceful assembly and expression, the right to operate free from unwarranted state interference, and the state's duty to protect. Therefore, the following specific recommendations are made:

6.1 Freedom of association

- Take measures to foster a safe, respectful and enabling environment for civil society, including by protecting civil society from threats, harassment and gross human rights violations. Where violations occur, ensure accountability.
- Promote a meaningful political dialogue that allows and embraces diverging views, including those of CSOs, HRDs, journalists, political activists and others.
- End the blacklisting of CSOs by the NGO Directorate and remove all restrictions placed on the work of civil society that are inconsistent with the right to freedom of association.
- Immediately reverse its decision to ban the use of certain words, including "homosexuality" and "gender" which arbitrarily restricts the work of CSOs and is a blatant violation of the right to freedom of expression and the right to privacy.

6.2 Protection of human rights defenders

- Provide civil society members, HRDs and journalists with a safe and secure environment in which to carry out their work, conduct impartial, thorough and effective investigations into all cases of attacks, harassment and intimidation against them, and bring the perpetrators of such offences to justice.
- Ensure that HRDs can carry out their legitimate activities without fear, undue hindrance, obstruction, or legal and administrative harassment.
- Immediately and unconditionally release all HRDs, including journalists and bloggers detained for exercising their fundamental rights to the freedoms of association, peaceful assembly and expression, and review their cases to prevent further harassment.

[71] Ibid.

- Publicly condemn at the highest levels of government instances of harassment and intimidation of CSOs and activists.
- Ensure the swift adoption of the bill on the protection of persons from enforced disappearance, and take all necessary measures to ensure the cessation of this practice.
- Systematically apply legal provisions that promote and protect human rights and establish mechanisms that protect HRDs, including by adopting a specific law on the protection of HRDs in accordance with HRC resolution 27/31.

6.3 Freedom of opinion and expression, media freedom and access to information

- Ensure the right to freedom of expression and media freedom by bringing all national legislation into line with international standards.
- Review Articles 226, 433 and 434 of the Iraqi Penal Code on defamation and insult, in order to bring them into line with best practices and international standards in the area of freedom of expression. Defamation law should conform to Article 19 of the ICCPR. A crime of 'insulting the government' is not consistent with the right to freedom of expression.
- Review Article 403 of the Iraqi penal code and ensure it is not used to crack down on free speech. This article criminalises published material that "violates public integrity or decency." This vague wording is not compliant with the right to freedom of expression.
- Amend the draft law on freedom of expression and assembly and bring it in line with international standards, including the ICCPR and the Convention on the Rights of the Child.
- Amend the 17 articles entitled No. (01) of 2023 published in the Kurdistan Gazette to comply with the right to free expression.
- Ensure that journalists and writers may work freely and without fear of retribution for expressing critical opinions or covering topics that the government may deem sensitive, including by adopting a framework for the protection of journalists from persecution, intimidation and harassment.
- Guarantee unfettered access for all people in Iraq to domestic and foreign media information, both offline and online.
- Revise the 2022 Draft Cybercrime Law to ensure that internet laws comply with the government's commitment to guarantee freedom of expression, media freedom and access to information, including by ensuring free access to electronic media, ceasing censorship and surveillance, and enabling journalists, bloggers, and other internet users to play a full and active role in promoting and protecting human rights.
- Implement legislative measures to enable access to information and establish mechanisms to facilitate public access, in line with international best practices.
- Adopt a law on access to information in order to promote the full exercise of the rights to the freedoms of expression and opinion.
- Organise inclusive consultations with journalists and the media in order to resolve disputes that exist concerning proposed laws on freedom of expression.

- Refrain from censoring social and conventional media and ensure that the freedom of expression is safeguarded in all arenas, including in the arts.

6.4 Freedom of peaceful assembly

- Adopt best practices on the freedom of peaceful assembly, as put forward by the 2012 report of the UN Special Rapporteur on the Rights to Freedom of Peaceful Assembly and of Association, and by General Comment No. 37 on the right to peaceful assembly adopted by the UN Human Rights Committee in 2020.
- Amend the draft law on the right to freedom of expression and assembly in order to guarantee the right to freedom of peaceful assembly.
- Unconditionally and immediately release all protesters, HRDs and journalists detained for exercising their right to the freedom of peaceful assembly and review their cases to prevent further harassment.
- Immediately and impartially investigate all instances of extrajudicial killing and misuse or excessive use of force committed by security forces in the context of all protests, in particular the protests that occurred in Iraq in October 2019 and throughout 2020, as well as subsequent protests calling for accountability for excessive use of force against protesters in 2019, 2020 and 2023.
- Review and update existing human rights training for police and security forces, with the assistance of independent CSOs, to foster the more consistent application of international human rights standards, including the UN Basic Principles on the Use of Force and Firearms and the Guidance on Less - Lethal Weapons in Law Enforcement issued by the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights in 2020.
- Publicly condemn at the highest levels all instances of the use of excessive and brutal force by security forces in response to protests, launch formal investigations into such instances and bring the perpetrators to justice.
- Provide recourse to judicial review and access to effective remedy, including compensation, in cases of unlawful denial of the right to the freedom of peaceful assembly by state authorities.

6.5 Access to UN Special Procedures mandate holders

- Noting that the Government has extended a standing invitation to all UN Special Procedure mandate holders since 2010, ensure that the planned visit by the Special Rapporteur (SR) on Torture in the 4th quarter of 2024[72] takes place. In addition, prioritise official visits by the: 1) SR on the situation of HRDs; 2) SR on the Rights to Freedom of Peaceful Assembly and of Association; 3) SR on the Promotion and Protection of the Right to Freedom of Opinion and Expression; 4) Working Group on Arbitrary Detention. 5) SR on the independence of judges and lawyers; and 6) SR on the right to privacy.

6.6 State engagement with civil society

- Implement transparent and inclusive mechanisms of public consultations with CSOs on all issues mentioned above and enable the more effective involvement of civil society in the preparation of law and policy.

[72] https://spinternet.ohchr.org/ViewCountryVisits.aspx?visitType=all&lang=en

- Include CSOs in the UPR process before finalising and submitting the national report; and allow CSOs to submit their own UPR reports without fear of reprisals over UN engagement.
- Systematically consult with civil society on the implementation of UPR recommendations, including by holding periodical comprehensive consultations with a diverse range of civil society actors.
- Incorporate the results of this UPR in action plans for the promotion and protection of all human rights, taking into account the proposals of civil society, and present a midterm evaluation report to the Human Rights Council on the implementation of this session's recommendations.

7. Annex: Assessment of implementation of civic space recommendations under the 3rd cycle

Recommendation	Position	Assessment/Comments on level of implementation
147.198 Protect human rights defenders and the right of civil society to participate in the public life of the country freely and independently (Chile); **Source of Position:** A/HRC/43/14/Add.1 - Para.II (a)	Supported	Status: Not implemented Source: Sections 2, 3
147.202 Adopt measures to protect freedom of assembly and association, in particular ensuring investigations in to the cases of violence that have occurred during the ongoing demonstrations within the country (Italy); **Source of Position:** A/HRC/43/14/Add.1 - Para.II (a)	Accepted	Status: Not implemented Source: Sections 3, 5
147.189 Respect the right to freedom of peaceful assembly and association, investigate all alleged cases of excessive use of force and bring those responsible to justice (Switzerland); **Source of Position:** A/HRC/43/14/Add.1 - Para.II (a)	Accepted	Status: Not implemented Source: Sections 3,5
147.185 Fully respect the rights to freedom of peaceful assembly and association and to freedom of expression and increase efforts to protect journalists and media workers against any kind of attack or intimidation (Slovakia); **Source of Position:** A/HRC/43/14/Add.1 - Para.II (a)	Accepted	Status: Not implemented Source: Sections 3,5
147.194 Guarantee the rights to freedom of expression, association and assembly in law and practice (Australia); **Source of Position:** A/HRC/43/14/Add.1 - Para.II (a)	Accepted	Status: Not implemented Source: Sections 3, 4, 5
147.193 Guarantee freedom of expression and opinion by protecting the action of journalists, media professionals and human rights defenders from all use of violence and threats by security forces (Argentina); **Source of Position:** A/HRC/43/14/Add.1 - Para.II (a)	Accepted	Status: Not implemented Source: Sections 3, 4
147.71 Revise the Protection of Journalists Law No. 21 of 2011 with a view to removing all restrictions on the freedom of the press and ensuring full protection of journalists and other media workers (Denmark); **Source of Position:** A/HRC/43/14/Add.1 - Para.II (a)	Accepted	Status: Not implemented Source: Section 4
147.177 Investigate killings, harassment and violence against journalists and hold perpetrators accountable (Greece);	Accepted	Status: Not implemented

Source of Position: A/HRC/43/14/Add.1 - Para.II (a)		Source: Sections 3, 4
147.183 Investigate the cases of journalists who have been killed, and continue to voluntarily report to UNESCO and all relevant international organizations (Maldives); **Source of Position:** A/HRC/43/14/Add.1 - Para.II (a)	Accepted	Status: Not implemented Source: Section 3
147.186 Put an immediate halt to intimidation and violence targeting journalists, especially during protests (Netherlands); **Source of Position:** A/HRC/43/14/Add.1 - Para.II (a)	Accepted	Status: Not implemented Source: Sections 3,5
147.195 Strengthen the protection of journalists by , inter alia , amending Act No. 21 of 2011 accordingly (Austria); **Source of Position:** A/HRC/43/14/Add.1 - Para.II (a)	Accepted	Status: Not implemented Source: Sections 3, 5
147.157 Take action to investigate all instances of disappearances and death of human rights activists, and to bring perpetrators to justice (Netherlands); **Source of Position:** A/HRC/43/14/Add.1 - Para.II (a)	Accepted	Status: Not implemented Source: Sections 3
147.161 Uphold and respect the freedom of expression and peaceful assembly and hold accountable the perpetrators of all violations in relation to the excessive use of violence as well as the use of lethal weapons against demonstrators (Slovenia); **Source of Position:** A/HRC/43/14/Add.1 - Para.II (a)	Accepted	Status: Not implemented Source: Sections 3, 4, 5
147.205 Guarantee respect for the rights to peaceful assembly and freedom of expression, including removing the blocking of social media (Estonia); **Source of Position:** A/HRC/43/14/Add.1 - Para.II (a)	Accepted	Status: Not implemented Source: Sections 4 ,5
147.187 Adopt the draft bill on freedom of expression, assembly and peaceful demonstration in full compliance with international human rights law (Republic of Moldova); **Source of Position:** A/HRC/43/14/Add.1 - Para.II (a)	Accepted	Status: Not implemented Source: Sections 4, 5
147.188 Guarantee freedom of peaceful demonstration, opinion and expression and freedom of the press by removing restrictions on access to the Internet and local and international news sites and by releasing any person detained for the exercise of these rights (France); **Source of Position:** A/HRC/43/14/Add.1 -	Accepted	Status: Not implemented Source: Sections 3,5

Para.II (a)		
147.197 Ensure that the rights of freedom of expression, freedom of the press, and peaceful assembly are fully respected and protected, both online and offline (Canada); **Source of Position:** A/HRC/43/14/Add.1 - Para.II (a)	Accepted	Status: Not implemented Source: Sections 4, 5
147.201 Uphold and protect the rights to freedom of expression and assembly as guaranteed in Iraq's Constitution and in line with its international commitments, and promptly investigate human rights violations against protesters (Greece); **Source of Position:** A/HRC/43/14/Add.1 - Para.II (a)	Accepted	Status: Not implemented Source: Sections 4, 5
147.191 Immediately cease using excessive force against peaceful demonstrators, particularly the unlawful use of tear gas canisters and live ammunition, and hold accountable, in a transparent manner, those responsible for this violence (United States of America); **Source of Position:** A/HRC/43/14/Add.1 - Para.II (a)	Accepted	Status: Not implemented Source: Sections 3,5
147.167 Conduct prompt, independent and effective investigations into the excessive use of force against protesters in the October demonstrations and bring perpetrators to justice, while taking effective measures to prevent the recurrence of such violence, particularly by enhancing human rights training for law enforcement officials (Republic of Korea); **Source of Position:** A/HRC/43/14/Add.1 - Para.II (a)	Accepted	Status: Not implemented Source: Sections 3,5
147.176 Ensure independent, transparent and impartial investigations into violence against and killings of civilians in the context of the ongoing protests (Germany); **Source of Position:** A/HRC/43/14/Add.1 - Para.II (a)	Accepted	Status: Not implemented Source: Sections 3,5
147.173 Cease and thoroughly investigate the use of excessive force by security forces and any other armed actors during the recent protests, including the killing of protesters, and ensure perpetrators are accountable (Canada); **Source of Position:** A/HRC/43/14/Add.1 - Para.II (a)	Accepted	Status: Not implemented Source: Sections 3,5
147.181 Conduct prompt, independent and effective investigations into the excessive use of force against protesters resulting in the death of more than 250 people and many more injured in the recent demonstrations, and bring perpetrators to justice (Liechtenstein);	Accepted	Status: Not implemented Source: Sections 3,5

Source of Position: A/HRC/43/14/Add.1 - Para.II (a)		
147.190 Protect freedom of peaceful assembly, including by properly investigating violence against protesters (United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland); **Source of Position:** A/HRC/43/14/Add.1 - Para.II (a)	Accepted	Status: Not implemented Source: Sections 3,5
147.200 Facilitate the right to freedom of peaceful assembly and protect protesters, including by ensuring that only security forces trained in the proper management of assemblies are deployed and that these are held accountable for any use of excessive force against protesters (Czechia); **Source of Position:** A/HRC/43/14/Add.1 - Para.II (a)	Accepted	Status: Not implemented Source: Sections 3,5
147.203 Promote effective reform measures by the Government, the legislature and the judiciary while respecting the constitutionally guaranteed freedom of peaceful demonstration and giving due regard to the requests of the peaceful protesters (Japan); **Source of Position:** A/HRC/43/14/Add.1 - Para.II (a)	Accepted	Status: Not implemented Source: Sections 3, 5