

Political Statement of the Iraqi Opposition Conference in London
14-16 December 2002

Due to the imposed rule of the sectarian racist regime, its repressive and terrorist actions and the internal and external wars of that regime, Iraq has experienced thirty years of its contemporary history in the worst state. During all these years the Iraqi people continued to struggle and make a series of bold attempts to end the abnormal conditions imposed on our people by the repressive regime. A broad section of the honourable people, including the armed forces and political and national forces of all the nations, religions and faiths participated in this legitimate attempt in every possible way, including armed struggle which reached its climax in the blessed uprising of March 1991. Millions of Iraqi people: civilians, members of armed forces, Arabs, Kurds, Turkomans and Assyrians, Sunni and Shi'i, took part in the uprising which was very close to deal the regime with the fate it deserves. A lot of blood and sacrifices were offered to achieve this aim, but conditions beyond the control of our steadfast people prevented this common aim of the Iraqis from being achieved and from getting the opportunity to rebuild our country on the basis of democracy, justice and peace.

Today, again there is an opportunity for our people and we can take advantage of the elements of the international situation to bring down this fascist regime and initiate positive developments in Iraq. There is a new common prospect open to us and we must remain committed to the inevitability of achieving this patriotic mission, and encourage the process of change in Iraq for the benefit of our people taking into consideration the interests of neighboring, regional, Arab and Islamic countries and the international community.

To achieve this aim, the Iraqi opposition conference, which embraces the majority of forces, groups and prominent figures in the Iraqi opposition, which was held in London on 14-16 December 2002, under the slogan: "For the sake of the liberation of Iraq and achieving democracy", reaffirms the main principles and criteria of the previous conferences and meetings of the Iraqi opposition, especially the Salah-al-Din conference in 1992 and the political discourse of the opposition delegation in Washington in August 2002. Starting from these criteria, the conference accepted and approved the following resolutions and recommendations:

1. The role of Iraqi opposition in the process of change
Members of the conference view the role of the national opposition, with all its diverse groups and organizations supported by the masses of our people, as a principal and essential role in the process of change. The conference considers the role of the opposition as a vital and crucial role in all the stages of the anticipated change in a way that corresponds with its abilities and practical conditions.

2. The future of Iraq and democracy

Iraq will be a democratic parliamentary, pluralist, federal (for all Iraq) state and will accordingly enact a humane and civilized concept of citizenship based on equality and elimination of discrimination against all peoples, religions, races and sects. The conference reaffirms that a permanent constitution for the country should be drafted in which the national composition of Iraq and the separation of legislative and executive powers and the judiciary are enshrined. It must also stress commitment to the supreme power of law, protection of human rights and public and private freedoms, and respect for the institutions of civil society.

3. Islam is the religion of the state

Islamic religion is one of the foundations of Iraqi state and the rules of Islamic shariah are a principal source of the sources of legislation. The conference stresses that guidance should be sought from the Islamic sacred values and principles of good and tolerance and take its methods and instructions into consideration for school syllabuses and education with due respect to all other heavenly religions and faiths.

4. The state of law

The conference expresses unanimous agreement that chaos, blind revenge and any other form of lawlessness which may tend to prevail in the future environment of Iraq under whatever pretext, must not be allowed. All cases should be brought to judicial authorities and internal and international courts through the law and justice. All cases of violations of civil rights; such as confiscation of property, violation of rights and all criminal offences and political crimes including the crimes of ethnic genocide, ethnic cleansing, massacres and war crimes, supported by evidence, shall be brought to court.

5. Political decision-making

The conference resolves that all the constituent elements of the Iraqi people; Arabs, Kurds, Turkomans, Assyrians, Chaldeans and others, and Muslims and Christians, Sunnis, Shi'is and Yezidis, and other believers in heavenly religions, should participate in the political decision-making.

6. Rejection of all attempts to trample upon the will of the Iraqi people to achieve change

The conference asks the international community to support the Iraqi people to become liberated from the dictatorial regime. At the same time, the conference rejects all forms such as occupation, internal or external military rule, external mandate and regional interference and stresses the need to respect the sovereignty of Iraq, the independence of neighboring countries and the principles of good neighborliness, regional cooperation, non interference in other countries' affairs; and commitment to all the pledges, statements and agreements which have been approved by the international community. Above all the UN Charter, the international charter for human rights and all the international conventions and agreements relating to them, as well as commitment to the Arab League and the Conference of the Islamic

organization.

7. Sectarian problem and eradication of its effects

Throughout the past history of Iraq and especially under the current regime, we in Iraq, as other sections of Iraqi community, have been subjected to oppression; violence; repression; discrimination; and denial of civil, political, national, cultural and social rights. This has destroyed the social balance in the country and greatly jeopardized national unity and the spirit of tolerance and forgiveness, and has led to the predominance of repression, special institutions and the use of deception and falsehood to impose power on the Iraqi society with all its peoples and colors, and its Shi'i majority. As a result, the Iraqi people have lost one of the most important elements of their unity, thus paving the way for dictatorial, racial and sectarian policies which harm all the Iraqi people.

Therefore, the conference believes that all the policies of sectarian discrimination must be prohibited as soon as possible, and respect accorded to the legitimate rights of the Shi'i which have been denied so far. The conference condemns the policy of aggression against the religious seminary authorities of Shi'i (Hawza Ilmiya) and interference in their affairs, their containment and compulsory appointment and imposition [of their religious guides]. It also condemns the murder of their grand religious guides and their families and religious sources of emulation, and the imprisonment and torture of thousands of others whom we do not have the opportunity to list here.

The conference also condemns the policies of aggression against Shi'i religious seminary institutions of Al-Najaf al-Ashraf and other holy cities, the destruction of mosques and husayniyas, Islamic centers, libraries and the banning of books, censorship and banning of Shi'i religious processions and the destruction of Shi'i-populated towns and villages and homes, the draining of their areas, their deportation and bringing other citizens and settling them in their places, expressing skepticism regarding their Arab and Iraqi belonging, the deportation of non-Arab Shi'is and denying them their Iraqi citizenship and withdrawing their Iraqi passports, taking away their children and confiscating their property.

The conference believes that the new constitution of Iraq must guarantee that these violations shall not be repeated and that all the constituent elements of the Iraqi people shall be protected without discrimination.

8. About the genocide attacks of Halabjah and Anfal

The conference condemns all the racial injustice, oppression and ethnic cleansing which the Iraqi regime has carried out premeditatively on the people of Iraqi Kurdistan, particularly genocide and Anfal operations which affected 180,000 people, 8,000 Barzanis, 5,000 Faylis and 5,000 people of Halabjah, and the destruction of thousands of towns and villages, all of which moved the conscience of people all over the world. While the conference

demands putting an end to this heinous policy, it stresses the need to find out about the fate of the victims, honor them, compensate their families, rebuild the destroyed villages and towns and prosecute those who committed these crimes in international courts.

9. About deportations, ethnic cleansing and change of national identity

The conference condemns all forms of deportations, ethnic cleansing, the use of chemical weapons and forced change of national identity, especially the changing of the national character of the areas of Kirkuk, Makhmur, Khanaqin, Sinjar, Shekhan, Zimar and Mandali, and so on. The conference demands that all the effects of this policy be eradicated once for all in the following way:

- a. The return of the deportees to their homes and areas, the return of all their property and possessions, and compensating them for loss and damages.
- b. The return of those people brought by the regime to be settled and replace the deportees to their previous areas and homes.
- c. The return of the Fayli Kurds and all the Iraqis whom the regime deported outside Iraq under the pretext that they were of Iranian origin, and unjustly took away their citizenship rights from them, and securing their Iraqi citizenship for them, the return of their property and possessions, and uncovering the fate of the Faylis who have disappeared since 1980 and compensating them.
- d. Abolishing all the administrative changes implemented by the regime since 1968 with the purpose of changing the demographic reality of Iraqi Kurdistan.

10. Federalism and the resolution of Kurdish question

Upon examining the Kurdish question and the ways of settling it, the conference stressed again the plurality and diversity of the Iraqi society as regards to ethnicity, sect, and political organization, and also stressed the consolidation of national unity and to achieve this through complete equality among all the citizens. By considering the resolutions and recommendations of Salah-al-Din conference, the subsequent meetings of the opposition in Washington in August 2002 and the adoption of the National Assembly of Iraqi Kurdistan of a complete federalism bill in its session on 7 October 2002, the conference expressed its respect for the people of Kurdistan and the free will of people of Kurdistan to choose proper and appropriate methods for their partnership with the people of one country. The conference debated the experiences of federal systems and concluded that it is an appropriate system of government for Iraq, which must be taken cognizance of as a basis for the resolution of the Kurdish problem within the framework of Iraqi constitutional institutions after the end of the dictatorial Saddam regime and

anticipated changes in Iraq.

In this respect the conference reiterated the unity of Iraqi land and coexistence among its peoples on the basis of voluntary union. The conference also reaffirms the just and legitimate demands of the people of Kurdistan for uprooting all forms of oppression and repression on the basis of international law which affords them the right of self determination and affirms fraternity, unity and partnership in one country.

11. The rights of Turkomans

The conference debated the racism and ethnic cleansing carried out against the Turkomans and stresses the importance of guaranteeing their equality with others and agrees to grant them their ethnic, cultural and administrative rights within a defined legal framework and to protect these rights constitutionally.

12. The rights of Assyrians

The conference debated the injustice and national oppression exercised against the Assyrians and stresses the importance of guaranteeing their equality with others and agrees to grant them their ethnic, cultural and administrative rights within a defined legal framework, and to protect these rights constitutionally.

13. The marshlands (Ahwar) catastrophe

Ahwar areas have suffered a great humanitarian and environmental disaster which has caused the drying up of a large area of the marshlands, the destruction of the topography and cutting off the source of livelihood of the population, the viability of life in these areas and the deportation tens of thousands of the population. The new government of Iraq must pay a special attention to these areas to ensure the return of their population, compensating them and supporting them for the revival of the area and fulfilling the requirement of a happy life for them.

14. About the unjust laws and decisions

The conference demands the suspension and abolition of all the racist laws and decrees which the regime has decreed against the Kurds, Turkomans and Assyrians, and its sectarian decrees against the Shi'is.

15. About the experience in the Iraqi Kurdistan region

The conference highly appreciates the experience in Iraqi Kurdistan in areas of freedom, democracy and reconstruction. This is an evidence of that proven reality that the Iraqis can be creative and constructive if they are free from dictatorship. The conference believes that it is possible to benefit from this experience as an advanced step on the path of the anticipated democratic transformation in Iraq and for the resolution of differences through fraternal dialogue and the uprooting of the use of violence in political action. The conference calls for supporting and protecting this experience and dealing with its legally-elected institutions until a new federal constitution is prepared

for the country, including the Kurdistan region, and the forces of peshmerga [Kurdish militia] shall be integrated within the Iraqi army.

16. Security apparatuses

The conference blames the regime for the mass killing of thousands of Iraqis and physical liquidation of thousands of citizens, political and scientific cadres and army officers. The conference again stresses the need for uncovering the truth about every crime and prosecuting those responsible in a legal way. The conference deems it imperative that all the repressive apparatuses which the regime has created for the intimidation and repression of Iraqi citizens be dismantled and a new security body be established in a way that will protect rights of citizenship, human rights and the security of the country in accordance with the law.

17. Army and armed forces

The participants reaffirmed the importance of rebuilding the military institutions and armed forces in a proper professional and patriotic way away from internal conflict, militarization of society and sectarian and racist policies; elimination of the weapons of mass destruction projects and of every weapon banned internationally, putting an end to the use of the army for internal repression and external aggression and confining the role of the army to the defence and reconstruction of the country.

18. Economic conditions and eradicating the effects of destructive wars

The conference holds the present regime responsible for the economic collapse, the deterioration of the living standards and social security experienced in Iraq today as a result of its destructive wars and forcing millions of people to leave their country. The conference urges the countries which host Iraqi exiles and refugees to take care of them and offer them refuge and facilities.

The conference also holds the present regime responsible historically, morally and legally for starting two wars against two neighbors of Iraq - Iran and Kuwait. It calls for cooperation by both countries for the freeing of the prisoners of war and detainees, eliminating the accumulated effects of that abnormal period and preventing the use of Iraqi territory for hostility against other countries.

The conference also calls on the international community, fraternal and friendly countries and international institutions and organizations to support Iraq during its transitional period within the framework of a comprehensive project to erase the effects of this tragic period. To achieve this, the conference stresses the need for these planned arrangements:

- collection of a substantial Iraqi, regional and international income.
- Allowing Iraq to reach its maximum capacity for the export of oil

- negotiation with countries which have large debts to Iraq to settle the debt problem and the accumulated interest.

- Asking the international community, particularly the friendly countries, to free Iraq's frozen assets abroad and help us to uncover the wealth of Saddam and those involved with him and confiscate their companies and accounts in all countries as the public property of the Iraqi people.

- The conference calls upon the new government to review all the oil, commercial and economic agreements which Iraq has signed since 1991 with foreign companies and countries as regards of legal status and the extent of consideration for Iraqi interests in these agreements.

- The conference calls upon the new government to cooperate particularly with Iran and Kuwait for the freeing of the prisoners of war and detainees from both sides and ending all the negative effects.

19. The oil-for-food program

The conference believes that it is necessary to protect the oil-for-food program which ensures food, medicine and rebuilding economic life for the Iraqi people and to endeavor to address the negative aspects of the program until such a time when the resolutions of the Security Council are reviewed and a new appropriate plan is devised by the new government to ensure a dignified life for the people, especially the poor classes and those with low and limited income. Also, development plans and equitable allocation of revenue to all the regions throughout Iraq must be carefully considered.

20. A new nationality law

The participants resolve that a new humane contemporary law must be created for granting nationality which will abolish all types of classification of Iraqi citizens that aim at depriving them of their nationality rights. Efforts should be made after the end of the current regime for all Iraqi exiles to return to Iraq and deal with the accumulated negative effects of this inhumane policy.

21. Facilitating the return of Iraqi migrants, deportees and refugees

The participants resolve that the authorities of the transitional period should provide immediate facilities for the millions of Iraqi emigrants and refugees in exile and prepare necessary facilities for them to return to their country to participate in its reconstruction, and to return their property and possessions to them and compensate them for the loss they have suffered.

22. The role of scientific and academic talents

The participants called upon academic groups, and Iraqi experts and scientists and all those who have a high degree of scientific competence to offer their skills, expertise and services for current and future revival and development plans until the end of the current regime.

The conference salutes the Iraqi martyrs of freedom and expresses its support for tens of thousands of political prisoners and their families who have been spending many years of their lives within the prison walls of the regime.

The conference also salutes all our families in any part and piece of Iraq and expresses its pride in their struggle and steadfastness.

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The International Alliance for Justice (AIJ) coordinates a network of 275 international NGO's from more than 120 countries calling for the establishment of an International Ad Hoc Tribunal for the Iraqi leadership's crimes against humanity, crimes of war and genocide.