

## **UPR of Iraq**

**16 February 2010**

### **Statement by Norway**

Norway thanks the delegation of Iraq for the presentation of the National Report. We appreciate the establishment of a Ministry for Human Rights. It is an important step towards improving implementation of human rights obligations.

Norway believes that the active participation of civil society is essential to the UPR process. We recommend that Iraq establishes an effective and inclusive process to follow-up on UPR recommendations.

Effective cooperation with the UN Human Rights machinery is fundamental to improve the human rights situation on the ground. We recommend that Iraq significantly improves its cooperation with the UN Treaty Bodies by submitting overdue reports. Further, we recommend that Iraq gives priority to facilitating the visits requested by Special Rapporteurs of the Human Rights Council.

Human rights defenders play an important role in fostering a culture of human rights. We remain concerned about the working conditions and the vulnerable situation of human rights defenders and journalists in Iraq and recommend that crimes and violations against human rights defenders and journalists are promptly investigated and the perpetrators prosecuted. We also recommend the Government to better disseminate and ensure full observance of the Declaration on Human Rights Defenders.

Women in Iraq are most affected by so called "honor" related crimes. The Criminal Code in its article 128 identifies "the commission of an offence with honorable motives" as a "mitigating excuse," allowing to reduce sentences for murder and rape against women. Norway recommends that the application of article 128 in the Criminal Code is suspended, with a view to revoke it. We further recommend that Iraq investigates all allegations of persecution based on gender and sexual orientation and that charges be brought against those behind these crimes.

We welcome the establishment of quotas for the eligibility of women in local and national elections. We believe that this measure will increase the awareness of the situation of women in Iraq. Norway recommends that special attention should be paid to women from marginal groups who have been affected by armed conflict and displacement.

Capital punishment is still used in Iraq. Norway recommends Iraq to reduce the scope of crimes subject to the death penalty, specifically regarding all non-violent crimes, and to work towards the total abolition of the death penalty.

