



Permanent Mission of India to the UN
New York

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UNSC meeting on Iraq
(25 August 2021; 1000 hrs)
by Ambassador T.S. Tirumurti
Permanent Representative of India to the United Nations

I thank Special Representative Jeanine Hennis-Plasschaert for her briefing. We appreciate the detailed briefing and the insights provided, and the support given by UNAMI to Iraq. I also welcome the Representative of Iraq to this meeting.

2. The upcoming parliamentary elections in Iraq provide a valuable opportunity to further consolidate democracy in the country. A transparent, free and credible election, conducted in a violence-free environment, with high voter turnout will empower the new Government to implement reforms, improve accountability and meet the genuine aspirations of the Iraqi people, especially women and youth. We commend the steps taken by the Iraqi authorities and the Independent High Electoral Commission (IHEC) to ensure a free, fair and inclusive electoral process, despite constraints due to the pandemic. The support, including electoral technical assistance, extended by UNAMI to IHEC in its efforts to ensure full preparedness for the elections is well appreciated.

3. India strongly supported the additional mandate provided to UNAMI to deploy an election monitoring team and to assist the Government of Iraq with the elections, including through a public information campaign to enhance election-related awareness among Iraqi voters. We take note of the update by the SRSG on the mobilisation of the team and call for its early deployment to ensure the effective fulfilment of the monitoring mandate provided by the Council. We appreciate the financial support extended by various member states to UNAMI and other UN agencies in implementing this mandate. In line with our strong democratic traditions, India has contributed to the democratic and electoral process in Iraq as an Observer of the 2018 elections. We hope to make a similar contribution during the upcoming elections as well.

4. We are also encouraged by the increasing number of women candidates who are participating in the elections. The credible steps taken by the government to promote women's electoral participation and to prevent and address violence against women candidates must continue to ensure full and effective participation of Iraqi women in the political process.

5. Successful recovery, reconstruction and economic development of Iraq are constantly threatened by the menace of terrorism. The recent report of the Secretary General on ISIL has provided another stark reminder of the critical danger posed by ISIL to the stability of Iraq, and regional and international peace and security. ISIL remains active in Iraq with a changed modus operandi. The group's core is now focussed on regaining ground in Iraq and Syria, while its affiliates are functioning independently. This evolving phenomenon is extremely dangerous and poses a new set of challenges to our collective efforts in the fight against ISIL and terrorism.

6. I express solidarity with all the victims and offer my deep condolences to their families in Iraq, who have suffered, and continue to suffer, from the scourge of terrorism. India had tragically lost 39 of its nationals to ISIL's terrorism in Iraq. Thousands other Indian nationals too had to be evacuated. We also recognise the immense sacrifices made by the people of Iraq, the security personnel in particular, in their fight against ISIL. We cannot afford to lower the guard against terrorist groups. In this regard, we welcome the continued international efforts to support Iraq in combating terrorism, restoring stability and reconstruction and in training the Iraqi forces.

7. The constructive dialogue and engagement between the Iraqi government and the Kurdistan Regional government on the budget, resource sharing, revenue sharing and border management has created a positive environment towards reaching a sustainable agreement on all outstanding issues. We encourage UNAMI to support and facilitate the dialogue as and when requested by both these governments.

8. India condemns military action in Iraq's territory undertaken by its neighbours without the consent of the Government of Iraq under the pretext of counter-terrorism operations. There can be no violations of Iraq's sovereignty, and its territorial integrity and independence must be fully respected.

9. We welcome the sustained joint efforts of the Governments of Iraq and Kuwait to locate, identify and repatriate the missing Kuwaiti and other nationals and missing Kuwaiti properties. Kuwait's identification of 10 individuals from the remains sent by Iraq will help provide closure to the victims' families. We commend the efforts made by the members of the Tripartite Mechanism and hope that the parties will continue to strengthen their cooperation until the matter is resolved to the mutual satisfaction of Iraq and Kuwait.

10. India appreciates the efforts of the Iraqi Government to contribute to regional stabilization and overcoming tensions through dialogue with neighbouring States. We wish Iraq success in its initiative to convene a regional conference for fostering friendly relations among counties in the region.

11. Let me conclude by reaffirming India's steadfast support for a democratic, pluralistic, federal, unified and prosperous Iraq. As a longstanding friend, India will remain a willing partner of Iraq in its efforts to achieve economic recovery, peace and stability, national reconciliation and reconstruction.

I thank you.

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