

On 29 January, Al-Iraqiya announced that it would resume participation in sessions of the Council of Representatives, following its decision to stop attending meetings in response to the arrest warrant against Vice-President al-Hashimi. That enabled an inclusive debate to take place among Iraq's democratically elected legislators on crucial issues, including the 2012 State budget, which was endorsed by the Council of Representatives on 23 February.

On 28 December 2011, KRG announced that the next elections for the governorate councils in Dohuk, Erbil and Sulaymaniyah would be held on 27 September 2012, with opposition parties expressing no objection to the date. The Kurdistan Democratic Party (KDP), on 8 January 2012, announced its decision to enter the governorate council elections alone, rather than in coalition with the Patriotic Union of Kurdistan (PUK). On 18 January, KDP confirmed that Nechirvan Barzani, the Party's Vice-President and former Prime Minister of the Kurdistan region, would take over the Premiership of the Regional Government from Barham Salih, in accordance with the 2007 strategic agreement between KDP and PUK. During an extraordinary session of the Kurdistan Parliament on 16 February, Mr. Barzani was confirmed as Prime Minister of KRG and Imad Ahmed from PUK as Deputy Prime Minister; however, parliamentarians from the Gorran Party, the Kurdistan Islamic Union and the Kurdistan Islamic Group boycotted the vote. On the same day, the President of KRG, Masoud Barzani, appointed Kosrat Rasul of PUK as Vice-President, a post that had remained unoccupied for two years. President Barzani, on 7 March, tasked Prime Minister Barzani with forming a new Government within 30 days.

In response to the political situation in the country, particularly the rising tensions between the main political blocs, UNAMI intensified its consultations with a broad range of leaders and representatives to encourage them to find common ground that would restore confidence in the political process. During the reporting period, the Special Representative of the Secretary-General, Martin Kobler, met members of the Iraq Minority Council and other representatives of the Christian, Shabak, Yazidi and Sabeen Mandeian communities in Baghdad, Kirkuk and Ninewa for discussions on the challenges to the participation of those communities in Iraqi political life. UNAMI also focused on assisting the Council of Representatives with regard to Iraq's unfinished constitutional agenda, such as the establishment of the Federation Council, judicial reform and relevant laws not yet enacted, including article 125 of the Constitution on minorities. On electoral matters, the Council of Representatives continued the selection of the next board of nine Commissioners of the Independent High Electoral Commission. A Committee of Experts, comprising 22 members of the Council of Representatives, was established to assess

applications. At the request of the Speaker, with broad support from all main political blocs, UNAMI participated as an adviser and observer in the process, attending all Committee meetings and advising on selection mechanisms.

The number of civilians killed and injured in violent attacks increased during the reporting period. In January, 302 civilians were killed and 931 injured in attacks across the country, the highest number of civilian casualties since 2007. On 23 February, attacks across Baghdad and other areas of the country left over 62 persons dead and more than 200 wounded. Regarding the situation of the residents of Camp New Iraq (formerly Camp Ashraf), following the deadly raid on the camp on 8 April 2011 and the signing on 25 December 2011 of a memorandum of understanding between UNAMI and the Government on the relocation of the Camp's residents to the temporary transit location Camp Hurriya [YUN 2011, p. 356] near the Baghdad international airport, the Government mobilized considerable means to prepare the transit location. On 17 February, the first group of 397 residents moved in a peaceful manner from Camp New Iraq to Camp Hurriya, while the second group of 395 residents was transferred on 8 March. UNAMI monitored those relocations, acting as an impartial facilitator and defusing tensions between residents and Iraqi authorities at the embarkation and disembarkation points. The Secretary-General noted that the political deadlock over issues pertaining to the disputed internal boundaries was hindering efforts for a solution, and he remained concerned by the possibility of violence and reiterated that the Iraqi Government bore primary responsibility for the security of residents.

Report of Secretary-General (July). In his July report [S/2012/535], the Secretary-General stated that political tensions in Iraq had increased since the previous reporting period, and the national conference proposed by President Talabani, initially scheduled for 5 April, lost momentum. After three days of consultations beginning on 28 April in Erbil, President Talabani of Iraq; the President Barzani of KRG; the leader of the Al-Iraqiya bloc, Ayad Allawi; the Speaker of the Council of Representatives, Osama al-Nujaifi; and the leader of the Sadrism Trend, Muqtada al-Sadr, called for a solution to the political impasse based on the Constitution and dialogue. On 2 May, a delegation from the Sadrism Trend delivered a letter to the leader of the National Alliance, Ibrahim al-Jaafari. The letter, signed by all participants in the Erbil meeting except President Talabani, contained a number of demands, including non-interference in the work of security forces, activation of the role of the Council of Representatives, and limitation of the Prime Minister's position to two terms. In response, the National Alliance reaffirmed its commitment to participating in a national conference to address the situation, and on 17 May, President Tal-