

**Migration Review Tribunal
AUSTRALIA**

MRT RESEARCH RESPONSE

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Questions

- 1. With regard to the risk of non-return, please provide a brief overview of the situation in Basra in terms of both security and livelihood matters.**
- 2. If possible, please provide a brief overview of the situation in Basra for teachers in terms of security (have there been attacks on teachers?) and employment (pay and conditions?).**

RESPONSE

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The UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA) maintains a multi-stakeholder research group, the Inter-Agency Information and Analysis Unit (IAU), which employs information retrieved from a range of UN agencies and partner NGOs to produce profiles on security and livelihood conditions in Iraq's various governorates. The most recent IAU 'Basrah Governorate Profile' was published in July 2009. In addition to providing a brief overview of recent developments in Basrah as they relate to political, security and livelihood issues (see the text quoted below) the profile provides an extensive array of maps and statistical information presented in graphs and tables, some of which provides information by district level (these are best viewed electronically under magnification by opening Attachment 1). According to the data presented: Basrah Governorate's Al-Basrah District's unemployment rate is presently at 14% for women and 11% for men (compared to 20% for women and 12% for men across the larger Basrah Governorate; and: 13% for women and 12% for men across the whole of Iraq). Basrah district would also appear to fare comparatively well in terms of wealth, health and electricity supply (see the Indicator table at the bottom of the report). Overall the report finds that Basrah had a "much-improved security environment in the second half of" 2008, noting that "[a]n unusually high proportion (85%) of Basrah's IDPs – most of whom come from Baghdad – would like to settle in the local community". The overview follows:

Situating in the south eastern corner of Iraq, Basrah is the socioeconomic hub of southern Iraq. The governorate is of great strategic importance, as it possesses the whole of Iraq's single stretch of coastline, a significant amount of oil, the Shatt al-Arab waterway and borders with Kuwait and Iran. Basrah also contains part of the Marshlands, which have been an important source of support for Shi'a political movements.

A government crackdown in March 2008 on militia groups operating in Basra and the subsequent declaration of a ceasefire by Al-Sadr led to a much-improved security environment in the second half of that year. An unusually high proportion (85%) of Basrah's IDPs – most of whom come from Baghdad – would like to settle in the local community.

Due to the high salt content of local water sources, one of the main problems facing Basrah is access to safe drinking water. The water from the general network is only fit for washing and cleaning purposes. Water for drinking and cooking is generally purchased from water tankers or markets.

Basrah performs well according to other infrastructural indicators: sanitation and electricity access are significantly better than the national average throughout the governorate. However, female labour force participation outside Basrah city is low, and female unemployment is particularly poor in Fao, Al-Midaina and Al-Zubair districts ('UN Inter-Agency Information and Analysis Unit 2009, 'Basrah Governorate Profile', July <http://www.iauiraq.org/reports/GP-Basrah.pdf> – Accessed 8 October 2009 – Attachment 1).

An August 2009 report provides an overview of the situation across Iraq in recent months with regard to rising food prices. According to this report: "Food prices in the local Iraqi markets have risen at a steeper rate than global food prices. Iraqi food prices doubled between 2004 and 2008, while global food prices rose by 73%. The steeper rise in domestic prices was influenced by the rise in international food prices and an 800% rise in domestic fuel and light prices during the same period" (for further details see Attachment 1). A report produced by the NGO Coordination Committee for Iraq provides extensive data on average salaries in Basra and Baghdad as well as the average cost of food and other daily needs (see the Basra tables in Attachment 2). A simpler, though perhaps less accurate (based on UNDP 2004 data), assessment of wages to livelihood prices is provided in a BBC News page supplied as Attachment 4 (UN Inter-Agency Information and Analysis Unit 2009, 'Iraq Food Prices Analysis', August <http://www.iauiraq.org/reports/Iraq%20Food%20Prices-Final.pdf> – Accessed 8 October 2009 – Attachment 2; NGO Coordination Committee for Iraq (undated), 'NCCI Follow up of Prices in Iraq – 2008' http://www.ncciraq.org/uploads_ncci/pdf_2008_Price_indicators_Basra_and_Baghdad.pdf – Accessed 12 October 2009 – Attachment 3; 'Cost of living' in: *Life in Iraq* (undated), *BBC News* http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/shared/spl/hi/in_depth/post_saddam_iraq/html/6.stm – Accessed 12 October 2009 – Attachment 4).

In September 2009 the International Organisation for Migration (IOM) published a returnee assessment for the Basrah Governorate which looked at both the extent to which Basrah residents have fled and/or returned to Basrah as well as the extent to which Basrah has served as a haven for Iraqis fleeing other parts of the country. Pertinent extracts follow:

Current Returnees in Basrah

IOM monitors have currently identified 500 returnee families in Basrah, all of whom have returned from internal displacement. IOM has assessed 26 of these returnee families, who cited food, water, shelter, health and legal help as their priority needs, similar to those of the IDP population.

Future return potential in Basrah

IOM monitors have assessed 3,298 IDP families who fled Basrah, mostly to Salah al-Din, Ninewa, and Anbar. These IDPs have varying intentions depending on their location of displacement. For instance, very few IDPs from Basrah who are currently in Ninewa want to integrate into their local communities. Most of them plan on returning.

On the other hand, IDPs displaced to Salah al-Din from Basrah have more varied intentions. 38% would like to return, 33% intend to resettle in a third location, and 21% intend to integrate into their local communities of displacement in Salah al-Din.

...*Basrah's displaced: who are they?*

According to the Iraqi Ministry of Displacement and Migration, there are currently 6,968 IDP families displaced in Basrah Governorate. IOM monitors have assessed 4,510 families. The vast majority of Basrah IDPs are Shia Arab families who fled due to sectarian violence. More than half originate from Baghdad, with another quarter of the governorate's IDPs originating from Salah al-Din. Nearly all of Basrah's IDPs arrived between March 2006 and March 2007.

Basrah has been receiving IDPs since the Iran-Iraq war of the 1980s. A second wave arrived in the 1990s, this time consisting of Marsh Arabs driven out by the former regime's draining of the marshes in southern Iraq. The majority of pre-2006 IDPs in Basrah fall into these categories, living mostly in Al-Qurna and Al-Middaina. IDPs displaced after the 2003 conflict fled mainly to Basrah City (International Organisation for Migration 2009, 'Basrah Governorate Profile Sept 2009 IOM IDP Andreturnee Assessment', September http://www.iom-iraq.net/Library/idp_gov_profiles/2009/Governorate%20Profiles%20-%20Basrah.pdf – Accessed 9 October 2009– Attachment 5).

The April 2009 *UNHCR Eligibility Guidelines for Assessing the International Protection Needs of Iraqi Asylum-Seekers* provides an overall assessment of the security situation in Iraq's southern Shi'ite governorates, and Basrah in particular, finding that: "On the surface, the situation has significantly stabilized as a result of the [March 2008] military offensive and the extensive presence of the Iraq Army". Nonetheless, the report also notes that: "Despite the fact that overall levels of violence have decreased after the military operation in 2008 and the continued heavy presence of the [Iraq Army], targeted, often politically motivated killings, in particular of security officials, local government or party officials, religious and tribal leaders as well as professionals continue to occur". Pertinent extracts from the report follow below:

162. Among the Shi'ites, power struggles pitted the Sadrist Movement/JAM and the Shi'ite dominated central government against each other. In 2008, Al-Sadr and the JAM were politically and militarily marginalized, including by military operations in the Southern Governorates and Sadr City, widespread arrest campaigns and a decision banning political parties with militias from competing in the provincial elections – a move seen as directly aimed at the Sadrists. The Dawa party and ISCI hold substantially different views in relation to federalism and the power of regions vis-à-vis the central government. Starting with the military operation in Basrah in March 2008, PM Al-Maliki initiated efforts to reach out to Shi'ite tribes in the Southern Governorates, both in order to garner support during the military operations and to broaden his power base. This move met the opposition of ISCI, which dominates most provincial councils in the Southern Governorates. Dawa, unlike its rivals (ISCI and the Kurdish parties), does not have an armed militia. Tribal groups often find themselves caught in the middle and attacks on tribal leaders who have responded positively to Al-Maliki's outreach have already been recorded. The growing rivalry between ISCI and Dawa threatens to disrupt the already delicate alliance that has dominated Iraq's central government since 2006. At the local level, provincial election results indicate that the Dawa Party (which allied itself with other parties in the "State of Law" list) made significant gains at the expense of ISCI. However, as no party won an absolute majority, they will need to build coalitions and it is not yet clear how the divisions among Dawa and ISCI will be reflected at both the local and the central level.

...216. Until spring 2007, Basrah was a battleground for Shi'ite militias including JAM, Fadhila, Thar Allah, the Badr Organization and other exclusively tribal formations, all vying for power and resources. Kidnappings and assassinations were common occurrences. On 25 March 2008, the ISF launched a massive military operation ("Charge of the Knights") to root out "outlaws" and "re-impose law". The operation in Basrah ended partly due to US military support and partly due to the Sadrism leadership calling for an end to militia resistance. A truce was brokered in Iran on 31 March 2008. The Iraqi Army launched widespread clearing operations and declared full control of Basrah City centre on 24 April 2008. In the aftermath, the Iraqi Government dismissed 1,300 soldiers and policemen who deserted or refused to fight during the operation.

217. On the surface, the situation has significantly stabilized as a result of the military offensive and the extensive presence of the Iraq Army. The grip Shi'ite extremist groups held on the local population seems to have eased and "Un-Islamic" behaviour is no longer systematically punished with death, though occasional incidents continue to occur. The local police is known to be heavily infiltrated by militias despite some purges. Reviving the economy and reducing high unemployment are also seen as key to achieve lasting security as militias find it easy to attract young, unemployed and disillusioned men. Despite the allocation of funds for reconstruction and humanitarian aid in Basrah by the PM, spending has been slow. These delays coupled with rising intra-Shi'ite tensions among ISCI and Dawa, "create favorable conditions for an increase in violence."

218. Despite the fact that overall levels of violence have decreased after the military operation in 2008 and the continued heavy presence of the IA, targeted, often politically motivated killings, in particular of security officials, local government or party officials, religious and tribal leaders as well as professionals continue to occur (UN High Commissioner for Refugees 2009, *UNHCR Eligibility Guidelines for Assessing the International Protection Needs of Iraqi Asylum-Seekers*, April – Attachment 6).

UNHCR's April 2009 report also provides an overview of the outcome of Iraq's May 2009 provincial election results, noting that the State of Law list of Prime Minister Nouri al-Maliki's Islamic Dawa Party did extremely well in Basrah: "In most governorates, no single party won a majority enough to rule on its own. An exception is Basrah, where the State of Law list won 57% of the seats (although it received only 37% of the votes)". The report finds that the overall results: "indicate a major shift in the balance of power among the Shi'ite parties as the nationalist list supported by PM Al-Maliki, State of Law, made substantive gains in Baghdad, Basrah and several other Southern governorates". This noted, it is also reported that: "In the aftermath of the elections, various parties made accusations of fraud and intimidation, fuelling fears that the transfer of political power may not be peaceful". The report notes that: "Sadrists vowed to appeal the results in Baghdad, Diwaniyah, Najef and Missan". Extracts follow:

Election results from the provincial elections, released by the Independent High Electoral Commission of Iraq (IHEC) on 19 February 2009, indicate a major shift in the balance of power among the Shi'ite parties as the nationalist list supported by PM Al-Maliki, State of Law, made substantive gains in Baghdad, Basrah and several other Southern governorates. ISCI, which has strong ties to the religious establishment and dominated the provincial councils in Baghdad and most southern governorates since 2005, has been significantly decimated as voters apparently rejected its explicit sectarian identity and ambitions to decentralize the country along sectarian lines. It is also widely held responsible for failing to improve public services. Pro-Sadrists have shown that they are still a political force to be reckoned with, particularly in Baghdad, Najef, Missan and Thi-Qar, while Fadhila lost seats across Iraq, including in its former stronghold Basrah.

...In the aftermath of the elections, various parties made accusations of fraud and intimidation, fuelling fears that the transfer of political power may not be peaceful. Accusations and threats of a violent backlash were most pronounced in Sunni-dominated Al-Anbar Governorate, where the tribal-based Awakening Councils were pitted against the Iraqi Islamic Party (IIP). Sheikh Ahmed Abu Risha, the leader of the Sunni Awakening, warned that the result threatened to reignite the insurgency and Sheikh Ali Al-Hatem, another local tribal leader who had backed another tribal-led state, warned that any outbreak of violence over the election results could become an intra-tribal conflict. It should also be noted that pro-Sadrists vowed to appeal the results in Baghdad, Diwaniyah, Najef and Missan.

...In most governorates, no single party won a majority enough to rule on its own. An exception is Basrah, where the State of Law list won 57% of the seats (although it received only 37% of the votes). In Baghdad and Wassit, the list won a near majority (49% of the seats in Baghdad and 46% of the seats in Wassit). Across the Shi'ite-majority governorates, the State of Law list is in the lead, followed by either ISCI or the Sadrist competing for the second biggest number of seats. This fact makes it necessary to forge power-sharing alliances.

...Certainly, the elections solidified PM Al-Maliki's power basis and might lead to a further centralization of government power. This may deepen the conflict with his former allies, ISCI and the Kurdish parties, and further complicate the finding of a viable compromise with the Kurdish parties on the status of "disputed areas" and other pending issues. The elections also strengthened PM Al-Maliki's position ahead of national elections, in which he is said to be seeking to renew his mandate. While the political landscape has clearly shifted as a result of the provincial elections, the majority of seats in the CoR will continue to be held by parties that were disfavoured by the voters in the provincial elections until national elections are held in December 2009 (UN High Commissioner for Refugees 2009, *UNHCR Eligibility Guidelines for Assessing the International Protection Needs of Iraqi Asylum-Seekers*, April – Attachment 6).

The following UNHCR and UN OCHA & IAU reports may also be of interest:

- An August 2007 UNHCR thematic map report provides figures for total returns to Iraq's various governorates (UN High Commissioner for Refugees 2009, 'Map of Total Return to Iraq', January <http://www.unhcr.org/refworld/docid/4acc5a6cd.html> – Accessed 12 October 2009 – Attachment 7).
- An August 2009 IAU report provides an overview of the situation across Iraq in recent months in terms of civilians casualties, health concerns and education (<http://www.iauiraq.org/reports/Factsheet-EnglishR.pdf> – Accessed 8 October 2009 – Attachment 8).
- The most recent IAU vulnerability map provides data on a variety of issues across Iraq, including: security, development, employment and health trends (the thematic maps are best viewed electronically using the magnification tool) (UN Inter-Agency Information and Analysis Unit 2009, 'Iraq – Areas of Vulnerability', March <http://www.iauiraq.org/maps/Areas%20of%20Vulnerability%20Map.pdf> – Accessed 8 October 2009 – Attachment 9).

2. If possible, please provide a brief overview of the situation in Basra for teachers in terms of security (have there been attacks on teachers?) and employment (pay and conditions?).

Teacher salaries in Basra and across Iraq

Very little information on teacher salaries in Basra could be located beyond some scattered news reports. In April and October 2006 there were reports of teacher strikes in Basra. An October 2006 report relates that: “The Basra teachers’ federation and union [had] called for a general strike demanding to improve the teacher’s living conditions and to increase the teachers’ salary scale to be equal to that adopted in Iraq’s Kurdistan region”. The report further relates that: “Teachers working in Iraqi northern provinces of Duhuk, Sulaymaniyah, and Erbil receive a salary as twice as that received by the teachers working in the other provinces”; and that: “The education ministry responded by increasing the salary of a newly appointed teacher up to 150,000 Iraqi dinars (\$101)”. In December 2007 it was reported that Iraqi teachers were again striking for pay commensurate with that received in the Kurdish areas and that: “According to figures released by the education ministry, Iraqi teachers receive a monthly salary of 200,000-550,000 Iraqi dinars (1 U.S. dollar= 1,117 Iraqi dinars), while teachers in Kurdistan earn 280,000-750,000 dinars a month” (‘Basra teachers demonstrate for pay rise’ 2006, *Aswat al-Iraq*, 18 April <http://en.aswataliraq.info/?p=18575> – Accessed 12 October 2009 – Attachment 10; Saadon, M. 2006, ‘Basra schools reopen as teachers’ strike off’, *Aswat al-Iraq*, 18 October <http://en.aswataliraq.info/?p=29672> – Accessed 12 October 2009 – Attachment 11; ‘Basra teachers strike’ 2006, *Iraqi News*, 19 October <http://www.iraqinews.com/education/basra-teachers-strike.html?Itemid=126> – Accessed 12 October 2009 – Attachment 12; ‘Iraqi teachers stage countrywide strike’ 2007, *Aswat al-Iraq*, 16 December <http://en.aswataliraq.info/?p=63261> – Accessed 12 October 2009 – Attachment 13).

Security for teachers, women and in schools over 2007 to 2009

It would appear that conditions in Basra schools have fluctuated over recent years according to the state of local security. Prior to the 2008 military operation which displaced the power of the militias Basra “teachers had been afraid to discipline students” according to *The Economist*. *Aswat al-Iraq* reported the killing of teachers by unknown assailants in November and December 2007, and during March 2008, at the time of the fighting between the “Al-Mahdi Army, led by Shi’i leader Muqtada al-Sadr, and Iraqi security forces”, *Al-Jazeera TV* reported the comments of Yusuf al-Musawi, in Basra that: “gangs are still present and the killing of doctors, teachers, and professors still continues”. In October 2007, “an explosion ripped through a high school, killing two students and wounding 15”. Over the months of March to April 2008 it was reported that a number of Basra’s schools were unable to operate due to fighting. Reports of under-resourced Basrah schools have also appeared. And in August and November 2007 it was reported that schools in southern cities like Basra were being overwhelmed by the influx of persons fleeing the violence which affected central Iraq at that time. It may also be of interest that in 2007 and early 2008 Basra was reportedly affected by a spate of murders committed against women who, it was suspected, had been targeted by Islamist militias for transgressing traditional modes of behaviour in terms of dress or workforce participation (‘Searching for a phoenix in Basra’ 2009, *The Economist*, 30 April http://www.economist.com/world/middleeast-africa/displaystory.cfm?story_id=13579106 – Accessed 9 October 2009 – Attachment 14; for attacks on teachers in Basra, see: Saadon, M. 2006, ‘Three physicians kidnapped, teacher killed in Basra’, *Aswat al-Iraq*, 14 November <http://en.aswataliraq.info/?p=31397> – Accessed 12 October 2009 – Attachment 15; ‘Teacher

killed in front of his students in Basra' 2007, *Aswat al-Iraq*, 3 December <http://en.aswataliraq.info/?p=62008> – Accessed 12 October 2009 – Attachment 16; and: 'Replacement of Basra police commanders under way – Al-Jazeera TV' 2008, *BBC Monitoring Newsfile*, source: *Al-Jazeera TV* (Doha, in Arabic), 25 March – Attachment 17; for the October 2007 bombing of a Basra high school, see: Parker, N. 2007, 'Blast kills 2 at high school in Basra – Attack on the facility, which held coed classes, comes amid a Shiite power struggle in the southern Iraqi city', *LA Times*, 19 October <http://articles.latimes.com/2007/oct/19/world/fg-iraq19> – Accessed 9 October 2009 – Attachment 21; for the 2008 closure of schools, see: Hajaj, C. 2008, 'UNICEF responds to critical needs with water tankers in Basra crisis', UNICEF website, 31 March http://www.unicef.org/infobycountry/iraq_43434.html – Accessed 12 October 2009 – Attachment 18; Hajaj, C. 2008, 'Violence in Iraq disrupts lives and education', UNICEF website, 21 April http://www.unicef.org/infobycountry/iraq_43630.html – Accessed 12 October 2009 – Attachment 19; for lack of resources, see: 'Iraq: Local tribes in south set up schools' 2007, *IRIN News*, 3 June <http://www.irinnews.org/report.aspx?ReportID=72517> – Accessed 12 October 2009 – Attachment 20; for the influx of IDPs on Basra schools, see: 'Iraq: Hundreds of displaced children in south unable to get school places' 2007, *IRIN News*, 7 May <http://www.irinnews.org/Report.aspx?ReportId=72001> – Accessed 12 October 2009 – Attachment 22; 'Iraq: Basra closes doors to displaced' 2007, *IRIN News*, 12 November <http://www.irinnews.org/Report.aspx?ReportId=75255> – Accessed 12 October 2009 – Attachment 23; 'Basra Struggles to Cope With Student Demand' 2007, *IWPR News*, 30 August http://www.iwpr.net/index.php?apc_state=hen&s=o&o=p=icr&l=EN&s=f&o=338212 – Accessed 12 October 2009 – Attachment 24; for attacks on women transgressing traditional norms, see: 'Iraq: Islamic extremists target women in Basra' 2008, *IRIN News*, 2 January <http://www.irinnews.org/Report.aspx?ReportId=76065> – Accessed 9 October 2009 – Attachment 25; see also: 'Iraq: Female harassment from religious conservatives', *IRIN News*, 14 April <http://www.irinnews.org/report.aspx?reportid=23680> – Accessed 12 October 2009 – Attachment 26; 'Women under extremists' guillotine in Basra' 2007, *Aswat al-Iraq*, 28 November <http://en.aswataliraq.info/?p=61484> – Accessed 12 October 2009 – Attachment 27; 'Iraqi Women Targeted by Campaign of Violence' 2007, Association for Women's Rights in Development website, source: *ABC News*, November <http://www.awid.org/eng/Issues-and-Analysis/Library/Iraqi-Women-Targeted-by-Campaign-of-Violence> – Accessed 12 October 2009 – Attachment 28).

Nonetheless, improvement in conditions in Basra have been reported over the recent 18 months. In August 2008 it was reported that: "Schools in Basra reopened on April 6 and to make up for lost days, children are attending classes on Saturdays. Universities and colleges started again on April 20". In April 2009 a *Guardian* report on female work participation and education in Basra interviewed a number of local Basrah women who felt more hopeful about the possibility for development; though the report also noted the local assessment that schools remained under significant stress. Reporting on the outwardly reduced presence of the militias in Baghdad in June 2008, *USA Today* has related that: "Perhaps the surest sign that radical Islamist militias no longer hold sway here came last week, when local councilman Nazar Aziz complained to the local news media of sexual discrimination in the school district – against men. Of the 1,532 teachers hired since April, 1,300 have been women, he said". Reports of US and Iraqi military support for Basra schools in terms of resources and security have also appeared. A US provincial reconstruction team reportedly opened a new "multi-million-dollar" school in Basra's Jameat District in October 2009. And in January 2009 it was reported that Iraqi Army "Soldiers from the 14th Division along with Soldiers of the

490th Civil Affairs Battalion, traveled to the Al Zubair and Karowaan kindergartens in the Zubair district to deliver school supplies and make further refurbishment assessments". This noted, while local US and British commanders often speak positively about Basrah news reports often also relate that local residents are less optimistic about the current situation ('Iraq army in "full control of Basra"' 2008, *News.com.au*, source: *Reuters*, 24 April <http://www.news.com.au/story/0,23599,23594890-23109,00.html> – Accessed 12 October 2009 – Attachment 29; Chulov, M. 2009, 'The guns are quiet in Basra now, but behind the veil fear lingers', *The Guardian*, 18 April <http://www.guardian.co.uk/world/2009/apr/18/iraq-legacy-extremism-basra-women> – Accessed 9 October 2009 – Attachment 30; Levinson, C. 2008, 'In Basra, some worry militias just "hiding behind fake walls"', *USA Today*, 29 June http://www.usatoday.com/news/world/iraq/2008-06-29-basra_N.htm – Accessed 9 October 2009 – Attachment 31; Galloway, M.A. 2009, 'New School Offers Iraqi Students Chance to Excel', *Free Republic*, source: *American Forces Press Service*, 8 October <http://www.freerepublic.com/focus/f-news/2357175/posts> – Accessed 9 October 2009 – Attachment 32; 'Iraqi, U.S. Forces Support Basrah Schools' 2009, Multi-National Force Iraq website, 25 January http://www.mnf-iraq.com/index.php?option=com_content&task=view&id=25108&Itemid=128 – Accessed 12 October 2009 – Attachment 33; 'Marshland village to receive a 'Mudhif' style school' 2009, Multi-National Force Iraq website, 9 March http://www.mnf-iraq.com/index.php?option=com_content&task=view&id=25740&Itemid=128 – Accessed 12 October 2009 – Attachment 38; 'Normalcy slowly returns to Basra' 2008, Multi-National Force Iraq website, 30 May http://www.mnf-iraq.com/index.php?option=com_content&task=view&id=19965&Itemid=33 – Accessed 12 October 2009 – Attachment 37; Norton-Taylor, R. & Abdul-Ahad, G. 2008, 'The official British view of Basra: It's absolutely booming!', *The Guardian*, 15 August <http://www.guardian.co.uk/world/2008/aug/15/iraq.military> – Accessed 12 October 2009 – Attachment 34; 'British forces say Basra witnesses great development' 2008, *Aswat al-Iraq*, 14 August <http://en.aswatiraq.info/wp-content/themes/s1/print.php?p=89499> – Accessed 12 October 2009 – Attachment 35; Morgan, D. 2009, 'Iraq Shi'ite militants little threat in Basra-US', *Reuters*, 14 July <http://www.reuters.com/article/idUSN14283768> – Accessed 12 October 2009 – Attachment 36).

An overview of several pertinent sources follows below.

UNHCR has not completed a governorate assessment report for Basrah since August 2006. Though the security and livelihood information provided in the report is now somewhat dated, the report provides some of the most extensive information available on local education institutions and enrolments. The data contributing to this information was sourced from Iraq's Ministry of Education (MoE), media reports and the UN Children's Fund (UNICEF), in particular UNICEF's *School Survey 2003-2004 in Iraq* which was published in October 2004 and the Ministry of Education's *Educational Statistics in Iraq, 2003-2004*. The August 2006 UNHCR overview of education in Basrah follows below:

The MoE in Basrah Governorate owns over 729 buildings. Many buildings were looted in 2003, although it is estimated that nearly half of these have been reconstructed. The scarcity of books and teaching resources, an antiquated school curriculum and limited training of staff in contemporary teaching and learning methods limit the quality of education in most, if not all, educational facilities.

Basrah City has two Technical Colleges and two Universities run by the MoE/Ministry of Higher Education (MoHE), all of which have seen rehabilitation work but are short of resources. Basrah Governorate also has three Vocational Training Centres (transferred to MoLSA from the Ministry for Industry and Minerals in 2003). MoLSA also offers English language skills, literacy and computer training for unemployed persons.

The MoE enrolled 7,025 children into kindergartens, 305,541 children into primary schools (137,858 of these were female) and 106,278 children into secondary schools (40,551 of which are female) in Basrah Governorate in 2003/2004. The student teacher ratio for kindergartens in Basrah Governorate is 18, compared to a national average of 16. There is no data available on how many of those registered are returnee children. **MoE registrations of students show that the number of female students attending school in Basrah Governorate is significantly lower than the number of male students, particularly at the secondary school level and above.** Varying social pressures on girls which inhibit school attendance could have long-term consequences for the labour force in Basrah Governorate. Limited school attendance also impacts the socialization of returnee girls and women and their ability to reintegrate (UN High Commissioner for Refugees 2006, 'Basrah Governorate Assessment Report', August <http://www.unhcr.org/cgi-bin/texis/vtx/home/opendoc.pdf?tbl=SUBSITES&id=459ba6462> – Accessed 16 March 2007 – Attachment 39; for the October 2004 UNICEF study, see: <http://www.unicef.org/media/files/volume2analyticalreport.pdf> – Accessed 9 October 2009 – Attachment 40)

An April 2009 report authored by noted Australian journalist Martin Chulov provides extensive anecdotal information, sourced from local Basra women, on the situation in locale in terms of female participation in the workforce and education in particular. "Mona Massoud, director of the Iraqi Women's League, said education was under chronic stress, because many teachers have fled and families who had kept their children from school now wanted them to catch up on lost years of learning. "There are no new kindergartens, the schools are very crowded," she said. "There are three shifts of children attending schools each day. The militias and the military raids caused chaos in education." Other pertinent extracts follow:

...it has never been easy to be a woman in Basra. Under Saddam's rule, women in the southern city had a much more restricted life than their counterparts in other Iraqi regions.

Basran society had always lagged behind, in attitudes, as well as in tangibles. And when the British arrived in 2003, it seemed at first as though things might change for the better. "It was nice to know there was no longer a dictator looking over us," said Basma al-Waili, an elderly Basran.

But within a couple of years, the British soldiers had retreated to their bases. Militias filled the void, bringing with them hardline Islamic teachings that made life insufferable for Basra women. Their city and the surrounding areas were ravaged by an insurgency that placed it high among the most violent enclaves in an impossibly brutal country. Many of the basic tenets of family life were simply put on hold. Ambition had to wait. Now, again, the possibility of improvement is beginning to seep into women's minds.

"We suffered a lot," said Dr Nisrine Salem, 38, a physician at Basra hospital. "For 35 years we were too terrified to express our opinion. Since 2003, the change has been substantial, but we are still suffering. It's like when a child is born, he comes from darkness to light. Now we are thinking of studying and travelling, and learning more from researchers and experts."

Salem feels less opposition from society these days to her role as a professional. "I think women enjoy around 80-90% more liberation than before," she said. "Basra women have seized their freedom and in many ways we have broken the chains that once bound us ... The British gave us security. Now it's up to us."

But many other women are far less bullish, believing tribal customs and long-hated societal laws have been legitimised by the enforcement of four years of puritanical Islamic law.

Eham al-Zubeidi, 33, women's advocate, said the departing troops unwittingly ushered in such regressive moves throughout society. "The coalition forces were responsible for the terrorists crossing our borders," she claimed. "They turned the streets into graveyards for many women and children.

..."Basra was a sad city over the last six years," said science student Yisra Mohammed Al-Rubaiy, 22. "All you ever heard was that someone who you know was killed. There was a soundtrack of gunshots or clashes and there were so many problems for women. You cannot imagine the numbers of women who were killed. But now we as women can say the greatest part of the threat has gone, and I hope it will never return."

..."My daughters have stopped going to school altogether," said Kareema Saber, 34, a widowed pensioner with eight children. "They left because I cannot pay for them." Her three school-aged boys are still attending classes.

Mona Massoud, director of the Iraqi Women's League, said education was under chronic stress, because many teachers have fled and families who had kept their children from school now wanted them to catch up on lost years of learning. "There are no new kindergartens, the schools are very crowded," she said. "There are three shifts of children attending schools each day. The militias and the military raids caused chaos in education."

...Kareema Hassan, a social affairs officer in the Basra governorate, said: "Large numbers of women have begun coming to our centre asking for jobs. Many of them are widows, they don't ask for money, they want to work." A small number of government and council grants are available, but nowhere near enough to cater for demand.

"We are trying many ways to reduce the effects of unemployment and we are also trying to reduce illiteracy rates," Hassan added. "Basra society has begun to accept women working to help men. They are getting better salaries, but not by much."

That is some comfort to students such as Hiba Karim, 21, who attends a college in central Basra. But she still worries intently about her future in the new Iraq.

"We still have many fears. When I go to college I wear a hijab. I am very scared of extremist parties, but I can learn and study. I hope to get work. Security has improved dramatically here. The real war which targeted women has ended, but our fears still exist because Basra is a tribal society and it is restricted by religious and tribal tradition. But I can say that the women of Basra have finally started to breathe the freedom."

Suha Abbas, 24, a recent engineering graduate, is still looking for a job two years after graduating. "Young women here have the same problems as other Iraqi women," she says. "Most companies prefer to employ men only. We don't have an equal chance.

..."Security has improved, but not everywhere. It seems unbelievable that in some districts, women doctors, teachers and activists have been assassinated for not wearing hijabs. But it's true ... In Basra, a woman can go to college and work, but she cannot drive a car, go out for the evening, or play sport."

Assma Abdul Majeed, 32, an Arabic teacher, said piecemeal gains would be close to pointless without a revolutionary approach to shifting centuries of tradition and a blind acceptance of crimes against women, such as violence, which remains pervasive in Basra society.

...Zainab al-Zubeidi, 40, who runs a women's charity in Basra, said: "Violence is a very, very big problem, especially in the tribes. We have established a violence against women network. But there is also a role for women themselves. If they don't want to change, how can we change them?" (Chulov, M. 2009, 'The guns are quiet in Basra now, but behind the veil fear lingers', *The Guardian*, 18 April <http://www.guardian.co.uk/world/2009/apr/18/iraq-legacy-extremism-basra-women> – Accessed 9 October 2009 – Attachment 30).

In a separate Martin Chulov April 2009 report on the situation in Basra, Chulov reports of the improved security environment that: "New playgrounds and safer streets that stemmed from the military sweep that cleared the city 13 months ago have been well received by boys in particular, who are revelling in street football. Basra's girls, meanwhile, are taking to the extra school time". The report focuses primarily on situation of children in Basra and presents a number of anecdotal testimonies. The following may be of interest:

Mohammed Manal, nine, primary school student

"My life has improved a lot lately. My mother lets me play football, tennis and other sports with my friends, even though the stadium is a long way away. We play in the streets for two hours every afternoon and I can do what I want most times.

"The big problem in our lives, though, is the electricity – especially at night. We need it to study and to watch sport on TV. There has been a small improvement, but we need 24 hours, not the six to ten we are getting now. I want to be an engineer one day to fix the electricity.

"Before 2007 my mother made me a prisoner because of the security in Basra. She wouldn't even let me go to school and I could never play outside. She says many children were kidnapped in Basra. But now we both feel better.

"Last summer we went to Syria for a holiday. On Fridays we go to the park, or the river. My school is not good, though. It is old and tired and we need new equipment and teaching methods."

...Awad Fouad, 15, student at al-Kefah secondary school

"Before 2003, things were tragic here. We lived on the front line of three wars and suffered more than any of the other Iraqi provinces. We lived in poverty. There were problems with health and education and we could not afford to go to school. My father had a job at Basra University and his salary was \$10 each month.

"I have three brothers and two sisters. My mother left us because of our situation. But after 2003 my family's life transformed. My father became an assistant for the dean of Basra University and his salary was raised to \$2,000. I went back to school and so did my brothers and sisters.

"The British brought life to Basra. I can now play basketball, which I love doing, and we can get an internet connection. We can also think about travelling.

“Things improved again after 2008. I can now have picnics and stay out late until 10pm or 11pm. I want to be a doctor to take care of future generations of Basra children. They deserve the best” (Chulov, M. 2009, ‘The children of Basra learn to live and hope’, *The Observer*, 19 April <http://www.guardian.co.uk/world/2009/apr/19/children-basra-iraq-war-legacy> – Accessed 12 October 2009 – Attachment 41).

On 15 June 2009 the World Bank reported on current insufficiencies in Iraq as well as the planned response of government of Iraq’s (GOI) Ministry of Education (MOE). Pertinent extracts follow:

Over the past five years, the MOE recruited about 60,000 new and re-hired teachers who lack specialized training. There is a convergent agreement among the observers of the Iraqi educational system that there are shortages of skilled and well trained teachers. The project will provide support to the MOE Institute for Teachers Training and Development (ITTD) to develop training material and provide training on new teaching methods to about 10% of the recently recruited teachers.

...The GOI has allocated a considerable amount of budget to school building and rehabilitation. Budget allocation for MOE in 2009 is IQD212 billion and more than 85% of this allocation is expected to be spent on school construction and rehabilitation. Despite this effort and international partners’ contribution, including the Bank’s Iraq Trust Fund (ITF) projects, the general education system continues to suffer from a lack of appropriate buildings at both the primary and secondary levels. According to MOE statistics, only 9,341 school buildings are available to host the 12,507 Iraqi primary schools; 2,441 buildings are available for the 4,364 secondary schools. A large number of schools, especially in densely populated urban areas, have to operate in double or even triple shifts. More than 4,500 new school buildings need to be constructed in the coming years in order to eliminate school multiple shifting and to handle the additional demand for education. Under the current design, the relative impact of the Credit based on need would remain marginal. Building 40-50 new schools over the next few years when the government is building hundreds of schools a year and the need is counted in thousands would have little impact on the objective of alleviating school overcrowding. Furthermore, with the current focus on new school construction, little contribution will be made to strengthening the capacity of the MOE in effective management of school construction. The project must shift its focus to supporting the MOE in implementing its school construction plan and strengthening MOE’s capacity in critical areas such as educational planning and school mapping, school design, school construction and maintenance of school buildings so that the government’s significant resources already committed to school construction and rehabilitation can be spent better aiming at having higher impact in improving Iraq’s education system.

...The MOE is also aware of the need to address other crucial aspects of the education system, such as quality and relevance that have not been addressed yet. The principal challenge for the education sector in Iraq is to modernize the education system, which would include eliminating the current outdated curriculum and instruction methods, reforming teacher training, introducing efficient management techniques, and strengthening the overall capacity of the sector. The MOE has embarked on an initiative to revise and modernize the curriculum for a number of subject areas. With support from a Japanese grant, the MOE has recently revised its English curriculum. The MOE recognizes the need for the curricula designers to strengthen their capacity in modern curricula design and as such has requested for a portion of the Credit to be allocated to upgrading the skills of those tasked with the design of the new curricula. In addition, a large portion of the teaching force is in need of becoming familiar with new and modern teaching skills. The MOE, hence, has asked the Bank’s assistance in supporting a training-of-the-trainers (TOT) program with the goal of preparing a cadre of teacher trainers to train the large group of approximately 60,000 newly recruited teachers in modern teaching methods (World Bank 2009, ‘Project Paper Republic of

Iraq Third Emergency Education Project', 15 June http://www-wds.worldbank.org/external/default/WDSContentServer/WDSP/IB/2009/06/22/000333038_20090622021654/Rendered/PDF/490080PJPR0P09101Official0Use0Only1.pdf – Accessed 12 October 2009– Attachment 42).

The June 2007 report published by the National Recognition Information Centre for the UK may also be of interest, it provides an overview of the structure of Iraq's education system and the training and qualifications held by teachers at various levels (National Recognition Information Centre for the UK 2007, 'Analysis Report on Teacher Training System in Iraq', Refugee Council website, June <http://www.refugeesintoteaching.org.uk/OneStopCMS/Core/CrawlerResourceServer.aspx?resource=7CAAA36F-E71D-4C2B-957C-8FA2E5202E08&mode=link> – Accessed 12 October 2009 – Attachment 43).

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