

**20th Session of the UPR Working Group – Review of Iraq**

**Statement by Austria**

3 November 2014

Austria warmly welcomes H.E. ... and the delegation of Iraq to the UPR and thanks for the submission of their national report.

Austria is seriously concerned by the political instability, intensifying sectarian and ethnic divisions and the increasing and dramatic violations of human rights in Iraq. We are particularly disturbed by reports that the country's diverse religious minorities have come under direct attack by ISIL and by reports about abductions, random killings, and executions perpetrated by other forces against Iraqis of different faiths. We express our full support to the Iraqi government to take appropriate steps to protect members of all religious and ethnic minorities and to counteract the risk of a deepening ethnic and sectarian divide.

We also have serious concerns about the dramatically rising numbers of refugees and IDPs as a result of the violence.

Austria is also worried about the restrictions on journalists, who have suffered from acts of violence and intimidation.

Reports by UNAMI indicate deficiencies in the judicial sector with regards to due process and fair trial standards. Access to justice is reportedly seriously impeded by the lack of capacity, corruption and fear or reprisals.

Austria would like to make the following recommendations:

1. Ensure that all measures to counteract terrorism are in strict conformity with international law;
2. Take immediate measures towards the protection and re-settlement of IDPs;
3. Promptly and impartially investigate killings and violence against journalists and hold perpetrators accountable;
4. Investigate all allegations of torture and disallow as evidence confessions obtained through torture;
5. Take immediate steps to ensure independence of the judiciary by investigating allegations of corruption;
6. Implement a moratorium on executions and work towards fully abolishing the death penalty;
7. Ratify the Optional Protocols to ICCPR, CEDAW and CAT.

I thank you!