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Concluding 2009 and looking forward to the Achievements of 2010, says Iraq's UN Special Envoy, Ad Melkert



SRSR Ad Melkert working out of his Baghdad based Office (UN Photo/Sarmad Al-Safy)



UNDP, the Iraqi Chief of Justice, and German Government signing the agreement of cooperation



IHEC conducts a Ballot Lottery for All Political Entities

Concluding 2009 and looking forward to the Achievements of 2010, says Iraq's UN Special Envoy, Ad Melkert



SRSG Ad Melkert working out of his Baghdad based Office (UN Photo/Sarmad AISafy)

By Randa Jamal

The year 2009 is coming to an end, with a number of promising signs for achievements to be made in 2010, in a country for decades plagued by war, sanctions, and injustice. It was indeed a triumph to vote over an election law that would pave way for a national election on 7 March 2009. The United Nations Assistance Mission for Iraq (UNAMI) played a significant role in bringing together the various political components to generate consensus amongst them.

From his prism, and after spending approximately six months in Iraq, the Special Representative of the United Nations Secretary-General Ad Melkert is increasingly in grip with the situation unfolding in the country. At this juncture, he is working with several Iraqi partners to forge strong partnerships towards a prosperous Iraq. With this backdrop, he emphasized over and over again to the Iraqi people and the government that he is here, along with UN agencies, to advise and to work with them while ensuring the UN mission is as effective as it could be.

On the general objectives of the UN in Iraq, the Special Envoy maintained his initial sentiments he first expressed upon arrival: "the UN will also lay emphasis on supporting governance, and economic and social policy strategies." He added, "I am deeply convinced that by not addressing the huge inequalities and needs in

some parts of the country, they will remain a source of instability." However, economic and social progress depend on the political conditions that would generate consensus and stability. This explains UNAMI's mandate and having to deal with the political agenda: organizing, assisting and supporting the electoral process in addition to addressing political issues, particularly the Arab-Kurd relations in the disputed internal areas—all combined are prerequisites for progress across the board. In a nutshell, when a political agreement is in place, it's still vital for the people to experience improvement in their day-to-day lives, particularly the living standards, the SRSG notes.

Accordingly, he also believes that Iraq's progress requires time and patience. And quite often outsiders have a multitude of expectations surrounding the UN mission and the pace at which progress is being made. He explains that these expectations are not always inherently consistent or compatible with events unfolding on the ground. For instance, the political dimension of regional dialogue and national reconciliation, social and economic policies, human rights, integration of Iraq into the international community, among others, have their own timeframes that are at times intertwined and do not necessarily coincide with that set by outside counterparts. Therefore, Melkert says, "my role should also include interacting with all partners whether they are the international community or the neighboring countries to provide a reality check on expectations and timeframes in which progress could be accomplished with the support of the UN and others". "This would set realistic expectations while simultaneously respecting Iraq's priorities, choices, and impressive history", he emphasized.

For the upcoming period, Melkert anticipates that the election campaign itself will contribute to a free and fair election, which will allow candidates to compete for ideas and positions. Of course the election could either bring the country together or polarize it. "My hope is that in the post election period, the formation of a new government will enable consensus building around major issues that would define stability for the future and thus strong determination for economic and social programmes", he elaborated.

Although the security situation continues to pose challenges to the activities and movement of the UN, Mr. Melkert managed to travel throughout the country: North, South and Center. He also visited voting registration centers in Baghdad, women shelters in Erbil, and prominent religious

leaders in Najaf, among others. He also meets frequently with Iraqi politicians and stakeholders. UNAMI's work with the Governorate Liaison Officers is also important: "they communicate with us on regular basis, briefing us on what is happening in their governorates; we need to communicate with them even more frequently to be in loop on what unfolds in each governorate".

Although a large chunk of his time was spent in Baghdad, the SRSG visited a number of countries relaying the role of UNAMI and what it hopes to achieve for Iraq, in terms of its mandate of assistance and advice. One of them was accepting on behalf of UNAMI the *Sergio Vieira de Mello Prize* in Poland. To Melkert this meant

a great deal: to reflect on all the men and women who are working in the most difficult places in the world as part of the UN mission. He also paid tribute to Sergio de Mello, his predecessor of UNAMI, who fell at the outset of the 19 August 2003 bombing of the UN at the Canal Hotel in Baghdad. Receiving the Sergio de Mello award on behalf of UNAMI in Poland was poignant especially as it points to the importance of international cooperation (side blurb on the prize provided below).

With cautious optimism and latitude in managing the multitude of expectations, Melkert is looking forward to the achievements that 2010 could potentially generate.

The Nagroda Imienia Sergio Vieira de Mello Award



SRSG Melkert receiving the Sergio de Mello Award on Behalf of UNAMI

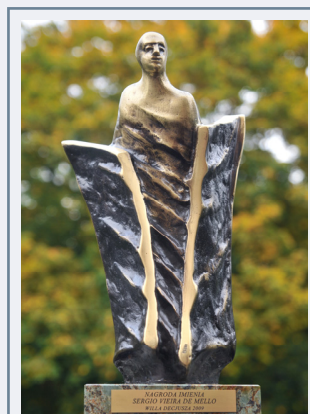
On 8 October 2009, the Special Representative of the United Nations Secretary General Ad Melkert, received the *Nagroda Imienia Sergio Vieira de Mello Prize* on behalf of the United Nations Assistance Mission for Iraq (UNAMI), in Villa Decius of Poland. The ceremony of prizes was held during an international conference entitled *Traps of Freedom*. Upon receipt of the prize, SRSG Melkert relayed his remarks, in which he expressed his gratitude for the international community, particularly Poland, and pointed out to the significance of international cooperation and its necessity in assisting conflict and post-conflict countries. He also elaborated on the role that UNAMI continues to undertake to promote reconciliation

The awards were established following the

initiative of the villa Decius Association in 2003, with the objective of promoting democracy and tolerance, in addition to paying tribute to the late Sergio de Mello, UN High Commissioner for Human Rights and the first Special Representative of UNAMI. The prize is awarded for the merits of peaceful coexistence, cooperation amongst societies, and tolerance for diversity. Given the difficulties and challenges the UN faces in Iraq, the Sergio de Mello prize was awarded to UNAMI in 2009.

The prize is awarded annually in two categories: to individuals and institutions, from Poland and abroad. It is awarded by the Award Committee, which is composed of the High Representatives of the President of the Republic of Poland; Ambassador of the Federative Republic of Brazil to Poland; UN High Commissioner for Refugees; Embassies, Consulates and Foundations (supporting the actions of the Villa Decius Association in mat-

ters related to human rights); Institute of National Remembrance; Commissioner for Civil Rights Protection; founders of the prize; and the Chairman and Director of the Villa Decius Association.



The Sergio de Mello Prize Awarded to UNAMI

IHEC Conducts a Ballot Lottery for Enlisting Political Entities



IHEC conducts a Ballot Lottery for All Political Entities (UN photo)

The Independent High Electoral Commission (IHEC) with the Assistance of the UNAMI Electoral Team, conducted a full Ballot Lottery, on 24 December 2009, at Al-Rasheed Hotel, to determine the order and the numbers for the various political entities/coalition lists, running for the upcoming parliamentary election scheduled for 7 March 2009, and how they would appear on the ballot.

Under the slogan: “The IHEC Conducts a Ballot Lottery for all Competing Political Entities”, the Ballot Lottery was carried out in a transparent fashion.

Deputy Speaker of the Iraqi Parliament Khaled Attiya lauded the Ballot Lottery, “It was a transparent process showcasing democratic mechanisms while treating all political entities equally and fairly”. He added, “These are solid preparations that will lead to 7 March 2010 parliamentary election”.

The majority of commissioners were also present in the event. At the start of the event, they explained the overall procedures for conducting the lottery, while reminded all political entities that dates for the campaigning period will be announced by IHEC in due time. For the Vice Chairman Amal Al-Bayraktar, she expressed satisfaction with having all the political entities present, 86 in total. She said, “the next steps are that the nominated candidates will go through the required vetting process through the Integrity

and Justice Committee and Bureau of Supreme Audit”. For the background check, the names of candidates will be listed without reference to their political entities, a fact that the Deputy Commissioner takes pride in. “This will allow for transparency and no fraud, which is our goal”.

As for UNAMI Electoral team member Anan Sorri, who worked closely with the IHEC team to pan out the Ballot Lottery event, he said that the lottery is important for the IHEC particularly that it follows best international practices in determining where each political entity falls on the voting ballot. “This is a great step that reflects the transparency and credibility that will lead up to the parliamentary election”.

With 86 political entities/coalitions present to draw a number that would enlist them in the Voting Ballot, the event was covered by 20 television channels with a live Broadcast by Al-Iraqiya.

IHEC Holds a Symposium to update Representatives of Political Entities



IHEC meeting with Representatives of the Political Identities (UN / Photo)

On 21 December 2009, the Independent High Electoral Commission (IHEC) for Iraq held a comprehensive symposium for the representatives of various political entities, at Al-Rasheed Hotel, in Iraq’s capital, Baghdad. The Chairman of the IHEC Faraj Al-Haydari said, “This meeting was held to address the representatives of political entities and to speak to them about the main pillars of a successful electoral process”. Addi-

tionally, updating them on the process that follows once the names of nominated candidates are submitted was key, for example the IHEC would need to ensure that the nominees have the credentials, as set by the Commission, to run for the election, checking with the concerned ministries and institutes on their background.

The symposium held under the banner “Towards a common vision for the Success of Election”, addressed four major pillars: the legal framework for elections discussed by Commissioner Qassem Al-Abboudi; administrative preparations made for elections discussed by Commissioner Hamdiya Al-Husainy; election anti-fraud measures discussed by Commissioner Amal Alberqader; and elections campaigns discussed by Commissioner Kareem Al-Tamimi. The introductory remarks were made by the Chairman and the entire conference was concluded by a general discussion. On the same day, the Special Representative of the Secretary-General, Mr. Ad Melkert, met with Mr. Faraj Al-Haydari to discuss the latest developments on the preparations underway for holding a national election scheduled for 7 March 2009.

Approximately 70 political entities were represented and 24 news outlets—Iraqi, regional and international—covered the event.

In Partnering with the German Government and Iraqi Judiciary, UNDP Rule of Law Programme Takes Action in Iraq

By Randa Jamal

Post the US led invasion of Iraq, a large number of Iraqi institutions collapsed, except for a few with systems that remained operational; one of them is the Iraqi Judiciary.

In light of this, the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) sought the opportunity to further empower the Iraqi judiciary through building capacities and sharing international best practices with their Iraqi counterparts. The UNDP Rule of Law Programme also focuses on



UNDP, the Iraqi Chief of Justice, and German Government signing the agreement of cooperation (UN photo)

judicial institutions in order to strengthen frameworks for institutional development towards the empowerment of the Iraqi Judiciary.

Mohammad El-Ghannam, UNDP Senior Advisor for Rule of Law and Human Rights, said that their role entails, “Providing advice to the Government of Iraq (GoI) on policies, frameworks, best practices and approaches to develop judicial institutions for the rule of law in Iraq”. For example, contributing to the development of a new continuing judicial education centre called Judicial Education and Development Institute (JEDI) is one of the programme’s objectives.

Based on the request made by GoI, UNDP approached the German government to discuss the possibility of funding the development and drafting of the civil law curriculum at the JEDI due to the high demand by current and upcoming Iraqi jurists and prosecutors. Among several tasks, UNDP will be responsible for identifying experts in specific areas pertaining to Iraqi law, who UNDP will recruit for the objective of developing specific components of the curriculum. Revisions to the curriculum will be based on feedback solicited from the stakeholders, and it will be further strengthened by a process of piloting/testing within JEDI’s first training term, with input and feedback incorporated for the sessions that follow.

Training of Trainers will be conducted through training courses by international experts to Iraqi academics or jurists in the field of Rule of Law. Teaching methods will employ practical approaches versus traditional ones. For example, the instructors will use case studies with all their phases, from their inception to issuing the final verdict. Additionally, they will also solicit, from the individuals they are training, information on the problems they face and therefore tackle

each problem according to the best judicial practices. For example, if the instructors reviewed a family law case pertaining to a divorce process, they will discuss with their trainees the best method of settling all the related issues: alimony, child custody and issuing the final verdict on the arrangements, El-Ghannam elaborated.

Much optimism surrounds the success that JEDI will generate as Iraq stands to be the mother of Rule of Law by virtue of *Hammurabi's Code of Law*, one of the first written in history, and the country that harnesses the title of the *cradle of civilization*. With all this said, El-Ghannam emphasized that this is an Iraqi driven process and that UNDP's role pertains to supporting and assisting in the provision of technical expertise.

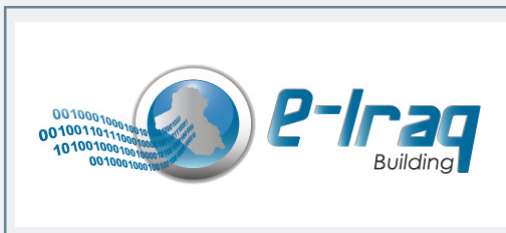
On 22 December 2009, the Iraqi Chief of Justice and the Head of the Iraqi Higher Judicial Council (IHJC) Judge Medhat Al Mahmoud hosted the German Ambassador to Iraq Baron Paul von Maltzahn and UNDP's Iraq Deputy Country Director El Bella Hagona to sign the agreement on Germany's contribution to JEDI. In the context of noting the independence of the Iraqi judiciary, Judge Al Mahmoud said, "Ethnicity and sectarian divisions never entered the Iraqi judiciary and that their criteria is based on skills and capacities". He also expressed his satisfaction regarding the agreement they signed calling it "an episode that would further develop Iraqi Judiciary."

Mr. Hagona noted "UNDP highly values the ongoing development partnership with the IHJC. The finalization of this new agreement with the Federal Republic of Germany marks a new area of cooperation in one of the most critical subjects for peace and state building. The strengthening of the Judiciary contributes towards an improved operational Rule of Law framework for administration and access to justice – and will increase the chances of reaching the Millennium Development Goals".

The German Ambassador said that his country is supportive of such initiatives and looks forward to further cooperation with both UNDP and the Iraqi Judiciary.

As for El-Ghannam he emphasized his optimism about JEDI and believes that it will be fully operational by 2010.

UNDP Held an International E-Governance Conference at Baghdad's International Conference Center



The Government of Iraq, in partnership with UNDP, concluded a 2-day high-level international conference on e-governance. The conference, entitled *Building e-Iraq*, focused on the benefits that the new Information and Communication Technologies (ICTs) can bring to the Iraqi public sector.

The gathering, which took place at the International Conference Center in Baghdad, brought together national and international e-governance experts, and Iraqi public administration decision makers as well as stakeholders representing national, regional and local governorates. In addition, the IT business sector, civil society organizations (CSO) and non-governmental organisations (NGO), donors, academic professionals and researchers from Iraq also attended.

The conference included series of plenary sessions combined with several specialized workshops focusing on critical themes such as policy and regulatory environment, public sector modernization and ICTs, e-service delivery at the local level.

The event was designed to increase awareness among decision makers and general managers within Iraqi line ministries and institutions. By providing concrete and innovative approaches and solutions to well known public administration challenges, the conference beefed up support for e-governance policies and initiatives which are still emerging in the country. The event was designed from a non-technical perspective in which local, national, regional and global experiences were showcased from the vantage point of public administration managers and policy makers.

E-governance provides powerful tools that can also transform government interactions with citizens, businesses, and other parts of government.

UN Agencies Active in Iraq December 2009

- In line with the overall objectives of the project on "Improving Relevance and Quality of Technical and Vocational Education and Training in Iraq", **UN-HABITAT** launched a National Media Campaign to increase awareness and stimulate interest in technical and vocational training among youth for better access to employment in the construction sector. UN-HABITAT along with the Foundation of Technical Education produced a 20-minute documentary and distributed promotion material. The documentary was broadcasted on a number of local and international TV stations.
- As part of the inclusive education awareness campaign, **UNICEF** marked World Disability Day with a series of activities including an art exhibition in Erbil.
- **WHO** organized a workshop on Gender Based Violence for officials of the Ministry of Health and Members of Parliament in Erbil.
- **WHO** presented the results of the Environmental Health Survey at the KRG Ministry of Health
- **UNOPS** concluded a training on the standards of prison management for trainees from the Justice Network for Prisoners and staff from the Ministry of Justice, Ministry of Interior and Prison Management from throughout Iraq.
- The **UNDP** Mine Action technical advisor facilitated and assisted in convening a technical workshop for staff from the Directorate of Mine Action and the Ministry of Environment.
- A "road map" for micro, small and medium enterprises (MSMEs) development was discussed with Iraqi government officials and representatives of the private sector and Iraqi civil society during roundtable organized by **UNOPS/ILO** team in cooperation with **UNDP, UNIDO, and FAO**. This "road map" will be turned into a strategy aimed at the revitalization and diversification of the Iraqi economy, strengthening the competitiveness of Iraqi enterprises, inclusive growth, employment creation and poverty alleviation.
- To support some 2,484 IDPs and vulnerable families across the governorate of Dahuk,

OCHA is coordinating with different UN agencies and NGOs for the assessment of the conditions of these families to help provide the assistance needed.

- **IOM** conducted a series of trainings and workshops on the Assisted Voluntary Return Program, the Humanitarian Security and Stabilization Programme and the IDP Monitoring Program with IOM staff from Baghdad and Basrah and the KRG.
- To help improve access to primary health care services, reduce and stabilize chronic and acute malnutrition among pregnant and lactating women and children under the age of five years, **WFP** provided food assistance to 3,510 pregnant and lactating women, 25,274 malnourished children and their families and 288 TB patients in the most vulnerable districts at ten Governorates in Iraq .

* Information provided by the UNAMI Development & Humanitarian Section.

Quotes from Iraqis December 2009

- "The commission will open polling centers in 15 countries all over the world to enable 1.9 million Iraqis living abroad to cast their votes in the upcoming parliamentary polls." Independent High Electoral Commission member Sirdar Abdulkareem, 27 December 2009, Aswat al-Iraq News Agency.
- "I expected when I returned to Iraq that I would be able to at least build a small house for my children, 50 square meters. So that when I die they'll be able to say: bless our father, he left us this room. I was not able to." Omar Salman, an Iraqi refugee in Syria, 22 December 2009, UNHCR.
- "There are some politicians who belittle al-Fekka issue within Iraq and criticize the Iraqi people and other political powers for demanding an Iranian withdrawal from Iraqi lands. Iraqis will deal with a strong slap to these politicians in the upcoming parliamentary elections." Lawmaker Dhafir al-Ani, head of the Iraqi Accord Front, 24 December 2009, Aswat al-Iraq News Agency.
- "The Iraqi Government had placed huge advertisements around our neighbourhood in Damascus encouraging refugees to return. They promised returnees cash grants and

helping us find employment. We were destitute in Syria and we hoped the assistance would help us rebuild our lives back home. When we arrived in Iraq, nothing materialized." Shahla, Iraqi refugee who returns back to Syria, 22 December 2009, Reuters.

- "The sectarian and political diversity will eliminate the consensual democracy and will give rights to everybody to rule democratically; this would be the beginning of setting foot on the right path." Head of the Iraqi National Assembly MP Osama al-Nijeifi, 29 December 2009, NINA.
- "There are several reasons behind what happened ... misunderstanding of information, incorrect assessments, conspiracy and blackmail, and conflict of interests and bureaucracy." Interior Minister Jawad al-Bolani, 12 December 2009, Reuters.
- "We are expressing solidarity with all the people who have been wronged. We are not going to receive any well-wishers nor hold any social parties, particularly after the recent bombing attacks in Baghdad and the targeting of churches in Mosul, which have claimed the lives of innocent civilians," Archbishop Lewis Sako, 24 December 2009, Aswat al-Iraq News Agency.
- "We hope that the new legislators would be able to re-build the country and improve living conditions for Iraqis." Kamil Haso, a businessman from Dohuk, 1 December 2009, Aswat al-Iraq News Agency.

* These quotes were compiled by the Public Information Office Assistant Ali Abdul-Jalil.

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UNAMI Focus

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