

July 5, 2021

Statement by KRG Office of the Coordinator for International Advocacy (OCIA)

**KRG Utilizes Special Legislations and Regulations to Combat Human Trafficking**

On July 1, 2021, the U.S. Department of State released its annual report on the issue of human trafficking. There is a section in the report dedicated to evaluate the progress made in Iraq and the Kurdistan Region, and according to the report, the region is continuing to work to prevent human trafficking.

Each province in the Kurdistan Region has an office to investigate human trafficking, and these offices have been set up by the KRG Ministry of Interior. Courts and special judges have also been appointed to investigate and prosecute the perpetrators. At the same time, the Kurdistan Parliament, in accordance with Law No 6 (2018), has ratified the Iraqi Parliament law of Combating Human Trafficking.

The offices for combating human trafficking is under the auspices of the Directorate of Human Trafficking, which oversees the issue at the level of the Kurdistan Region. At the same time, there are sub-committees superintended by the High Committee on Combating Human Trafficking, which is chaired by the Director General of the Interior Ministry Diwan. The aforementioned committee meets every two months to discuss the situation of human trafficking and to put in place a working mechanism to deal with it.

Several laws have been enacted in the Kurdistan Region to combat this detested practice. Articles 393, 394, and 395 from the Iraqi Penal Code No 111 (1969) impose severe penalties on those who commit sexual offenses and misconduct against children and women. Additionally, the Prostitution Law No 8 (1988) 3 has banned all forms of illicit sex, and those who trade in victims will be severely punished.

At the same time, in the Law No 6 (2018) of the Kurdistan Parliament, the trafficking of children is enshrined in the same legal framework and heavy punitive measures are set accordingly. In the case of foreign workers, Regulation No 2 (2015) of the Ministry of Labor and Social Affairs is implemented.

Law No 6 (2018) of the Kurdistan Parliament defines human trafficking in accordance with the international Protocol of Palermo and recognizes it as an international crime. About twenty human trafficking cases have been opened and the suspects have been detained. At the same time, there are four women shelters in the region, in which the victims receive support and health care.

The regional government provides assistance to the victims, including the hiring attorneys, covering expenses, resolving their issues and bringing them back into the community. At the same time, the rights of witnesses are protected, and their names will not be disclosed during - and after - the legal proceedings and will remain under the protection of the government until their safety is guaranteed.

Also, the prohibition of child recruitment is in accordance with the principles of military prosecutions and the Law of Military Punishment. KRG abhors recruiting children and reiterates that this practice has no space in the Kurdistan Region.