

May 18, 2021

Office of the Coordinator for International Advocacy: KRG Reaffirms its Commitment to Democratic Principles

On May 11, 2021, Jeanine Hennis-Plasschaert, Special Representative of Secretary-General (SRSG) and the Head of the United Nations Assistance Mission for Iraq (UNAMI), briefed the United Nations Security Council (UNSC) about the latest developments in the country, and posed the organization's observations in this regard.

The SRSG commented on the recent spikes of Covid-19 infections in the early stages of vaccination campaign, need of structural reforms in the oil sector, approval of the federal budget law, successful passing of the Yezidi Survivor Law that recognizes the atrocities committed against Yezidi girls and women as international crimes, and the potential impediments to a credible election late this year.

The SRSG also alluded to the calls of KRG for UN mediations to sustain open-end discussions in Erbil-Baghdad dialogue on Sinjar and Kirkuk.

Meanwhile, as far as KRG is concerned, it reiterates that it remains dedicated to consolidate and exemplify the democratic values pertinent to good governance, freedom of expression, institutional integrity, women and youth empowerment, among others.

The KRG is engaged with UNAMI and the United Nations Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR) on media freedom – both on broader policy and on individual cases – and remains committed to this relationship. A free media is an essential element in a well-functioning democracy. Kurdistan region has a free and vibrant media, and that Kurdistan is a regional exemplar of freedom of expression and freedom of the media.

The KRG is committed to addressing concerns about media freedom where they are raised and is committed to working with relevant international partners including UN agencies to further improve media protections.

KRG stresses that there is a clear split between the jurisdiction of the court and of the government. KRG respects the independence of the judiciary, committed to a coherent check-and-balance system, and cannot interfere in the judicial process.

The Kurdistan Regional Government is fully committed to the rule of law, to a fair and impartial legal process, and to the freedom of the media. The Government is currently working with UNAMI and the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights to ensure Kurdistan is fully meeting its international human rights obligations and is following international human rights best practice, in particular in respect of media freedom.