



July / August 2009 Activities, Issue 36 & 37

Dear Friends,

During July and August, we have been working hard to implement projects to promote our vision of a free and democratic Iraq. IF Executive Director Rend Al-Rahim appeared on several prominent media outlets to share our vision. IF is pleased to announce that it produced Iraq's first Universal Periodic Review report for the United Nations. In addition, IF staff held coalition-building and advocacy workshops throughout Iraq during the reporting period. As part of our work to empower the community of Mdaina, Iraq, we are pleased to report that we have trained 100 teachers and small business owners on computer technology to improve the operation of local businesses and enhance the ability of teachers to deliver education to their students. Following these training workshops, IF held a graduation ceremony for all participants of the Mdaina Education Project, including the literacy and IT trainees. During the months of July and August, IF staff working to improve the lives of Iraq widows have concluded a training cycle in Baghdad and continue providing valuable skills training and empowerment programming in Basra.

IF's HRAI team also produced its seventh and eighth newsletters during this time. The newsletters were produced in an updated format, featuring photos, and media coverage in July and August. HRAI's newsletter reports on the HRAI project and the human rights situation in Iraq.

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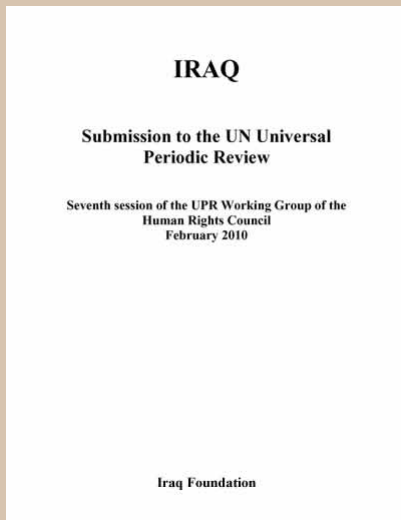
[IF Publishes 7th and](#)

As always, please do not hesitate to contact us should you have any questions about our projects or activities!

Sincerely,

Joseph Sandor
Communication Officer
Iraq Foundation

IF Produces Iraq's First Universal Periodic Review Report for the United Nations



On July 1, 2009, IF held a training for members of the Human Rights Advocacy Coalition (HRAI) in Erbil, Iraq, which centered on the United Nations' Universal Periodic Review (UPR) report. The training focused on the role of NGOs in the UPR submission and providing the participants with the technical tools to write a collective UPR shadow report. After successful completion of this training and a two-day follow up meeting in Baghdad on 29th of July, the HRAI coalition wrote Iraq's first UPR report and submitted it to the UN on August 31 2009. UPR is a newly-introduced global mechanism under

the Human Rights Council (HRC), which was created by the UN General Assembly in March 2006. Through the UPR, national human rights reports submitted by both governments and NGOs are presented for expert review in an international forum. The Iraq Foundation produced the first such report on Iraq. The report examines a number of human rights indicators including, the prevalence of torture in Iraqi prisons and detention centers, the use of the death penalty, as well as violations against women and children, weak children protection, weak rule of law, targeted killing and forced displacement of minority groups.

[Read the UPR Report \(PDF / English\)](#)



IF holds 3rd Advocacy Workshop and Coalition-Building Meeting

IF held its third advocacy workshop from July 2 - 4 as

[8th Human Rights Newsletter](#)



IF In the Media:

During the months of July and August, IF's Executive Director Rend Al-Rahim promoted IF's vision and made several media appearances in prominent Arabic and international news outlets. Ms. Al-Rahim appeared Al-Hurra to discuss the visit of Prime Minister Nouri al-Maliki on July 22, 2009. In August, Ms. Al-Rahim was interviewed by BBC World News and appeared on Aljazeera's half-hour weekly political show "Inside Iraq" on Al Jazeera English to discuss the changes of US policy towards Iraq from 2003 until the present.

part of the Human Rights Advocacy Initiative (HRAI) project. This workshop was held in Erbil, Iraq following the UPR training. This workshop focused on advocacy, including file preparation, strategic planning, networking, coordination with the media and the various challenges that NGOs might face while implementing their strategies. Following this workshop, HRAI members held a one-day coalition building meeting aimed at reviewing the HRAI project activities and sharing experiences and concerns. Coalition members also came up with a plan to hold a human rights week with concerted human rights related activities in the provinces. 19 coalition members (both men and women) representing 15 governorates attended the workshop/meetings and engaged with interest in the discussions.



IF Publishes 6th Human Rights Newsletter!

The Human Rights Advocacy Initiative (HRAI) published its seventh and eighth newsletter in July and August 2009. These newsletter reports on the human rights situation in Iraq. Formed in May 2008 by the Iraq Foundation, the goal of the HRAI project is to empower Iraqi human rights leaders to be better advocates for human rights. Published in Arabic, HRAI's monthly newsletters are available on our website.

[Read Newsletter \(July 2009\)](#)

[Read Newsletter \(August 2009\)](#)

[Quick Links:](#)



IF Holds Capacity-Building Workshops in the Southern Governorates



From 6 -12 July, IF held two back-to-back capacity building workshops, to support the Southern Governorates NGO Capacity Building project. Each workshop gathered together ten participating NGOs to review and expand the skills learned last November in Sulaimaniya, which include Strategic planning, project proposal design and project management, advocacy and networking, governance and management, and financial planning. In addition to these workshops, a dinner was held on the 8th of July for 20 NGOs from Basra, Nassirya and Maysan to facilitate communication and networking at a regional level. Chief Operating Officer Selwa Gailani attended the workshops and dinner.

IF Launches Computer Skills Training for Small Business Owners and Teachers in Mdaina, Iraq



During the month of July, IF launched computer training courses for 100 small business owners and teachers. Designed to provide basic computer

literacy to enhance these participants businesses and teaching abilities, the classes provided 56 continuous hours of computer training from July to August. To ensure gender diversity, participants included an equal number of men and women. At the conclusion of the training in August, IF conducted theoretical and practical examinations to the trainees, showing substantial improvement!

IF Celebrates the Graduation of All Participants in the Mdaina Education Project



IF held a graduation ceremony on August 19, 2009, for all the participants of the Mdaina Education Project (MEP), including participants in the literacy programs, general computer skills courses, and advanced information technology program. This ceremony was held in the computer center, refurbished and renovated

by IF. The opening remarks were given by Mr. Sa'eed Fadhil Juma'a, Deputy Head of Mdaina Local Council. Graduation certificates were distributed to all the graduating trainees during this ceremony. Ms. Dhefah Al-Jarahi, IF's Director of Administration and Finance spoke about the achievements of Mdaina Education Project. This computer center will serve the community of Mdaina and be maintained by the community and trained IT staff.

[Learn more about Mdaina Education Project...](#)

IF Helps Iraqi Widows in Baghdad and Basra



As part of our efforts to improve the lives of Iraqi widows, IF is pleased to report that we have successfully concluded the second cycle of trainings in Baghdad, as part of the Widows' Empowerment Project (WEP). The goal of the WEP project is to train disadvantaged Iraqi widows on a set of skills that will empower them politically, and increase their economic

independence. IF will hold the graduation ceremony after the holy month of Ramadan ends in September. The third cycle of widows training will commence in Baghdad in early October.

Throughout July and August, training is proceeding according to schedule in IF's Basra training centers. With the help of Qurna Municipal Council, IF has located a work place in a kindergarten for widows and seamstresses who, after completing WEP training, received grants from International Relief and Development (IRD). IF staff is supervising implementation of these grants and is working hard

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to secure employment opportunity for all participating widows.

[Learn more about the Widow's Empowerment Project and View Photos...](#)

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