

## RTI/IRI NORTHERN FOCUS GROUPS

Contact: Steven Moore, IRI  
smoore@iri.org  
Gurbux Singh, RTI  
gsingh01@lgp-iraq.org

### Background

RTI were asked to conduct focus groups in Basrah, Najaf, Hillah, Baghdad, Baquba, Mosul, Erbil and Sulaymania around public opinion regarding the agreement between the CPA and the Iraqi Governing Council. IRI and RTI previously reported on the southern groups, conducted in December.

This report reports on groups conducted in Mosul, Erbil and Sulaymania, from January 8 through January 13, 2004, plus an extra, unrequested session conducted in Basrah after two days after the December 29 Basrah town hall meeting.

### Methodology

This series of groups has drastically decreased bias associated with the groups being connected with Americans or CPA. The groups were conducted in a university setting with only Iraqi staff using the name of the Independent Institute for Administrative and Civil Society Studies (IIACCS), a new public opinion research firm in Baghdad with which IRI works. IRI expatriate staff reviewed video tapes of the groups taped on a small security type camera at IRI offices in Baghdad and discussed the findings at length with IRI local staff.

Even without Americans present, suspicious Iraqis accused the moderators of being CIA and in league with other various organizations. The anti-American bias was much more pronounced in the southern focus groups.

Recruitment remains the most challenging aspect of this type of project. IIACCS recruited some of the participants in some cities, while IRI local staff recruited participants in other cities. Participants were paid 25,000 dinar for their participation, but IRI local staff found that providing recruits the opportunity to have their opinion heard was a superior recruiting technique. That being said, difficulties associated with recruiting created a bias toward educated (particularly academic) Iraqis who are more affluent than average.

While not very representative of the population at large, the participants are opinion leaders, whose provide valuable information.

IRI moderators have increased in skill level over the last six weeks. Rather than asking questions on the discussion guide and accepting any answer, the moderators have learned to probe to get the answers they need. They also have come to better understand the importance of being objective, decreasing bias associated with giving their opinion to the group.

## Preliminary Draft – For Discussion Purposes Only

### Key Findings

- The main problem with the agreement is not that Iraqis do not like the agreement. Quite the contrary. Most groups were quite happy with the prospect of the agreement, but virtually none of the groups believed it would happen. ←
- There is little correlation between educating the participants on the agreement and their willingness to believe the agreement. However, virtually all of the participants felt that the education process is important and welcome.
- The antidote to Iraqi disbelief is action by the CPA. Specifically, the Iraqis need to believe that the security situation is improving. However, any promise by the CPA that is kept will likely have a positive result.
- The word "respect" in referring to the Islamic majority in Iraq tends to annoy Arabs. They react to it like it is condescending.
- Freedom of press and freedom of expression are both very much less important to the Kurds than the right to exist the right to not be discriminated against.
- Arabs tend to feel that freedom of press and freedom of expression will increase civil strife by people publishing newspapers and sniping at rival groups. This is not just felt between Sunni and Shiia, but as well (perhaps more) between Shiia factions.
- Even in the Kurdish north, where the largest reservoir of goodwill toward the Coalition remains, there is little faith in the ability of the Coalition to provide for the rights of Kurds in the transition process.
- Similarly, Arabs are citing the UN as an objective arbitrator for the handover of sovereignty.
- In terms of timespan waiting for the elections to come, the Kurds think it is too short, and the Basrahns think it is too long.
- The Kurds do not trust the Arabs. They feel like they have had some 12 years of democracy, effective government and relative prosperity. They are unsure why the Kurdish people should cast their lot in an election that is dominated demographically by Arabs.
- Without strict direction by IRI moderators, the answer to every question in Arab cities is "security." Similarly, in Kurdish cities, the answer to every question is "Kurdish autonomy" or "Federalism."
- In about a third to a half of the groups in both the north and south, there existed an undercurrent of self-reliance in the matter of security. One or two people in these

## Preliminary Draft – For Discussion Purposes Only

groups would place responsibility for security on the Iraqi people themselves, rather than point to the Coalition as failing to provide security.

- As with the December groups, the Iraqi police are seen as ineffective, corruptible and poorly trained. *curious ?*
- All groups were concerned about what should happen if a substantial number of Iraqis do not approve the constitution in the referendum. One woman was worried about a number as low as 1% rejecting the constitution.
- Many of the opinion leaders feared that the less educated people would waste their vote because they would associate the referendum with the Saddam referendums, where the outcome was pre-ordained.
- The Kurds in particular feared that the southern masses would sway to vote in a particular way by just a few religious leaders.

### Analysis

Following is a focus group discussion guide with responses from the participants and analysis answering each question, with the city from which the information came noted. Questions from the discussion guide are bolded, while participant quotes are italicized.

On 15 Nov the CPA announced that political authority would be transferred to the Iraqi government. Were you aware of this decision?

In general, the northern cities were much less aware and much less educated on the agreement.

*“Why has the media not told us about these agreements?” -- 24 year old female student from Sulaymania*

These groups were conducted prior to the town hall meeting in Mosul, which could be a contributing factor. Additionally, IRI found that education efforts by non-CPA organizations were stronger in the south.

How did you find out?

Satellite TV, specifically Al-Jazeera, was the most frequently mentioned source of news. However, focus groups cannot measure penetration of message, and this information is valid only for the people in the groups. Note that these groups skew educated and affluent, which are the group of people most likely to have access to satellite TV.

Note as well that in many of the groups, people say that Iraqi TV should take a greater role in educating people on the agreement. In particular, the focus group participants

## Preliminary Draft – For Discussion Purposes Only

were worried that the lesser educated Iraqis would cast an uninformed vote, or would vote by the order of their cleric. Many suggested a television campaign as an effective way to educate the masses.

*"The caucuses will be better understood if people get to watch TV programs to explain them, rather than watching some television sit-com." – 28 year old female computer programmer from Basrah*

**What were your feelings upon hearing of this decision?**

*I am afraid that the authority will be held by an Arab so that there will be no difference than the last regime. – 24 year old female student in Erbil*

**Do you believe it?**

In general, the feelings of northern Iraqis mirror our findings throughout Iraq. People want to believe the agreement, but are reluctant to do so.

*I am optimistic about the prospect of power being transferred to the Iraqis, but I don't trust that it will happen – 21 year old female law student in Erbil*

**What makes it believable/unbelievable to you?**

*We don't know if the GC knows about it or not! Why did they not talk about it for a month after they wrote it? – 43 year old male political science professor in Erbil*

**Now I'm going to give you an overview of the agreement.**

<distribute agreement>

**Let's take a few minutes to look over it and then we'll talk about it. Please write down your first impressions. Especially, write down the parts of the agreement that you may have questions about. Or, think about those parts of the agreement that may not be very clear to the least educated Iraqis.**

<Take agreement back up>

**What is your first impression of the agreement?**

**Do you believe it?**

The problem with the agreement is not in whether the Iraqis like it – it is in whether they believe it will happen. The focus groups did not reveal any correlation between knowledge of the agreement and believability of the agreement.

## Preliminary Draft – For Discussion Purposes Only

*"I believe in it, but it is not easy to make real. I wish it were more than just ink on paper."  
– 25 year old woman in Mosul*

In general, people are waiting for some application or external event to validate the agreement.

**"This (the agreement) is happy story, but the CPA say that they will provide the security. In my opinion, if they can't provide security for themselves, how can they provide it for us?" – 28 year old female computer programmer from Basrah**

**"I will believe it if the Americans leave, and that is impossible." – 36 year old male education administrator from Mosul**

In central and southern Iraq the answer to every question, regardless of the question, is "security." In northern Iraq, security is an issue as well, but the answer to every question is "What about the Kurds?"

**"The paper we read is obscure and foggy and needs a lot of clarification in order for it to be understandable for the simple people and even for us. The Kurdish issue hasn't been mentioned in any way." – 24 year old female student in Sulaymania**

**"I feel pessimistic, and I don't want the agreement to be applied. There must be a self-governing system given to the Kurds. Their rights must be preserved before writing the constitution."—35 year old woman with a bachelor's degree from Erbil**

Let's take some of the specific parts of the agreement and put them on the white board.

By February 28, 2003, the Governing Council will approve a Transitional Administrative Law that guarantees basic rights for all Iraqis during the transition, including freedom of speech and freedom of press.

What questions do you have about this?

What questions do you think that cleaning people and taxi drivers might have about it?

What fears and concerns do you think people will have about this part of the agreement?

probe: do you think that Iraqis are worried that their basic rights will suffer under this agreement?

## Preliminary Draft – For Discussion Purposes Only

**probe: what do you think about the governing council writing this? Who should write the Transitional Administrative Law to manage the transition to sovereignty?**

Probably most surprising about this part of the agreement from a Western perspective is the undercurrent of fear of freedom of speech and freedom of the press in the focus groups.

*The freedom of speech... what if that speech wasn't right and critical toward certain issues? I think the freedom of speech thing is an ~~over-rated~~ thing: – 37 year old male health worker in Mosul*

*"Is the freedom of press when everyone will say the thing that they want?" – 42 year old female physician in Mosul*

*"The Iraqi people need the freedom, but there must be control of it." – 26 year old female BA in French arts in Mosul*

The Kurdish groups feel they are working from a much more basic right than freedom of speech and freedom of the press – the right to exist, religious rights, the right to have a representative in the government, equal job opportunities, and the right not to be discriminated against in general.

*"Why mention this obscure right about the media?" – 30 year old female pharmacologist in Sulaymania with agreement from most of the group*

*"What about the rights of the Kurdish people?" – 3 male teachers in their early twenties in Erbil*

*"(the agreement) should reflect the free and honest opinions of the Kurdish people, not just the rights of the media." – 34 year old male masters student from Sulaymania*

Even in post-town hall meeting Basrah, the women's group felt that freedom of the press and freedom of speech would exacerbate ethnic and religious differences and might lead to civil strife.

*"We are in a critical condition. There is no benefit from the freedom of expression since it will create a civil war. There should be limitations to prevent mistakes." -- 28 year old female computer programmer from Basrah*

*"People from different religions will start newspapers on their own and start trouble." – 65 year old female professor in Basrah*

Probing by the moderators revealed that these Basrah opinions even apply to censoring the Shiia majority in the south of Iraq. Participants noted that Shiia are fractured, and felt that widespread freedom of expression would lead to further splintering and violence among the Shiia sects.

## **Preliminary Draft – For Discussion Purposes Only**

While not revealed directly by the focus groups, the IRI local staff conducting the groups said that earlier in the day some local representatives of the Islamic Da'wa Party held a meeting on the campus of the university explaining the IGC/CPA agreement. IRI local staff felt that these opinions among the men's group were generated as a result of that meeting.

**The Transitional Administrative Law will respect the Islamic identity of the majority of the Iraqi people, while providing guarantees of religious freedom for all Iraqis.**

**What questions do you have about this?**

**What questions do you think that cleaning people and taxi drivers might have about it?**

**What fears and concerns do you think people will have about this part of the agreement?**

The similarities in response of the groups on this subject breaks down between the Kurdish cities and Basrah/Mosul.

Three of the four groups in Basrah and Mosul (the exception being the Mosul women) took exception to the word "respect" in this part of the agreement. The reaction was particularly profound in Basrah – possibly due to the aforementioned Islamic party meeting on the university campus, or perhaps the difference is due to a wider difference between Islamic passions in Mosul and Basrah.

The Mosul men's group used the opportunity to talk about the importance of Islam as the foundation of Iraq, while the Basrah groups tended to feel that "respect" was condescending.

"What do they mean by 'will respect?' We want them to respect us as Iraqis and understand that 80% are Muslims. We were raised with Christians, Sabia, Sunna... we don't need others to teach us how to respect." – 39 year old college female teacher in Basrah

"If this part will give all the religions their freedom, there will be a fragmentation between the Iraqis." – 19 year old female student in Basrah

"I am provoked by the word 'respect.' Why don't they just confess that Islam is the religion of this country?" – 31 year old male with a post-graduate education in Basrah

## **Preliminary Draft – For Discussion Purposes Only**

*"What do they mean by respect the Islamic identity...? Do they mean only respecting the relationship between the person and God? What we want is that Islam is the basis of the law of Iraq." – 61 year old male retired teacher in Mosul*

*"Instead of respect it would be better to say guarantee the protection of the other religions." – 62 year old male ex-military officer in Mosul*

*They have to change this part and write that the formal religion in Iraq is the Islam with respecting the other religions. – 49 year old male headmaster of a teacher's institute in Mosul*

The Kurdish groups were on the whole more interested in the rights of minorities, perhaps since they are a minority themselves, although Islamic pride did play a significant role in the groups.

*I prefer that Iraq be liberal country with respect to all religions. – 23 year old male administrator in Erbil, 23 year old male teacher in Erbil and 43 year old political science professor*

*Being Kurds we feel that there is no need for this section, for we are not racist, unlike the Arab who always tried to control the minorities and religiously differentiate between Sunni and Shiite, Christianity and Islam. – 23 year old female law student*

Other group members pointed out the hypocrisy of the racist nature of this statement, but the fear of more abuse at the hands of the Arabs seems to be present in all of our Kurdish focus groups.

*Here in Sulaymania we don't discriminate basing on religion. We can say our society live in a harmony, so this item will not provoke any question. – 56 year old female professor, with agreement from the group*

Both groups in Erbil said they thought the specific minority religions should be mentioned in the basic law. One can assume that this is indicative of the Kurdish desire to have their rights mentioned in the basic law, and a willingness to coalesce with other minorities.

*The agreement should contain something to explain the freedom of all religions. – Erbil male 21 year old college student*

*I want the rights of each religion to be equally represented in the constitution – 42 year old female high school educated employee in Erbil*

*Every religion has it own ideas, so it would be better if these ideas are mentioned in the new constitution. – 30 year old female civil servant in Erbil*



## **Preliminary Draft – For Discussion Purposes Only**

Basrah women have fear of control by outside groups, and use it as an excuse to be concerned about allowing too much religious freedom.

**Sure the people will have fears and concerns about (this section of the agreement). The law has to determine the type of religion and the type of freedom. For other religions they can publish a newspaper or a magazine, they can enjoy their holy days but without affecting the Muslims. – 22 year old female researcher in Basrah**

**Other people from outside Iraq are trying to make a problem here; the Jewish, the Wahabi. -- 39 year old female university professor in Basrah**

**Based on the Transitional Administrative Law, by May 31, 2004, local caucuses will be convened in each of Iraq's 18 governorates to elect delegates from among their number for an Iraqi Transitional National Assembly.**

**What questions do you have about this?**

**What questions do you think that cleaning people and taxi drivers might have about it?**

**probe: do you think that people understand what a caucus is? What do you think the difference is between a caucus and an election?**

**What fears and concerns do you think people will have about this part of the agreement?**

The caucuses are widely misunderstood in all the cities. The numerous questions are detailed in the attachment labeled "Questions." Only in three Kurdish groups and Basrah did useful information come out about concerns of the participants.

The men in Erbil were unanimous in their concern about the transitional period. One participant pointed out that the Iraqi constitution has been transitional since 1970. All were concerned about the instability that might come about during a transitional period.

The caucuses caused concern among women in Erbil.

**Who will manage this process (the election of the representatives), I think this part of the obscure of this agreement & this will lead to serious negative results. – 31 year old woman from Sulaymania with a post-graduate education**

As we have seen all over Iraq, security remains a major issue.

**How can hold an elective convention while we suffer a bad security condition?—28 year old woman with a post-graduate degree in Erbil**

## **Preliminary Draft – For Discussion Purposes Only**

*(in agreement) We want active steps to afford security than we should move to the elective convention. – 28 year old female in Erbil*

In Basrah, even well educated male participants are looking toward outside validation for the caucus – clerics and the United Nations.

*This part is clear for us but we depend on our clerics who have notes about this part.— 46 year old male PhD in Basrah*

*We want the UN to be the supervisor of the election because it represents an independent doesn't relate to any country – 53 year old male physics professor in Basrah*

*By March 15, 2005 direct, one-man, one-vote elections will be held for a constitutional convention. This convention will meet to write a permanent constitution.*

**What questions do you have about this?**

**What questions do you think that cleaning people and taxi drivers might have about it?**

**What fears and concerns do you think people will have about this part of the agreement?**

**Probe: Do you think Iraqis will wait until this long for an election?**

This section provokes numerous questions, detailed in the Questions attachment to this document.

There is a stark contrast between the north and south in terms of the length of time the participants are willing to wait for an election. The south wants elections very quickly, while the north prefers to wait as long as possible.

The female group in Sulaymania all felt that waiting for a constitution was OK, and that the Kurds would wait as long as it took to assure Kurdish rights in the constitution. This was echoed in Erbil.

*We don't care if the constitution is civilian; we just care about the federal point – 28 year old male law researcher from Erbil*

Since most of our focus group participants are well-educated opinion leaders, there is concern among some of them about what the lesser educated Iraqis will do in an election. Many of them are concerned that the vote of the lesser educated masses will be

## **Preliminary Draft – For Discussion Purposes Only**

determined by only a few people. Think of this comment from a focus group participant in Mosul in context of the numerous comments from Basrah about the necessity of following the will of the clerics in choosing a leader.

*"I think since the simple people don't understand the procedure in the right way and they don't know the exact value of their votes, how will they determine the fate of Iraq? Certain groups can affect the mind of the simple people and change their opinions. This is a problem since there are so many uneducated people." – male accountant, high school education, 50 years old in Mosul*

While the dependence upon the opinions of clerics in the south, the northern Iraqis are much less reliant on the opinions of their religious leaders.

*"As a citizen I can freely elect the person who will represent me, not depending only on the clerics. We can elect the person who will serve our country and people." – 53 year old male doctor of physics in Basrah*

In fact, while the Kurdish groups showed an undercurrent of affinity for the Shiia who had been similarly oppressed by Saddam, the Kurds are quite concerned about leaving their own fate up to the southern masses.

*People should make choices far away from external influence in the referendum, in order to be responsible for their choice. – 28 year old woman from Erbil with a post-graduate degree.*

Kurds in general don't want to be governed by Arabs, and believe that this is a pivotal point for their independence – if they don't get it done right now, then they believe that there is fifty years of armed struggle ahead of them. The Erbil women's group felt that the Arabs would not choose the sort of Federalism desired by the Kurds (3 regions vs. 18 regions), if they chose Federalism at all.

Some members of the male group in Erbil were quite passionate about getting back to their homes in Kirkuk, and were willing to trade away Kirkuk's oil revenues to do so.

The Sulaymania women's group thought that the whole process is complicated and even the term (constitution) is too obscure for the simple people to understand.

Most participants in Basrah's female focus group felt that the USA was benefiting from the (in their view) long period of time before the elections.

*"I think the reason that it is taking a long time because they are writing the constitution in the United States and will send it here." – 28 year old female computer programmer from Basrah*

This is a joke, but it was agreed to by everyone.

## **Preliminary Draft – For Discussion Purposes Only**

Many of our participants felt that less educated Iraqis will associate referendums with the phony elections of the former regime. They think that these people will not vote, or will not mark their ballots in an informed fashion.

*"The Iraqi people used to try many referendums (under the former regime) but never once did they respect the procedure since they already know the results... this is what people know about referendums." -- 22 year old female biology student from Basrah*

*"...people know about the old way (the way of the former regime) of referendums, but they need to know now what is the real meaning of the referendum." -- 39 year old female college professor from Basrah*

The Kurds are proud of their last 12 years of democracy, and are reluctant to give up their already functioning government to become part of the rest of Iraq's instability.

*We want Federalism, but the kind of this federalism is still unclear. Here in Kurdistan we have a constitution approved by our parliament. What about that? Will it be considered or not in the new general constitution?—male PhD from Sulaymania*

Their concerns are likely valid. One of the more educated male members of the Basrah focus group provided a structure into which he classified Basrahns.

*"People can be divided into three groups: the first one is those who follow the clerics, the second one is those who follow parties and the other group is those who don't follow anybody but I see that the majority of the people are in the first group." -- 31 year old man with a masters in Arabic literature*

While there is much confusion surrounding the constitutional drafting process, at least one of the group members was anxious to participate.

*"One man one vote – what does that mean? What does a person need to do to nominate himself?" -- male accountant, high school education, 50 years old in Mosul*

**After the constitution is drafted, it will be approved by the Iraqi people in a referendum.**

**What questions do you have about this?**

**What questions do you think that cleaning people and taxi drivers might have about it?**

**probe: do you think that people understand what a referendum is?**

**What fears and concerns do you think people will have about this part of the agreement?**

## **Preliminary Draft – For Discussion Purposes Only**

The entire men's group in Sulaymania was concerned about the referendum, and how it might impact Kurdish rights.

All the groups showed concern about what might happen if substantial (or less substantial) portions of the Iraqi electorate did not vote for the constitution.

*If the Iraqi people didn't approve the constitution, what will happen then? Even if 1% refuses it, that 1% is not a small ratio. What can we do then? -- 39 year old female college professor in Basrah*

While no group came out and said that less than unanimous acceptance of the constitution would cause civil strife, that was implied.

Many groups have concerns about the "all or nothing" nature of a referendum, and propose a "line item" vote.

Some group members felt that the process excluded them, and that they didn't have much of a choice in the matter should the Iraqis desire independence.

*"We must accept the constitution even if we don't like it. If we don't vote for it, then we will not have independence, so we must vote for it!" – 19 year old female college student from Basrah*

**By December 31, 2005, national elections for a new Iraqi government will be held based on the new constitution. The elected government will assume power. The transitional government will be dissolved.**

**What questions do you have about this?**

**What questions do you think that cleaning people and taxi drivers might have about it?**

**What fears and concerns do you think people will have about this part of the agreement?**

There is a conflict in public opinion regarding the shame of being protected by foreigners versus the need for a well-trained, well-equipped force to keep security in Iraq. This need for the CF to keep security was well-documented in December's groups.

*"The Iraqi people cannot accept being protected by foreigners. The persistence of the CPA for a longer time means the persistence of instability. – 39 year old female college professor in Basrah*

## **Preliminary Draft – For Discussion Purposes Only**

*The period is too short; one year is not enough to make election -- 51 year old sociology professor in Erbil*

Even in Kurdistan, where our moderators saw more of a reserve of US sympathy than anywhere else we have conducted groups, there is pessimism about the US conducting the election.

*If the US going to supervise the elections, our rights will be lost. – 18 year old female high school student in Erbil*

*I'm afraid if the same people ruling now will remain in power, I mean the GC and the coalition forces; they will not preserve the rights of the Kurdish people. – 41 year old college educated male from Sulaymania & 52 year old high school educated male from Sulaymania*

*Throughout this process, Coalition Forces will continue to work side-by-side with new Iraqi police and security institutions to ensure a peaceful transition to a sovereign, democratic, secure Iraq.*

**What questions do you have about this?**

**What questions do you think that cleaning people and taxi drivers might have about it?**

**What fears and concerns do you think people will have about this part of the agreement?**

People in many groups had concerns about just what the role of the CF might be, and how the Iraqis might have sovereignty if the CF remained.

*"If the CPA is going to be part of providing security, then I don't think we can call this transferring authority." – 20 year old college student studying Arabic in Basrah*

*"Keeping security is the work of the Iraqi people without depending on the CPA." -- 22 year old male pharmacy student in Basrah*

This is in keeping with the small strain of self-reliance in the focus groups. In many groups, one or two people talk about self-reliance of the Iraqi people in the matter of security. This vein of public opinion could be tapped through a public education campaign on how Iraqis can participate in their own security.

In a couple of the groups, some of the members showed disdain for the new Iraqi police uniforms, which remind them of the US uniforms.

## **Preliminary Draft – For Discussion Purposes Only**

*"Who are the Iraqi police? Those who have no weapons and don't train enough. It is not a realistic thing because police now can't keep security – they are not ready for that. When I see police with their new uniform, it is not respectful." 31 year old Basrah male with a masters in Arab literature*

The sense that the CF only protect themselves was prevalent in December's focus groups in the south, and showed itself in an undercurrent in this set of groups.

*The Americans aren't supporting the IPF unless it is for their own protection. Since the previous Iraqi army is involved in war crimes and it won't be able to come back, people will think it is better to provide the IPF with advanced weapons and equipment. -- male accountant, high school education, 50 years old in Mosul*

*"Most of the police are kids only working for salaries. We want a mix of the old experience with the police." – 38 year old female high school graduate in Mosul*

Mosul groups also expressed an interest in seeing the return of the military, the old army, to keep security. This opinion is more pronounced in Mosul, and perhaps they the rest of Iraq isn't quite as anxious to see the return of the military. Mosul has a reputation as a military city, which may explain why it is interested in seeing the old army return. One of our moderators said that the running joke in Mosul is that a man cannot find a woman to marry him if he holds a rank below lieutenant.

However, this is indicative of the desire for alternatives to the current security situation.

Finally, the security question underpins everything in Iraq. This sentiment was found in groups throughout Iraq. Participants are reluctant to believe anything CPA says while security is still a problem.

*Good end to the story, but the CPA says that they will provide the security for us. But in my opinion, if they couldn't provide security for themselves, how can they provide it for us? – 28 year old female computer programmer from Basrah*

### **QUESTIONS**

Following are questions that Iraqis had about the process, reported by city.

#### **Erbil men**

- ☐ Where is the right of the Kurdish people?
- ☐ There are eighteen governorates, so where is the right of the Kurdish people?
- ☐ Why do we need this transitional period?
- ☐ Is the constitution is coming from the election or vise versa?

#### **Erbil women**

## **Preliminary Draft – For Discussion Purposes Only**

- Only two kinds of freedom were mentioned (freedom of speech, freedom of press), were they mentioned exclusively or they were mentioned only to give examples?
- Why should the GC write the law, why not the university masters from different nationalities and sects?
- The elective convention going to be applied in the northern provinces of Iraq?
- Row can hold an elective convention while we suffer a bad security condition?
- Shall we have an elected representative or appointed one?
- Shall we elect a representative or we vote on an appointed one (referendum)?
- We want to know the specifications of the new constitution, is it federal democratic or not?
- Are the people going to write the constitution, or elect people write the constitution?

### Mosul men

- What do they mean by the respect of the Islamic religion are they talking about secularism or it's going to be an Islamic republic?
- The transitional government, how it's going to be, which political parties will participate?
- Why did they mention the freedom of speech and press and they didn't mention the freedom of the political parties?
- What are the caucuses? are they representing parties, unions, associations?
- One-man, one vote? What does the person need to nominate himself? Who is going to write the constitution ;? And how many votes are required so the person can join the writing of the constitution?
- The people who will write the constitution, are they appointed or elected?
- In case there are points in the constitution against our habits and principles and morals what can we do with that?
- If more than 50% refuse the constitution, what will happen?
- What they mean by the government, will there be a President or a prime minister?
- Will be there a paper with the names of the nominated people in it?
- What are the security institutions, why we should wait so long to have security, it's a must for all people to know that all what we care about now is the security, where are the police forces, why didn't they arrange for that since the beginning?
- If the IGC and the CPA will dissolve, why are they going to arrange the security issue?
- What is the meaning by the dissolve of the CPA?
- Why don't they start early with the security problem?

### Mosul Women

- What if a ratio of the Iraqi people refuse the constitution? What will happen?
- If more than 50% they have to change, if less I think it will remain, but I wonder are people from different cultural level of the people will participate in the writing of the constitution?



## **Preliminary Draft – For Discussion Purposes Only**

### Sulaymania men

- wondering about the date specifically. What is the mechanism of choosing the date?
- I wonder about who has the authority to sign this agreement with the CPA? Are they the same persons who are announced by the CPA themselves? & do they know about this agreement or not?
- I am wondering about the Kurdish people why they would accept this unclear cloudy agreement?
- government election or government plus parliament? We are talking about the constitution but we don't know what kind of constitution we are talking about...
- Which is first? The government or the parliament...? Does the government is formed by the constitution or the parliament? How is the government formed without the existence of the legislative authority?

### Sulaymania women

- I think one of the questions is now there are elections of the city advisory consuls (CAC). Is it the same elections mentioned in the agreement? Or the eighteen representatives (one from each governorate) are going to elect the president? – There are no explanations for the future election system?
- There will be eighteen representatives are they the candidates for the presidency? – On which basis the candidates will participate in the presidency elections? Depending on their relations with the political parties? Or basing on their ethnic background?
- What's the purpose behind this? What they are waiting for to explain the agreement to the Iraqi people?
- If it is going to be religious ruling, is the president going to be Shiite, Sunni, Arabic or Kurdish?
- What are the bases of candidacy? Are they going to enter themselves or they are going to be chosen by The GC or the coalition Forces?
- What is the role of the constitutional committee? How many persons will compose it? And whom they will represent?
- How many Kurdish representatives are going to be in this committee?
- Do the elected persons will have legal and political experience?
- Are the educational and the intellectual going to be conditions to choose the candidates?
- If some of the elected persons are not Kurds, are they going to neglect the Kurdish rights?
- If the Iraqi people refused the constitution, are they going to do amendment on it? And who will do these amendments, is it the same committee?
- If the Iraqis refused the constitution, is it going to be imposed on them?
- What type of government going to be? Is it going to be republican or royalty?
- What do you mean by new police? You mean they will replace the existing police force that worked during Saddam's era?

### Basrah Men

## **Preliminary Draft – For Discussion Purposes Only**

- Why is it a transitional government? We need permanent one.
- How will be the supervisor of the election and writing the constitution?
- Now how long that we need to write a permanent constitution for our country?
- Where is Iraq state? It is Islamic country depend on Islam in each field of life.
- Do we have a permanent constitution in Iraq? Can the GC establish a committee to write the constitution?
- Do you want the occupation forces to put the constitution for us?
- We need the end of the occupation, when does it end?

### Basrah Women

- Where will the members of the IGC after the IGC will be released?
- Regarding the caucuses -- it's understood, but I'm I going to select who is going to represent me, or other people will perform that?