

Boycott and Chaos at the United Nations in Geneva: Who Committed War Crimes in Iraq?

The US Sponsored Iraqi Regime's Failure to "Fool the International Community"

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Iraqi Sources of the BRussells Tribunal - edited by Dirk Adriaensens

A Conference in Geneva about the "crimes of the former Iraqi regime" of Saddam Huseein, organised by the Iraqi government, has turned into a condemnation against the occupation and the current US sponsored regime.

On 19 September 2012, a conference was organised in Geneva by the current Iraqi authorities. This conference would reveal what the organisers called the 'crimes of the former regime'. There was a widespread national and international campaign to seek support for this conference. Unfortunately for them and unexpectedly, the conference turned out to be a total failure. The support they were seeking turned into a strong condemnation of the crimes against humanity, committed by the Anglo-American occupiers and their Iraqi allies.

Report prepared by an Iraqi colleague who attended the conference

Swiss Police intervened to end the conference after chaos erupted.

p>The conference was held in one of the side halls of the Palais des Nations (European headquarters of the United Nations) in Geneva, with a total boycott by diplomatic corps and non-governmental organizations. The conference lasted 4 hours and was attended by Iraqis, Arabs and Kurds. Most of them came with the four Iraqi Ministers and others who live in Switzerland. The preparation and the planning of the conference took a long time and a huge amount of money was spent, money that could have been better spent to ease the Iraqi people's poverty and ameliorate the basic social services. A special committee for strategic planning was set up to advertise the event. The Under Secretary of the Iraqi Ministry of Human Rights, along with a large delegation was sent to Geneva 20 days prior to the conference. The whole diplomatic corps, media and journalists were invited. According to the government announcements, the goal of the conference was to issue international resolutions against the former Baath regime. But in fact, their actual aim was to conceal their own unspeakable crimes against the human rights of the Iraqi people.

On the other hand, however, intensive attempts were made by NGO's to bring this conference to a halt. The attempt succeeded and the conference turned into an occasion to reveal the violations and the crimes committed by the occupiers and the current

government since the invasion of 2003.

In a letter, signed by almost three hundred NGO's and addressed to the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights, all diplomatic missions and journalists condemned this conference. The letter asked the High Commissioner to focus on the violations and the crimes that took place since the invasion and called for a special rapporteur for human rights in Iraq. Then, these NGOs, issued a press release in the Human Rights Council expressing their views and demands (see below).

Eventually, there was not one diplomat who attended the conference, not one member of the civil society and there were no journalists.

One representative from the Office of the High Commissioner attended the opening of the conference. She delivered an oral statement, reminding the delegation of the current violations, especially the executions campaign, and she left the meeting immediately after her intervention.

The conference turned out to be a real disaster. At the beginning, the Al Maliki delegates and the Barzani ones got engaged in arguments and claims as to who was heading the conference and whose initiative it was.

The arguments among the Iraqi delegates continued, stronger words were used, and finally the United Nations police was forced to intervene and urged the attendees to leave the hall. The lights were shut off when the delegates (among them the ministers) ignored the order. They had to leave eventually. The conference failed despite of the claims from the government that it was a success. Worse than that, their press conference was as shameful as the conference was.

Needless to say this was rather a rare incident and a violation of protocol rules. The interference by the police was needed to stop the heated arguments that arose between the organizers and the attendees, as some of them were asking about the current violations, other arguments started over allocations of money to a number of participants.... Another Iraqi scandal at the United Nations.

Here's a link to a short film below that shows the chaos inside the conference hall.

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=aTiu8kHP344>

300 NGO's urge the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights to focus on Human Rights situation in Iraq after 2003

Press release

Why is the Iraqi Government talking about past Human Rights violations while ignoring the current ones?

This question was put before the UN High Commissioner for Human rights by almost 300 NGOs from around the world regarding the meeting organized by the Government of Iraq on 19 September 2012 at the Palais des Nations/ Geneva, about "The crimes of the previous

regime in Iraq". The NGO's believe that the conference is merely an attempt to divert attention from the ongoing human rights violations in Iraq. We urge all of you to distance yourselves from participating in this meeting.

It is a well-known fact that the human rights situation under the former regime in Iraq was examined by the UN Commission of Human Rights. As a result, dozens of UN resolutions were adopted, condemning the previous government of Iraq. Then, after 2003, members of that government were executed by the current Iraqi authorities; compensation was paid to the alleged victims of the violations that happened before 2003, among other measures. For these reasons, the signed NGOs are questioning the motivation behind such an event. Also, what effect might it have on the victims of the current violations?

Since 2003, widespread and serious human rights violations have taken place in Iraq on a daily basis. Those violations have been committed by the US forces and the current Iraqi authorities. NGO's have repeatedly appealed to the Human Rights Council to put the human rights situation in Iraq on the agenda of the Council. They continue to urge the Human Rights Council to not ignore the serious and deteriorating human rights situation in Iraq.

The High Commissioner has expressed concern about the widespread and unjust trials and summary executions—two of the most serious violations of international human rights law—that regularly take place in Iraq. The UN Mission in Iraq (UNAMI) has also repeatedly reported the widespread violations of numerous human rights by the Iraqi authorities as well as others in Iraq.

The participation of the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights in the meeting of 19 September 2012 will be widely perceived as not paying the required attention to the current violations of human rights in Iraq as the meeting may intentionally try to cover these violations and mislead the public on the humanitarian tragedy in Iraq. We regret that this will be the apparent message sent to so many civil society actors in Iraq and across the Middle East and around the world who are aware of this event and strongly condemn it.

We appeal to you to reconsider your involvement in this event and to instead, consider drawing attention to the ongoing human rights violations in Iraq. We also hope that you will support the numerous civil society actors from the region in their efforts to create awareness in the Human Rights Council of the human rights tragedy in Iraq today.

The Iraqi Ministry of Human Rights denied the reports over the failure of the conference held by the Ministry, on last Wednesday/Sept/19 in Geneva to acquaint the international community with the crimes of the Iraqi former regime.(1)

The article states:

"The MoHR assured in a statement that "A certain media outlet reported that the Conference held in the Swiss capital, Geneva which was devoted to circulate the crimes of the former regimes, has failed," noting that "These reports said that some Iraqi persons entered the Conference hall and caused chaos prompting the Swiss police to intervene and end the conference session."

"The statement added "The success of the conference incensed the enemies of Iraq especially the remnants of the former regime of Ba'ath Party, thus they resorted to use this cheap media outlet to fabricate such groundless story."

“It is worth to mention that the works of the Second Conference of circulating the former regime’s crimes started, on last Wednesday, Sept,19th in Geneva with attendance of the Iraqi Minister of Human Rights, Mohamed Shya al-Sudani, besides other Iraqi officials.”

“Some media outlets have reported the failure of the conference due to a mess that happened while holding the conference.”

Comment

It is obvious that the Minister has attended the conference. Actually he was the chairman of the conference. But they can’t say who also attended the conference, because this is the real failure: no other country was present! In the article they used a photograph where the name of Turkey appears, to give the impression that Turkey participated in the conference.

Our Iraqi source asks the following questions:

1- Can the Ministry name two countries that attended the conference??

2- Can the Ministry name more than 2 NGO’s that attended the conference?

3- Can the Ministry name more than 3 journalists who participated in the press conference?

4- Can the Ministry name 3 non-Iraqi who attended their INTERNATIONAL conference???

Those who attended the conference are the delegations which came from Baghdad, and Kurdistan with their friends and relatives, few Iraqi (Kurds and Arab) from Switzerland....Where is the success???

Conclusion

The official international UN Human Rights Bodies, the Western politicians and the mainstream media may have betrayed and forgotten the Iraqi people, millions of people and thousands of NGO’s around the world have not! And as you can conclude from this action, there is always hope and positive results can be achieved, when united we keep on defending the rightful demands and aspirations of the Iraqi people. Next year will be the tenth “anniversary” of the invasion. Let’s organize political and cultural events, protest actions, lobbying campaigns and conferences.... Let them know we still haven’t digested this illegal imperial invasion and brutal occupation of the sovereign Republic of Iraq, that we have not forgotten the Iraqi people. The central slogan should be “**Accountability for Iraq and Restoring Justice**”.

Dirk Adriaensens is coordinator of SOS Iraq and member of the executive committee of the BRussells Tribunal. Between 1992 and 2003 he led several delegations to Iraq to observe the devastating effects of UN imposed sanctions. He was a member of the International Organizing Committee of the World Tribunal on Iraq (2003-2005). He is also co-coordinator of the Global Campaign Against the Assassination of Iraqi Academics. He is co-author of Rendez-Vous in Baghdad, EPO (1994), Cultural Cleansing in Iraq, Pluto Press, London (2010), Beyond Educide, Academia Press, Ghent (2012), and is a frequent contributor to GlobalResearch, Truthout, The International Journal of Contemporary Iraqi Studies and other media.

Notes

(1) Iraqi Human Rights denies reports over failure of Geneva Conference

<http://www.iraqinews.com/features/iraqi-human-rights-denies-reports-over-failure-of-geneva-conference/>

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