

NCCI would like to remind its members that would not have paid their fees to regularise their situation contacting adminlog@ncciraq.org

EDITORIAL

Issue 68 – 31st May 2007

Put neutrality to the test of the Iraq humanitarian context

Yesterday, in Amman, the author of the *Humanitarian Agenda 2015's* Iraq case study, Greg Hansen, presented the main findings of the country report.

Humanitarian Agenda 2015 (HA 2015) is a policy research project aimed at equipping the humanitarian enterprise to more effectively address emerging challenges. *HA 2015* focuses on the challenges and compromises that are likely to affect humanitarian action worldwide in the next decade. The issues under study are organized and analyzed around four interrelated themes: the universality of humanitarianism, the implications of terrorism and counter-terrorism for humanitarian action, the trend toward coherence between humanitarian and political agendas, and the security of humanitarian personnel and the beneficiaries of humanitarian action¹.

The Iraq final report will be available next week, but during the presentation, one of the main findings highlighted by the author caught our attention. It regards the universality of humanitarian action.

Through the numerous interviews conducted by the courageous team who worked inside Iraq, it appears that “Neutrality is not an abstract notion for Iraqis”. That is very good news, because in the current Iraq humanitarian context such a finding was not evident.

Indeed, amongst those who are promoting or working in the humanitarian field, whether they are Iraqis or foreigners, neutrality does not always appear at the top of the agenda, and the understanding of what is or should be neutral might often be subject to debate.

What kind of neutrality regulates agencies and organisations that are protected by MNF-I? Would these agencies accept to be protected by other forces on the ground? Conversely, would organisations protected by militias accept to be under MNF-I or Governmental protection?

How is the neutrality of an organisation that mainly receives funds from one side of the belligerents perceived?

And, above all, where is the neutrality when agencies only deal for access or humanitarian support with the Government of Iraq which is a *de facto* part of the conflict? Why is it taboo for them to deal with militias and non-state armed forces that are even sometimes linked with official authorities?

We are conscious that such questions might shock some readers. Yet, neutrality by its very nature requires an equal treatment of all sides of the conflict. As such, it is worthwhile to wonder why the perception of neutrality is as blurred as it is for some stakeholders in Iraq. It is perhaps the only way to find solutions to improve in practice the neutrality of humanitarian actors.

¹ Country studies provide the basis for analysis. Studies completed so far include Afghanistan, Burundi, Colombia, Liberia, Northern Uganda, Sudan and the Occupied Palestinian Territories. Others planned for completion in 2007 include Nepal, Sri Lanka, the Democratic Republic of Congo and Iraq. Completed country studies and a preliminary report, *Humanitarian Agenda 2015: Principles, Power, and Perceptions*, are available on the project's website at: <http://fic.tufts.edu/?pid=32>.

Perceptibly, the post 9/11 discourses of fear and over-security that are linked with Global War On Terror (GWOT) policies have an important effect on the current reality on the field. Obviously, many westerners today hesitate to oppose the Orwellian-like propaganda and creed that “*you are with us or you are against us*”.

Yet, in adhering, or refusing to oppose to the above-mentioned GWOT policy, agencies and organisations have lost their neutrality and, in doing so, have jeopardised their credibility and are now more at risk to be targeted by other groups that would consider them as part of the “global” conflict.

Additionally, this situation has *de facto* increased fear, cultural and contextual misunderstandings, and, in some cases, even racism and withdrawals of personal or cultural expression.

A complete study would be necessary to find all the reasons for such a loss of neutrality as it can certainly not be reduced to the above-mentioned comment. In some cases it was certainly a choice, while, in the specific case of Iraq, the high level of politicisation of the humanitarian context underlined by most of observers definitively played a role in the current lack of neutrality of various humanitarian actors. The complete HA 2015 report will certainly give us some answers to such a question. Hopefully, it will also explore some concrete solutions to put neutrality as one of the most important principles of humanitarian organisations.

Waiting for a deeper analysis, some issues can or have already been raised to increase the neutrality of humanitarian actors, and, therefore, to improve the whole humanitarian intervention in Iraq:

- ✓ In agencies that deal with both political and humanitarian aspects, a clear distinction between the two orientations should be defined. Indeed, political support cannot be neutral and would consequently hamper the necessary neutrality of humanitarian actions.
- ✓ Break the apparent taboo, and start to consider possibilities to engage with others actors as plausible interlocutors. Of course such an action would concretely oppose the GWOT machine that labels all opposition forces as “terrorists”. On the other hand, it might also be perceived as problematic for those who refuse to engage in talks with MNF-I or the GoI. But it appears in many situations to be the only way to save lives. Dealing with all forces on the ground is something that is accepted, or at least considered as normal and necessary for humanitarian action in conflict situations worldwide. It should not be any different within the Iraq context.
- ✓ As already requested, a high level Civil Military Coordinator with a civilian and humanitarian background might help increase acceptance of the notion that organisations that engage in discussions or negotiations for humanitarian access with militias are not automatically thought to be for or against official troops.

Of course, this is only a subset of propositions and they do not claim the conceit of being infallible. Nor are they the only solutions. Local solutions, creative and innovative are certainly more preferable as better answers that speak to the Iraqi nightmare. In fact, many NGOs and humanitarian actors have not stood idly by to wait to deal with all parties and have instead concretely begun to experiment with neutrality on the ground as their only way to access the most vulnerable.

But other organisations should join such movements soon. There is still time for it. At any rate, it is not too late. It is what Iraqis tell us, through the HA 2015’s finding, accepting and acknowledging neutrality as a universal principle of humanitarian aid. That’s why it is good news.

Salaam,
NCCI Team

HUMANITARIAN UPDATES

FROM NCCI, NGOS' REPORTS FROM THE FIELD AND UN AGENCIES

Advocacy

- **[A call from Iraqi Women Movement to H.E. Mr. Ban Ki-Moon](#)**

Source: [Iraqi Women Movement](#)

Document: [Statement](#)

Date: [May 29, 2007](#)

Access: [Open](#)

We call upon you and the international community, to stand up to your commitment to help Iraq to recover and restore its state of law, as the international community and Iraq partners' obligations towards Iraq are clearly identified under the mandates of UNSC Resolutions 1483, 1511, and 1546. In spite of the fact that all HR office reports, and lately the strategic framework report on IRAQ did not reflect all the humanitarian violations and incidents by key players in Iraq, the reports all agree on describing situation in Iraq as the worst humanitarian catastrophic conditions, and urges international community to act positively and promptly.

- **[Did the U.S. Lie about Cluster Bomb Use in Iraq?](#)**

Source: [Tom Dispatch](#)

Document: [Article](#)

Date: [May 24, 2007](#)

Access: [Open](#)

Did the U.S. military use cluster bombs in Iraq in 2006 and then lie about it? Does the U.S. military keep the numbers of rockets and cannon rounds fired from its planes and helicopters secret because more Iraqi civilians have died due to their use than any other type of weaponry? These are just two of the many unanswered questions related to the largely uncovered air war the U.S. military has been waging in Iraq. The study also found that, from March 2003 through June 2006, 13% of violent deaths in Iraq were caused by coalition air strikes. If the 655,000 figure, including over 601,000 violent deaths, is accurate, this would equal approximately 78,133 Iraqis killed by bombs, missiles, rockets, or cannon rounds up to last June. There are also indications that the air war has taken an especially grievous toll on Iraqi children. Figures provided by The Lancet study's authors suggest that 50% of all violent deaths of Iraqi children under 15 years of age in that same period were due to coalition air strikes.

- **[Thirty years on, 1977 Additional Protocols remain key to protecting civilians in conflict](#)**

Source: [ICRC](#)

Document: [Press Release](#)

Date: [May 29, 2007](#)

Access: [Open](#)

Friday 8 June will be the 30th anniversary of Protocols I and II additional to the 1949 Geneva Conventions. The 1977 Additional Protocols were drawn up essentially as a response to the increased suffering of civilians in armed conflict due in part to developments in weapons technology. They introduced essential rules relating to the conduct of hostilities and the methods and means of warfare, the aim of which was to strengthen protection for civilians. In particular, they formulated the important principle of distinction between civilians and combatants and between civilian objects and military objectives.

 [The 1977 Additional Protocols](#)

Operational and Neutral Space

- **[The Draft Law of Non-Governmental Organisations – In English and in Arabic](#)**

Source: [UNAMI](#)

Document: [Draft Law](#)

Date: [March 19, 2007](#)

Access: [Open](#)

The draft law for NGOs presented to the civil society commission of the Iraqi Parliament by UNAMI. This Law is issued in accordance with the principles of democracy, which is based upon respect for the freedoms guaranteed in the Constitution. The aim of this law is to reinforce the freedom of citizens to create and join non-governmental organizations (NGOs), a right protected by Article 45.1 of the Constitution. It also creates a centralized mechanism to organize the registration of Iraqi and Foreign NGOs.

- **Civil Defense: The Surge That Would Really Save Iraq**

Source: [Brookings Institution](#)

Document: Article

Date: May 21, 2007

Access: Open

What Iraqis desperately crave (and deserve) is to be able to live their lives safe from criminals, terrorists, and ethnic cleansing; to get jobs that enable them to put food on the table; to have access to clean water, adequate gasoline, and regular electricity; and to enjoy social and governmental structures that provide these things and fix problems when they arise. The soldiers can handle the first clause of that sentence; the rest can only be provided by civilians. There are no easy solutions to any of the problems listed above, but the Bush administration has denied itself one method of potentially alleviating many of them by refusing to engage the international community, and the United Nations, in the process of reconstruction. The United Nations is hardly a perfect organization, but it has the ability to reach out to a range of actors that the U.S. government—and particularly the Bush administration—cannot. The United Nations has a number of agencies with some real competence in the basics of nation-building. In addition, it can call upon a vast array of NGOs that have the very skills and experience that so few Americans possess but that are so desperately needed.

Humanitarian Needs and Assistance

- **Iraqi Women Movement meeting at Baghdad UNAMI office**

Source: [Iraqi Women Movement](#)

Document: Minutes of Meeting

Date: May 29, 2007

Access: **Members**

Upon a letter of request for meeting from IWM to HE Ashraf Qazi, UN SRSG in Iraq, the above-mentioned meeting with IWM was arranged on May 15th, 2007.

- **Erbil NGOs Coordination Meeting**

Source: [NCCI](#)

Document: Minutes of Meeting

Date: May 22, 2007

Access: **Members**

Minutes of the last NCCI Coordination Meeting held in Amman on the 15th of May.

NGOs, International Organisations and UN Agencies' communication

- **UNAMI Focus**

Source: [UNAMI](#)

Document: Newsletter

Date: May 28, 2007

Access: Open

An Office for the Co-ordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA) team arrived to finalise the protection and advocacy strategies and to facilitate the two workshops held on 15 to 16 May. The first two members of the longer-term OCHA Surge Team arrived on 18 May and will be responsible for moving the consultations forward as well as finalizing their own operational plan.

- **Accès à la formation et aux soins (In French)**

Source: [Secours Populaire Français](#)

Document: Press Release

Date: May 29, 2007

Access: Open

En partenariat avec une association iraquienne, le Secours populaire français soutient la population iraquienne en ouvrant un centre de formation professionnelle pour femmes, et en finançant l'achat et l'équipement d'une clinique mobile.

Protection

- **ICRC still seeking access to Iraqi-run prisons**

Source: [Alertnet](#)

Document: **Article**

Date: **May 24, 2007**

Access: **Open**

The head of the International Committee of the Red Cross said on Thursday he was not optimistic about a breakthrough in talks with Iraqi officials to gain access to up to 20,000 people held in Iraqi-run prisons. The neutral humanitarian agency is already visiting some 17,500 people in Iraq who are detained either by American, Kurdish or British authorities, ICRC President Jakob Kellenberger said. The ICRC announced six months ago that it was close to an agreement with Iraqi authorities to allow its officials to visit inmates at Iraqi detention centres, where Sunnis have alleged inmates are tortured, but talks have dragged on.

 [The ICRC Annual Report](#)

Health & Mental Health

- **Hospitals Stretched to the Limit**

Source: [IWPR](#)

Document: **Article**

Date: **May 30, 2007**

Access: **Open**

A recent World Health Organisation, WHO, report stated that an overwhelming number of conflict-related casualties die due to insufficient medical supplies at the hospitals. Dr Qasim Daud, a member of the health and environment committee of the Iraqi parliament, admitted that the shortage of staff and supplies "put us and the officials at the ministry of health in a critical situation". Daud sees two main factors underlying the deterioration of Iraqi health care - the continuous emigration of medical staff and the absence of a good strategic administrative plan.

- **Amputee Cyclist to Circumnavigate The Globe For War Victims**

Source: [Clear Path International](#)

Document: **Article**

Date: **May 24, 2007**

Access: **Open**

Following his Southeast Asia tour, Dan will be turning east across Russia and into the Middle East where he will meet with the Amman Cosmopolitan Rotary Club in Jordan, the host club of Rotary International's Basra, Iraq Prosthetics Project. The Basra, Iraq Prosthetics Project is an all-volunteer project to bring desperately needed aid and medical assistance to Iraqi civilian amputees through the Basra Ministry of Health Clinic which serves five districts in Iraq.

IDPs

- **Internally Displaced Persons in Iraq – Update**

Source: **Cluster F**

Document: **Article**

Date: **May 23, 2007**

Access: **Open**

Latest update on displaced persons in Iraq. It is estimated that over 2 million people are currently displaced inside Iraq as of 10 May 2007. Of these, 1.2 million were displaced before 2006 and 822,810 were displaced after February 2006.

- **UN report highlights plight of over 800,000 IDPs**

Source: [IRIN](#)

Document: **Article**

Date: **May 29, 2007**

Access: **Open**

"Each time we arrived in a new camp, dozens of other families arrived with us. Most of the places are full to bursting and some of the displaced families are forced to sleep rough on the ground without tents until aid agencies can give them some protection and food. In the camp where we are staying now, we were forced to sleep in the open air for three days and drink dirty water because the aid agencies couldn't reach us," he said.

- **"We couldn't even get a single chair to remind us of the good old days"**

Source: [IRIN](#)

Document: **Article**

Date: **May 28, 2007**

Access: **Open**

"It is not a matter of money but my family is homeless. They sleep in tents in a camp for displaced persons on the outskirts of the city suffering all kinds of humiliation. They are terrified of the constant clashes near our camp between government forces and insurgents. "If the government had shown that they are people of their word, we would have been back in our house by now. I cannot work because I'm the only older man in the group and I cannot leave the women alone under such dangerous circumstances. We depend on aid delivered by local NGOs [non-governmental organizations] to survive.

Refugees

- **Operation Freedom From Iraqis**

Source: [New York Times](#)

Document: **Opinion**

Date: **May 27, 2007**

Access: **Open**

When all else fails, those pious Americans who conceived and directed the Iraq war fall back on moral self-congratulation: at least we brought liberty and democracy to an oppressed people. But that last-ditch rationalization has now become America's sorriest self-delusion in this tragedy. Iraqis are clamoring to get out of Iraq. Two million have fled so far and nearly two million more have been displaced within the country. (That's a total of some 15 percent of the population.) Save the Children reported this month that Iraq's child-survival rate is falling faster than any other nation's. One Iraqi in eight is killed by illness or violence by the age of 5. Yet for all the words President Bush has lavished on Darfur and AIDS in Africa, there has been a deadly silence from him about what's happening in the country he gave "God's gift of freedom."

- **Desperate Iraqi Refugees Turn to Sex Trade in Syria**

Source: [New York Times](#)

Document: **Article**

Date: **May 29, 2007**

Access: **Open**

Desperate, Umm Hiba followed the advice of an Iraqi acquaintance and took her daughter to work at a nightclub along a highway known for prostitution. "We Iraqis used to be a proud people," she said over the frantic blare of the club's speakers. She pointed out her daughter, dancing among about two dozen other girls on the stage, wearing a pink silk dress with spaghetti straps, her frail shoulders bathed in colored light.

- **World Vision partners begin education programmes for Iraqi refugee children**

Source: [World Vision](#)

Document: **Press Release**

Date: **May 29, 2007**

Access: **Open**

Three World Vision partners began education programmes for young Iraqi refugees in Jordan last week, despite challenges that continue to hinder humanitarian operations in the region. Up to a quarter of a million of the refugees in Jordan are of school age. Yet, according to the UN refugee agency (UNHCR) only around 10, 000 are going to school. A mere 4 percent of the Iraq refugee children are receiving an education in Jordan.

Education – Child Protection

- **Education Working Group**

Source: [NCCI](#)

Document: **Minutes of Meeting**

Date: **May 27, 2007**

Access: **Members**

The Cluster B (Education and Culture) Coordinator for Iraq was seeking input from NGOs operating in Iraq on the current Cluster B Strategic Framework, in particular on how to incorporate a more humanitarian dimension into the context.

- **Domestic violence against children on the rise**

Source: [IRIN](#)

Document: Article

Date: May 24, 2007

Access: Open

Mental health specialists say there has been an increase in domestic violence against children largely a result of the violence that has gripped Iraq since the US-led invasion in 2003. They say the violence has affected people's behaviour.

- **Wounds run deep for children of Iraq war**

Source: [Pakistan Daily News](#)

Document: Article

Date: May 28, 2007

Access: Open

"I will never forget the image of my mother and brother lying on the ground covered with blood," Ziad says, referring to the aftermath of a car bomb intended for the local courthouse in his hometown of Kirkuk, north of Baghdad. His physical injuries will not prevent him from one day leading a relatively normal life, but the psychological impact of the attack will last a lifetime, as it will for thousands of Iraqi children.

- **Mud Schools in Forgotten Land**

Source: [IWPR](#)

Document: Article

Date: May 30, 2007

Access: Open

Enterprising tribesmen, fed up with officials' failure to address their education needs, build their own makeshift schools. The village of Ghadhari, in the province of Muthanna, has never had a school. "We hoped [after Saddam's fall] that any new government would listen to our desire for [one]," said Sheikh Dhager al-Hashim from the al-Ziyad tribe, the largest in this long neglected part of southwest Iraq.

Human Rights

- **Iraqi Women the Worse for War**

Source: [Alternet](#)

Document: Interview

Date: May 28, 2007

Access: Open

Remember those photos of Iraqi women triumphantly raising freshly inked fingers for Western cameras after voting in their new "democracy"? They were presented to the world by the U.S. government as an indication of a policy that would liberate Iraqi women and men. Well, it didn't quite work out that way, according to Iraqi women's rights activist Yanar Mohammed, who argues that the situation for women in her country has significantly worsened since the American invasion in 2003.

- **Women forced to give up their jobs, marriages**

Source: [IRIN](#)

Document: Article

Date: May 30, 2007

Access: Open

Most of the local construction companies in Iraq now have only men working for them," she said. "In about 14 percent of families in Iraq women are the main breadwinners, and often they care for a large number of children. The increase in unemployment among them just means more children without support," said Sarah Muthulak, a spokeswoman for the Baghdad-based Women's Rights Association (WRA). "Discrimination against women today is unprecedented. They are being sacked because of their gender; that is unacceptable," she added.

- **Human rights in Iraq: a case to answer**

Source: [The Independent](#)

Document: Article

Date: May 29, 2007

Access: Open

The Attorney General, Lord Goldsmith, is facing accusations that he told the Army its soldiers were not bound by the Human Rights Act when arresting, detaining and interrogating Iraqi prisoners. Today, rights groups and experts in international law will call on the Government to disclose Lord Goldsmith's legal opinion, which they say could have helped create a culture of abuse of Iraqis by British soldiers.

IRAQ CONTEXT

General Overview

- **Iraq Crisis Report (IraqHAR)**

Source: [Centre of Excellence on Disaster Management and Humanitarian Assistance](#)

Document: **Weekly report**

Date: **May 30, 2007**

Access: **Open**

A weekly Iraq humanitarian assistance report Compiled by Pacific Disaster Management Information Network

- **Juan Cole's informed comment's excerpts**

Source: [Informed Comment – Juan Cole's Web Blog.](#)

Document: **Selection of daily comments**

Date: **May 25-31, 2007**

Access: **Open**

Juan Cole is a Professor of Modern Middle East and South Asian History at the University of Michigan. As such he brings daily much needed expertise and historical perspective to issues surrounding Iraq, Afghanistan and the Middle East. Good reading to have a weekly review of the Iraq daily situation.

Non-Violence and Reconciliation

- **'I won't testify against my abductors'**

Source: [Toronto Star](#)

Document: **Opinion**

Date: **May 23, 2007**

Access: **Open**

'I cannot participate in a judicial process where the prospects of a fair trial are negligible, and more crucially, where the death penalty is a possibility,' writes James Loney who was kidnapped in Iraq in 2005. Norman, Harmeet and I have forgiven our captors. Our reason is very simple. We've had enough with bombs and guns and gallows. We want to see an end to all killing, regardless of the reason. Capital punishment is simply the legal face of the dead-end cycle of violence and retribution for violence that is destroying Iraq. We want to see something genuinely new and different, a future that begins with the power of forgiveness.

- **"Kirkuk and the Kurds: A Difficult Choice Ahead" – In English and in Arabic**

Source: [ICG](#)

Document: **Opinion**

Date: **May 22, 2007**

Access: **Open**

If, on the other hand, the Kurds accept a federal solution to their predicament, they will not only have to live with other Iraqis but make compromises with them, some very painful. In such a scenario, Kirkuk could only be shared, its power and administration fairly divided between its principal representatives. The Kurds would then be in their right to ask for international security guarantees so that the atrocities of the past cannot and will not be repeated.

- **Sunni Resistance Receptive to Sadr Alliance**

Source: [IPS](#)

Document: **Article**

Date: **May 24, 2007**

Access: **Open**

Nationalist Shiite cleric Moqtada al-Sadr's bid to unite Sunnis and Shiites on the basis of a common demand for withdrawal of U.S. occupation forces, reported last weekend by the Washington Post's Sudarsan Raghavan, seems likely to get a positive response from Sunni armed resistance. Sadr's project for a Sunni-Shiite united front against both al Qaeda and U.S. occupation offers a potential basis for an eventual settlement of the sectarian civil war in Iraq as well as for U.S. withdrawal. But it could also be the basis for a new and more deadly phase of fighting if Sadr returns once more to military resistance.

- **Iraq peace call**

Source: [Gulf Daily News](#)

Document: Article

Date: May 28, 2007

Access: Open

IRAQ can only be saved from the current state of anarchy if the country and its people adopt non-violent methods made legendary by Mahatma Gandhi, according to a world-renowned spiritual leader. Art of Living Foundation founder Sri Sri Ravi Shankar was speaking to the GDN after returning from a peace mission to the war-torn country. He visited Iraq as a state guest at the invitation of Iraqi Prime Minister Nouri Al Maliki.

Human Living Conditions

- **"Baghdad is a smashed city..."**

Source: [Dahr Jamail](#)

Document: Article

Date: May 27, 2007

Access: Open

Baghdad is a SMASHED city: no roads to drive on; most of them are closed off by concrete obstacles with concertina wire. In addition, the presence of the Iraqi military, who cover their faces with black masks and hold their guns in such a way that when you see them you will definitely be afraid that they will shoot you.

- **One Day in the World's Most Dangerous City**

Source: [Der Spiegel](#)

Document: Article

Date: May 25, 2007

Access: Open

What does daily life look like in the Iraqi capital? What goes through people's minds when yet another bomb explodes, killing and maiming innocent people? SPIEGEL spent time with four Iraqis and describes a day in the world's most dangerous city through their eyes.

Violence

- **U.S. Security Contractors Open Fire in Baghdad**

Source: [Washington Post](#)

Document: Article

Date: May 27, 2007

Access: Open

Blackwater Employees Were Involved in Two Shooting Incidents in Past Week. Employees of Blackwater USA, a private security firm under contract to the State Department, opened fire on the streets of Baghdad twice in two days last week, and one of the incidents provoked a standoff between the security contractors and Iraqi forces, U.S. and Iraqi officials said. A Blackwater guard shot and killed an Iraqi driver Thursday near the Interior Ministry, according to three U.S. officials and one Iraqi official who were briefed on the incident but spoke on condition of anonymity because of a pending investigation. On Wednesday, a Blackwater-protected convoy was ambushed in downtown Baghdad, triggering a furious battle in which the security contractors, U.S. and Iraqi troops and AH-64 Apache attack helicopters were firing in a congested area.

- **Iraqi church leaders blame U.S. for their parishioners' plight**

Source: [Azzaman](#)

Document: Article

Date: May 25, 2007

Access: Open

Iraqi church leaders say the country's Christians are suffering immensely and have blamed the U.S. for what they describe as their "tragic conditions". They said their churches were being evacuated and monasteries occupied by U.S. occupation troops while cities like Basra and Baghdad were being emptied of Christians.

- **A Slow, Hard Crackdown**

Source: [Der Spiegel](#)

Document: Article

Date: May 25, 2007

Access: Open

The Ghazaliya neighborhood of Baghdad descended into chaos last year when Sunni insurgents started "cleansing" it of Shiites. Now it's the job of American soldiers -- and their Iraqi helpers -- to clear it of insurgents.

- **Extremists threaten new gov't Internet project in universities**

Source: [IRIN](#)

Document: Article

Date: May 27, 2007

Access: Open

Islamic extremists who believe that the Internet can spread immoral and un-Islamic behaviour say that they will sabotage plans by the Iraqi Ministry of Higher Education and Scientific Research to link the country's science centres electronically and offer free Internet access to students.

- **Most Foreign Fighters From Gulf**

Source: [AP](#)

Document: Article

Date: May 27, 2007

Access: Open

Seventy percent of foreign insurgents arrested in Iraq came from Persian Gulf countries via Syria where they were provided with forged passports, an Iraqi intelligence officer said in a published report Wednesday.

- **Morgue Data Show Increase In Sectarian Killings in Iraq**

Source: [Washington Post](#)

Document: Article

Date: May 23, 2007

Access: Open

From the beginning of May until Tuesday 22nd, 321 unidentified corpses, many dumped and showing signs of torture and execution, have been found across the Iraqi capital, according to morgue data provided by a Health Ministry official who spoke on condition of anonymity because he was not authorized to release the information. The data showed that the same number of bodies were found in all of January, the month before the launch of the Baghdad security plan.

- **One-Third of Troops in Iraq Support Torture, Majority Condone Mistreating Innocent Civilians**

Source: [Alternet](#)

Document: Article

Date: May 24, 2007

Access: Open

Two weeks ago, the press reported on the findings of a five-month-old study dealing with soldiers' ethics and mental health from the Office of the Surgeon General of the U.S. Army Medical Command. Some accounts focused on an alarming statistic in the executive summary of the report: 10 percent of the Soldiers and Marines interviewed reported "mistreating noncombatants." Some of the press accounts of the surgeon general's study, "Mental Health Advisory Team (MHAT) IV; Operation Iraqi Freedom 05-07," also reported the more detailed findings from its chapter on "Battlefield Ethics."

Reconstruction is not going so well...for Iraqis

- **'Iraqi police cannot control crime'**

Source: [The Guardian](#)

Document: Article

Date: May 30, 2007

Access: Open

Even the Iraqi government today admitted that it could barely trust its own interior ministry police. Speaking on the BBC's Today programme, Hoshyar Zebari was frank in spelling out the shortcomings of the interior ministry, well-known for its infiltration by Shia militias from the Mahdi army and other groups.

- **US contractors in Iraq a law to themselves**

Source: [Middle East times](#)

Document: Opinion

Date: May 23, 2007

Access: Open

According to the attorney for Schmidt, the plaintiff, Triple Canopy's interest in what Henderson has or what he may write has little to do with them defending against the wrongful termination lawsuit, but addresses their graver concerns that may lead authorities to suspect that Triple Canopy may have conspired to obstruct justice by possibly covering up two apparent murders committed by their employee and possibly colluded with Iraqi and American officials and others to cover it up.

- **Stalled justice is just one of Ramadi's woes**

Source: [Middle East times](#)

Document: **Opinion**

Date: **May 23, 2007**

Access: **Open**

Physically and institutionally, Ramadi is in ruins. An estimated 60% of the city has been damaged by three years of street fighting. Unemployment may be as high as 80%. Municipal services such as water, power, sewage and garbage collection are nonexistent. The court system hasn't functioned since 2005, when terrorists began threatening judges with death. Despite the bleak panorama, members of a provincial reconstruction team consisting mainly of U.S. State Department officials say the window of opportunity is open to make Ramadi a functioning city.

- **Taste of Home Runs Low in Iraq**

Source: [Washington Post](#)

Document: **Article**

Date: **May 24, 2007**

Access: **Open**

Life in the Green Zone -- a Foreign Service hardship post -- has long been mitigated by the culinary comforts of home. Virtually every bite and sip consumed there is imported from the United States, entering Iraq via Kuwait in huge truck convoys that bring fresh and processed food, including a full range of Baskin-Robbins ice cream flavors, every seven to 10 days. But mouths turned dry Monday when an internal embassy e-mail announced a "Theater-Wide Delay in Food Deliveries." Due to an unspecified convoy problem, it said, "it may not be possible to offer the dishes you are used to seeing at each meal. Fresh fruits or salad bar items will also be severely limited or unavailable."

- **Iraq likely to miss goals set by U.S.**

Source: [Los Angeles Times](#)

Document: **Article**

Date: **May 29, 2007**

Access: **Open**

U.S. military leaders in Iraq are increasingly convinced that most of the broad political goals President Bush laid out early this year in his announcement of a troop buildup will not be met this summer and are seeking ways to redefine success.

- **Is the story of 'massive untapped oil reserves' fact or fictions?**

Source: [Azzaman](#)

Document: **Opinion**

Date: **May 29, 2007**

Access: **Open**

The restive Province of Anbar grabbed the headlines of world media recently. But the news, fortunately, was not related to the ongoing violence and ferocious resistance of U.S. occupation the province has been reputed for in the past four years. Suddenly, world media focused their attention on significant oil reserves of 100 billion barrels. And where? In the western desert and specifically in Ramadi Province. The reports ostensibly left no doubt that the province sits on gigantic oil fields which, if exploited, would place Iraq ahead of Saudi Arabia as the world's top oil producer.

- **Ideas cannot be killed**

Source: [The Guardian](#)

Document: **Opinion - By Fidel Castro**

Date: **May 30, 2007**

Access: **Open**

"Now, along the lines of the same calculations, I wonder: how many doctors could be graduated with the one hundred billion dollars that Bush gets his hands on in just one year to keep on sowing grief in Iraqi and American homes. Answer: 999,990 doctors who could look after 2 billion people who today do not receive any medical care. To reflect on these realities could help us to better understand the tragedy. It is not a matter of commercial advertising that costs so much money and technology. Add up the starvation afflicting hundreds of millions of human beings; add to that the idea of transforming food into fuels; look for a symbol and the answer will be George Bush.

Iraqi Political process

- **The madness of Maliki**

Source: [The Guardian](#)

Document: **Opinion**

Date: **May 28, 2007**

Access: **Open**

The honeymoon is over for the surge. In Baghdad, sectarian killings - the Bush administration's favorite metric for assessing the surge's progress - are back on the rise. The troop increase hasn't stopped large-scale bombings in the city. Anbar Province has quieted down, thanks to increased antipathy to al-Qaida by Sunni tribal and insurgent leaders, but Diyala and Ninewa provinces have become newly volatile. Politically, not one of the much-hyped reconciliation measures has yielded any reconciliation. In Washington, the Bush administration is under great pressure to articulate a Plan B.

Policies and Strategies

- **Iran, the United States and Potential Iraq Deal-Spoilers**

Source: [Stratfor](#)

Document: **Article**

Date: **May 29, 2007**

Access: **Open**

After 27 years of frozen relations, the United States and Iran held their first high-level direct talks in Baghdad on May 28 to negotiate a plan on how to stabilize Iraq. It took four years of heavy-handed negotiating tactics to bring U.S.-Iranian dealings over Iraq out of the back channels and into the public view. That was half the battle. The aligning of the U.S. and Iranian proposals for Iraq marks a significant inflection point in the war, but we still question whether the three big players negotiating this deal -- Washington, Tehran and Riyadh -- can trust each other enough and carry enough sway among Iraq's state actors to get them to cooperate and actually produce results on the ground.

- **Looking back, the Iraq Study Group report is worse than we thought**

Source: [Daily Star](#)

Document: **Opinion** by CSIS' Anthony Cordesman

Date: **May 23, 2007**

Access: **Open**

Not everything dies when it should, and the report of the Iraq Study Group, released late last year, is a grim example. Even at the time it was issued, it was a remarkably vacuous and unrealistic report. Its key recommendations were hopelessly impractical and the detail report — while good on some aspects of historical diagnostics — ended in a long list of sometimes contradictory conceptual recommendations lacking any detail justification, details, and operational plans. It was at best a warning of what overblown committees seeking a lowest common denominator could not accomplish.

- **More changes and more foreign hypocrisy in Iraq**

Source: [Daily Star](#)

Document: **Opinion**

Date: **May 23, 2007**

Access: **Open**

The combined legacies and policies of the American and British governments bring us this summer to the latest phase of this tragic process of Western powers expediently toying with Arabs for their own convenience. This is one reason why the Arab world is riddled with a combination of local tyrants and pro-Western lackeys, but very few normal, effective leaders, or stable and satisfied citizenries.

- **Iraq needs a new strategy**

Source: [Gulf Daily News](#)

Document: **Article**

Date: **May 28, 2007**

Access: **Open**

Iraq needs a totally new peace initiative, based at a very local level, working the reality of the present day and those with power on the ground, to get agreement on halting violence and working towards some form of devolved state.

- **From Worse to Worst?**

Source: [IPS](#)

Document: **Article**

Date: **May 29, 2007**

Access: **Open**

More than four months after the launch of the U.S. government's new Iraq strategy aimed at curbing violence in this war-torn country, the situation here shows no clear signs of improvement. Indeed, a recent report by a British think tank warns that Iraq is a "failure" on the verge of "collapse and fragmentation."

- **Special Operations: High Profile, but in Shadow**

Source: [New York Times](#)

Document: **Article**

Date: **May 29, 2007**

Access: **Open**

Every night in Iraq, American Special Operations forces carry out as many as a dozen raids aimed at terrorist leaders allied with Al Qaeda, other insurgent fighters and militia targets. Their after-action reports are the first thing that Gen. David H. Petraeus, the senior American commander in Baghdad, reads the next day.

- **The lessons of Vietnam**

Source: [Los Angeles Times](#)

Document: **Opinion - By Henry Kissinger**

Date: **May 31, 2007**

Access: **Open**

A political settlement has to be distilled from the partly conflicting, partly overlapping views of the Iraqi parties, Iraq's neighbors and other affected states, based on a conviction that the caldron of Iraq would otherwise overflow and engulf everybody. The essential prerequisite is staying power in the near term. President Bush owes it to his successor to make as much progress toward this goal as possible; not to hand the problem over but to reduce it to more manageable proportions. What we need most is a rebuilding of bipartisanship in both this presidency and in the next.

HUMANITARIAN WORLD PERSPECTIVES & QUALITY OF AID

THROUGH ARTICLES AND REPORTS

- **"How Compatible Are UN Coherence and Humanitarian Partnership?"**

Source: [Feinstein International Center](#)

Document: **Speech**

Date: **February 2, 2007**

Access: **Open**

My last point is that many people have mentioned the issue of top-down versus bottom-up, and I think there is a huge problem of cultural sensitivity that needs to be addressed – we are still operating in a dominant, top-down humanitarian enterprise that it not attentive enough and doesn't listen enough to what is coming from the bottom-up.

- **US ranks low, just above Iran on new peace index**

Source: [Alertnet](#)

Document: **Article**

Date: **May 30, 2007**

Access: **Open**

The United States is among the least peaceful nations in the world, ranking 96th between Yemen and Iran, according to a new index released on Wednesday that evaluates 121 nations based on their peacefulness. According to the Global Peace Index, created by The Economist Intelligence Unit, Norway is the most peaceful nation in the world and Iraq is the least, just after Russia, Israel and Sudan.

 **[Methodology and full list of countries](#)**

- **Weighed and found wanting**

Source: [The Economist](#)

Document: **Article**

Date: **May 24, 2007**

Access: **Open**

GO ON, check us out then—the more that people scrutinise us, the better. That, roughly, is the message which 17 of the world's aid agencies were sending when, at a recent meeting in Geneva, they unveiled details of a standard of good management to which all of them (and, in due course, other agencies) should aspire.

 [Humanitarian Accountability Partnership Website](#)

- **Voice Out Loud**

Source: [VOICE](#)

Document: **Newsletter**

Date: **May 30, 2007**

Access: **Open**

This edition of VOICE OUT LOUD is focused on the question of vulnerability in humanitarian crisis. Member organisations of VOICE share their views and experiences concerning the vulnerabilities of internally displaced people, and women living in crisis settings. The specificities of mental health problematic in crisis situations, vulnerabilities caused by disabilities, and those of indigenous peoples are also discussed. This edition also offers an inside to the impact of EU crisis management policies on EU humanitarian aid, and the state of-play of the planned EU Humanitarian Aid Policy Communication. In addition, there is an article about the ongoing humanitarian needs due to the on/off crisis in Afghanistan.

June 2007

Security Trend Analysis

The June 2007 Security Trend Analysis provided by the NCCI Team is an informational and advisory report to NGOs on possible threats and incidents based on the current trends in violence and armed groups activities.

This trend analysis is only a basic overview and guideline and is targeted for HoM and security specialists as an addendum to their own information sources, analysis and reactions.

The following trend analysis is formatted to inform HoM of possible eruptions of violence or decreasing security. Obviously, in the current context of daily violence and civil war, this monthly trend analysis may lose its strategic impact to forecast events of the coming period in view of the volatile security situation and frequent reprisals.

*The NCCI Security Trend Analysis is available **for our members only** on our website in [the Security Section](#)*

Upcoming Significant Dates

- 1st June: Anniversary of Nationalisation of Iraqi Oil (1973)
Birthday of Imam Ali Zainul Abedin*
- 18th June: Anniversary of Al Sadec'ka Zahra's death*
- 25th June: Anniversary of Mo'ta Battle (Killing of Jaffar)*
- 28th June: Anniversary of Fatima's death*
- 29th June: Renewing of Kabba by Abdallah bin Al-zubayr*

May 2007

Monthly Prices Indicators

NCCI is following Prices Indicators in Iraq since 2003. The purpose of these indicators is to help NGOs to have a concrete idea of the trend of the prices in Iraq.

The current surveys cover only Baghdad. However, we'd aim to cover other areas (North and South of Iraq) in cooperation with other NGOs and partners.

Methodology:

This trend analysis is based on a qualitative compilation of prices (not quantitative). Statistics presented here are collected weekly in wholesale markets and may not reflect real retail prices.

We are interested in the trend and not the real price.

The prices below represent a monthly average.

All prices are in Iraqi Dinars.

*The NCCI Prices Indicators are available on our website **for our members** in [the Indicators Section](#)*

Since March 2006 we have changed the items in order to be more accurate and have more appropriate prices with the Baghdadis' reality.

This report is divided in 5 sections: Food; Construction; Transports – Communication; Energy and Living costs.

After one year we are able to add graphs showing the evolution of these prices. In each table we already added a column showing the monthly evolution. The graphs accompanying these tables are formatted from a base-price (100) as March06 indicator.

This Page is your page

If you have an announcement (training, workshop, etc) regarding your organisation, if you are aware about meetings, events, humanitarian update, if you would like to make known some information, please send them to webmanager@ncciraq.org

Weekly Schedule

Baghdad NGOs Emergency Network is expected to meet on Tuesday, 5th.

We have added on our [weekly schedule](#) some events hold in Iraq or Jordan. that concern only specific invited people. They are highlighted as “restricted”. This is to give better information on what is going on to our members. We encourage you to check regularly our Weekly Schedule on our [Website](#) for updates.

Upcoming important dates

1st June: Anniversary of Nationalisation of Iraqi Oil (1973)
Birthday of Imam Ali Zainul Aabedin

18th June: Anniversary of Al Sadec'ka Zahra's death

Updates & Announcements

Iraqis granted extra 7 months to upgrade passports

Iraqi nationals who hold 'S' series passports will be allowed to enter Jordan until the end of December, according to the Jordanian Ministry of Interior.

New NCCI Board

The new NCCI board has elected its secretariat.

Chair: OXFAM

Vice-Chair: Danish Refugees Council

Treasurer: Mercy Corps

Secretary: Italian Consortium of Solidarity

Members: Iraqi Al-Amal, Enfants du Monde – Droits de l'Homme, Air Serv

New NCCI Administrator

A new NCCI administrator, Giovanna Bua, arrived in Amman to replace Boris Delannoy who is now leaving for new adventures. NCCI team would like to welcome Giovanna and thanks Boris for the last months spent amongst us.

"Civil Society Input on the Constitutional Review"

A conference Organized by Al-Hayat Network in partnership with the United Nations Office for Projects Services (UNOPS) And the Friedrich-Ebert-Stiftung (FES) will take place on Saturday 2 June at the Baghdad's Rasheed Hotel. It will gather parliamentarians, civil society representatives, international organizations, academics and the media to present these recommendations.

Aid, Security and Civil Society in the Post-911 Context Workshop

The Centre for Civil Society will be organizing an international workshop on 'Aid, security and civil society in the post-911 context', to be held from June 28-29th, 2007 in London.

NCCI's Contact List