DSRSG Walpole: Families of the disappeared deserve the truth

Baghdad, Iraq, 29 August 2019 – United Nations Deputy Special Representative for Iraq (DSRSG) Alice Walpole today addressed a gathering to mark the International Day for the Victims of Enforced Disappearances. The event, held under the auspices of the Prime Minister and organised by the International Committee of the Red Cross, commemorated the very many people who have disappeared in Iraq during decades of armed conflict, whose fates and whereabouts remain unknown.

“The search for those who have disappeared is a search for truth”, DSRSG Walpole said. “For many families whose loved ones are missing, presumed killed, the truth is the only recompense we can offer them”.

She recalled that the United Nations Security Council recently adopted its first ever resolution on persons reported missing during armed conflict. Resolution 2474 calls on parties to armed conflict actively to search for missing persons; maintain communication with the families of the missing; recover the dead; record and map burial sites; register and notify families of detainees.

DSRSG Walpole praised the Iraqi government’s engagement with the United Nations Committee on Enforced Disappearances and welcomed the draft legislation on enforced disappearances currently before the Iraqi parliament. In this context, she called on the government to investigate all disappearances, determine the fate and whereabouts of the missing, return detainees to their families, and identify and prosecute those responsible for abductions and deaths.

“It is, at the very least, what the families and communities of the disappeared deserve”, DSRSG Walpole said.

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For more information, please contact: Mr. Khalid Dahab, Deputy Director of Public Information/Deputy Spokesperson, United Nations Assistance Mission for Iraq. Phone: +964 790 194 0146, Email: dahab@un.org or the UNAMI Public Information Office: unami-information@un.org