



EUAM IRAQ STRATEGY FOR ENGAGING WITH CIVIL SOCIETY

The “European Union Advisory Mission in Iraq (EUAM Iraq) Strategy for Engaging with Civil Society” is part of the European Union’s comprehensive approach to security sector reform and a means for the Mission to take up a more leading role by recognising **civil society actors as a key partner**. The main aim of this document is to outline the visions and the logic behind **how** EUAM Iraq will engage with civil society.

Introduction

An **empowered civil society is a component of any democracy**. By articulating citizens' concerns, civil society actors are active in the public arena and engage in initiatives, which foster pluralism and further democracy. In that light, integrating a people-centered approach, through engagement with civil society, contributes to the effectiveness and impact of any intervention addressing the security sector. The European Union Advisory Mission in Iraq's efforts is no exception.

Iraq's civilian security sector faces different challenges. Civil society actors and organisations can make substantial contributions in addressing many of these issues through their lobbying, advocacy and oversight activities at national, regional and local level.

When it comes to democratic governance, rule of law and fundamental rights, including the right to life and dignity, freedom of expression and association as well as minority rights, they can enhance transparency and accountability of the public institutions and facilitate a greater focus on the needs of citizens in policymaking.

Civil society actors have also demonstrated their ability to campaign for **gender equality, fight against discrimination**, and promote **social inclusion** as well as environmentally sustainable policies and practices.



Vision

The building up of partnerships within the engagement of security sector reform is a strategic priority for EUAM Iraq. The Mission's activities involve all relevant stakeholders, including non-state and civil society actors.

At the heart of the security system governance agenda is the need to promote **people-centered approaches to security**. Placing people at the centre of a Security Sector Reform (SSR) process enables donors to better assess the security situation in each context, and to address the different security needs and perceptions of women and men, boys and girls.



Objectives of the engagement

- Localise EUAM Iraq's interventions and achievements in order to make them more effective, sustainable and demand-driven;
- Engage civil society in line with the general EU approach to strengthening their role;
- Improve the information exchange, gathering and verification;
- Promote local ownership, accountability and inclusiveness;
- Contribute to enhanced confidence between civil society and SSR-related government authorities;
- Through civil society, contribute to EUAM Iraq's transparency, outreach and effectiveness;
- Coordinate with EUAM Iraq's international partners on their engagement and support of civil society relating to the civilian aspects of SSR;
- Mainstream the European Union's approach to the implementation of UNSCR 1325 on "Women, Peace and Security" and subsequent resolutions relating thereto in all activities.



Definition of civil society and limitations to the engagement

By **civil society** we mean a **collective term indicating all forms of non-state and non-state-led social action by individuals and groups**. Organised civil society is an organisational structure whose members serve the public interest through a democratic process and act as mediators between government and citizens.

EUAM Iraq engages with international and national Non-Governmental Organisations (NGOs) thinktanks, academia and faith-based organisations involved in the civilian aspects of SSR.

Iraqi political, religious and community elders perceive the affiliation with civil society organisations as an effective way to seek representation and popularity with the people. Regular contacts with Civil Society Organisations (CSOs) and NGOs are of value in Iraq.

The following principles shall be considered when engaging with civil society:

- **“Do no harm” principle**, aiming to maximise the positive impact and minimise the negative;
- Requirement of **a legitimate, demand-driven intervention** that is in line with EUAM Iraq’s objectives;
- Civil society engagement is **complementary** to human rights and gender mainstreaming and constitutes mutually reinforcing strategies that need to be undertaken in parallel;

- **Human security:** A notion of security that encompasses human rights, good governance, access to education and healthcare and ensuring that each individual has opportunities and choices to fulfil his or her own potential;
- **Legitimacy:** The individual representing a social action ought to be accepted as a true spokesperson for the cause and enjoy the support of the constituency they claim to represent;
- **Accountability:** By articulating citizens’ concerns, civil society organisations are key to ensuring inclusive policies. CSOs therefore contribute to building more accountable and legitimate states;
- **No one left behind:** Extra effort should be made to ensure that the voices of those on the outskirts of society and the most marginalised are meaningfully heard and included. Examples of such collectives are the IDPs (internally displaced persons), survivors of domestic violence and other inequitable gender treatment, and many more.



Key areas of engagement

The Mission develops appropriate relationships in the context of EUAM Iraq's mandate with relevant national Iraqi, European and other international interlocutors from civil society. The Mission shall strive to engage more systematically with civil society in the following key areas:

A. Contributing to sustainable human security

Engaging with civil society actors which focus on security actors

Engagement with civil society actors in this area will contribute to monitoring, analysing and reporting on law enforcement and adequate public order as well as better understanding and monitoring of the perceptions and experiences of security for diverse men, women, boys and girls.

Engaging with civil society actors with a focus on local ownership and solutions

The Mission is promoting non-politicised local ownership and practical solutions to local problems. Regular and frequent consultations with CSOs will increase the Mission's awareness of the local environment and of the specifics of an Iraqi understanding of a state-led, trustworthy and serving security sector.

B. Improving information gathering and verification

EUAM Iraq will engage with civil society actors to improve the gathering and verification of information. EUAM Iraq has no physical access to certain areas but engaging with civil society organisations with connections to such regions can provide valuable insights into security-related developments, including political and economic aspects.

C. Contributing to conflict management

Engaging with civil society actors which focus on confidence-building measures

Engaging with civil society working on confidence-building can assist EUAM Iraq in identifying ideas that might have a potential to build at least limited trust with civilian security sector actors.

EUAM Iraq will act as a link between the local civil society and the donors, to direct help where it is most needed, as well as assist donors in identifying the most sustainable projects to build the public's confidence in SSR actors.

Engaging with civil society actors which focus on the Iraqi government's initiatives regarding security sector reform

EUAM Iraq's engagement with civil society will promote the cooperation between the government and CSOs, while supporting civil society initiatives such as civilian oversight. EUAM Iraq may assess the potential for several specific civil society actors to contribute to EUAM Iraq-specific tasks. Such engagement will be a good tool to inform regarding the development of national strategies in countering violent extremism (CVE), countering terrorism (CT), fighting organised crime, and Ministry of Interior strategies.



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