

# Deterioration of Iraqi Women's Rights and Living Conditions Under Occupation

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## **Abstract:**

For centuries, Iraqi women struggled for their human rights. It wasn't until the 1960's that some improvements in constitutional women's rights were implemented. During the seventies and eighties, women's rights improved significantly, providing better educational opportunities, political involvement, equal job opportunities, health care and development of laws and regulations to ensure a better life for Iraqi women and girls.

Deterioration of women's rights in Iraq began during the US-UN comprehensive economical sanctions imposed on Iraq during the nineties. In 2003, the invasion of Iraq by the USA and its allies resulted in the descent of the rights of women just like other elements in Iraqi society, infrastructure and the general quality of life.

To define the extent of the USA occupation impact on women's rights and living conditions, a survey composed of 21 questions was distributed in two major cities:

- Inside Baghdad, Iraq in the Karada District, and
- Kudsiya area in Damascus, Syria where more than 200,000 Iraqi refugees live.

The 150 women who answered the survey were a part of 150 families or households composed of a total of 502 Iraqis.

Statistical analysis of the questions of the survey indicated dangerous trends in the security status that drove Iraqi women out of their jobs, where 85% of the studied women are unemployed (taking into consideration that the large majority of this percentage have a formal education). The study also indicated that 36% of the studied families lived with no income or a very low income of \$100/month or less which has lead to women and children doing menial labor or begging. Also, it was found that 87 families have a victim of either occupation forces or sectarian violence. The mortality rate among this targeted displaced population is 193 per 1000. this high mortality rate is an indication of genocide existing amongst the migrated and displaced population. Missing family members rate at 12.7, and it is also estimated that 20% of the students of the studied women's families are having difficulties and failing schools. A percentage of other students quit school altogether.

The occupation is totally responsible for the deterioration and destruction of women's lives and rights in Iraq. Iraqi women under occupation need the help of their sisters in international women's organizations abroad to help protect them and protect their rights. They also have the right to resist the occupier in every way available to reclaim their lost lives and ensure a better life for themselves and their families.

# **Deterioration of Iraqi Women's Rights and Living Conditions Under the Occupation**

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## **Introduction**

Prior to 1920, Iraqi women's rights were not truly recognized under the Ottoman Empire rule. Iraq was occupied for four centuries under this rule which saw virtually no advancement of rights for women. The situation did not improve much under the tribal, religious ruling during the British occupation and colonial period of 1920-1958.

In 1958, Iraq became a Republic and for the first time ever, women's rights began to improve, when the government of General Abdul-Kareem Kasim supported by the Iraqi Communist Party amended Personal Status Law to grant equal inheritance and divorce rights. This Personal Status Law also relegated divorce, inheritance and marriage to civil, instead of religious, courts, and provided for child support.

After that, Iraqi women and girls began enjoying relatively more rights than many of their counterparts in the Middle East [1].

The primary underpinning of women's equality is contained in the Iraqi provisional constitution, which was drafted by the Ba'ath party in 1970 [1]. Article 19 declares all citizens equal before the law regardless of sex, blood, language, social origin, or religion [1].

Enrolment of women and girls in rural areas in literacy centers under the illiteracy eradication legislation of 1979 transferred women in Iraq into a new level of education, labor, and employment. With other employment laws, the opportunities in the civil service sector, maternity benefits, and stringent laws against harassment in the work place allowed Iraqi women larger involvement in building their careers [1].

Women attained the right to vote and run for office in 1980. In 1986 Iraq became one of the first countries to ratify the Convention on Elimination of all forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW).

During the 1990's, the (US-UN) sanctions imposed on Iraq had a great impact on women and children in Iraq. The financial crippling of families resulted in an increase of female illiteracy as many families could not afford to send their children to school.

To compare through numbers, according to (UNESCO) by the year of 1987, approximately 75 percent of Iraqi women were literate, but by end of 2000, the percentage of literate women dropped to less than 25 percent [1].

The criminal comprehensive economic sanctions imposed on Iraq not only prepared the situation in Iraq for the American aggressor to occupy the country and take over the oil reserves, but it also put a halt to the significant advancement in women rights and the improved living conditions they had struggled hundreds of years to earn.

By the end of the nineties, the economic constraints pushed women to leave their jobs and return to their traditional role in the home. The tremendous pressure and burden the Iraqi women have gone through since the illegal sanctions is indescribable, where she has had to feed the children with no food, take care of ill family members with no medicine, and bury her loved ones as an advanced sacrifice to the US invasion of Iraq.

Iraqi women proved to be reliable, enthusiastic and hard workers when given the chance to have a proper education and human rights.

By the end of the year 2000, many Iraqi women who worked as scientists, engineers, medical doctors, artists, poets, journalists, and educators proved that they not only can be equal to their counterparts, but more responsible to their historic challenge as an important integral half of society.

### **Iraqi Women Under Occupation:**

Like other parts of society, Iraqi women lives, rights, and living environment was drastically changed by the military operations during the invasion of Iraq in March-April 2003.

Tens of thousands of Iraqi women, children, and men were killed, injured and families were shattered as a result of using conventional and internationally banned weapons like White Phosphorous, Napalm, Depleted Uranium, Cluster Bombs, chemical agents and gasses [2] [3] [4] [5]. About 100,000 deaths were estimated as a result of occupation military operations for the period from March 2003 and August 2004 [6].

Due to the continuing existence of US-led occupation forces and the intentional collapse of security, the economy, and civil services, women's lives have become worse than ever. One reason of many is the new amendments made under the occupation government to the constitution and personal status laws. The majority of occupation assigned political parties are composed of religious clerics and fundamentalists who have their own sectarian explanations and interpretations of Islamic Sharia. These interpretations are often conflicting or contradictory from one faction to another. The new USA-written Iraqi constitution includes laws and regulations that leave much room for conjecture and interpretation by clerics and religious figures. This has resulted and will continue to result in a sure and swift deterioration of women's rights as most of the old laws protecting women are now arguable under this more 'flexible' constitution. The occupation is responsible of the deterioration in women rights and living environment through the following:

1. Contrary to Geneva Conventions, Iraqi women are arrested, detained, abused and made to collaborate with the occupation forces and to inform against resistance. [7]
2. There has been an increase of sexual assaults, torture and violations of women's right by US forces in Iraq. [8]
3. The majority of women lost their jobs. Seventy percent of the previously working Iraqi women today are unemployed for different reasons. Before the invasion, women formed more than 40 percent of total workers in the public sector. [1]
4. The dismantling of Iraqi security forces and police led to an increase in violence and crimes against women. Women are no longer leaving their homes unaccompanied by the relatives.
5. Women suffered from great loss of their loved ones through the unjustified killing of Iraqis by the "self-immune" from prosecution US soldiers. The total number of deaths in Iraq since the start of the invasion in 2003 is estimated to be 1,127,552 [10] due to different causes. The majority of these deaths are due to the troops use of excessive force and violence and the intentional creation of a sectarian civil war by the occupier to control the country.
6. Iraqi women are losing basic rights under the new constitution where women's rights are implemented only if they don't contradict the Shariaa, which is interpreted differently by each sect [11].

### **The Struggle of Iraqi Women Under the Occupation: Numbers and Statistics**

To investigate the effects of the occupation and its related political, economical, educational and social consequences, a survey through the questionnaire shown in Appendix [1] was conducted. The selected population of the survey was divided into two categories:

1. Iraqi women within families in the largely refugee area of Kudsiya in on the outskirts of Damascus, Syria. This population is largely comprised of Iraqis who were under high threat for various reasons.
2. Iraqi women within families in Karada District on the Rasafa side of Baghdad, Iraq. This area is considered a relatively stable, safe area.

The author and her assistants carried out the questionnaires and randomly distributed them to women within the families in these areas, and asked them to fill it out, and finally collected them for analysis. Due to the great fear of the women, the study team collected only 70 questionnaires from the women or families in Karada area in Iraq, and 80 questionnaires from the women in the Kudsiya area in Syria. In other words, the survey included 150 Iraqi families. Statistical analysis of the survey was split into the following categories:

- A- Marital Status
- B- Educational Level
- C- Age Distribution
- D- Employment Status
- E- Reasons for Current Unemployment
- F- Family Provider (Guardian)
- G- Monthly Income of the Family
- H- Family Members Killed During Violence or Conflict
- I- Circumstances of Family Member Deaths
- J- Missing Family Members
- K- Existing Chronic Illnesses Needing Treatment
- L- Existence of Chronic Illness Amongst the Women
- M- Displaced Families – Causes of Displacement
- N- Education and School Attendance Status of Students in the Families

### **Methods of Conducting the Survey:**

The survey is population \_based to prove what has been published regarding the deterioration in living conditions and women's rights under occupation in Iraq since 2003.

The technique used to analyze the results of the survey was descriptive analysis of the information or descriptive statistics. The data was collected, summarized and percentiles were drawn up based on this and compared to certain previously published statistics. Finally, for the results regarding the larger population of the threatened and migrated populace, inferential statistical analysis was used whereby conclusions were drawn regarding the larger population according to the smaller one surveyed.

A survey of 150 households randomly selected within two major population clusters. The first population cluster is in the Kudsiya area, a suburb of Damascus, Syria where about 200 000 Iraqi refugees live.

The second cluster is in Karada District, within the Rasafa side of Baghdad, Iraq.

Between the period of August to October of 200, a population based two cluster survey was conducted to define aspects of the deterioration of Iraqi women's living conditions and rights under the USA occupation of Iraq.

A questionnaire that covers different life aspects of a woman within any Iraqi family were put together (in the Arabic language) including the following:

- Marital status, educational level, age distribution, employment status, reasons for current unemployment, monthly income of family, family members killed during violence or conflict, missing family members, existing chronic illnesses needing treatment,

existing chronic illnesses amongst women, displaced families( causes of displacement), family education and school attendance status.

The questionnaire was then distributed in the selected areas by two teams. Each team consisted of a PhD, MS, and a B.Sc. holders who work, or used to work with the author in Baghdad University. The assistants refused to publish their names from fear of getting killed or kidnapped by the Militias.

Members of the two teams personally distributed about 300 questionnaires randomly within each area code of the geographical extent of these areas.

What made it easier for them is the fact that they are residents of these areas. They answered the questions of the household women whenever it is needed and checked related document.

The team collected only 80 answered questionnaires from Kudsiya area and 70 from the Karada area although the residents were assured that their names and addresses would remain anonymous.

The Selection Criteria of the Areas:

The selection criteria of these two areas are based on the following:

1-A well known fact that Kudsya Area in Syria is an Iraqi refugee-like area for those families who escaped killing, kidnapping, death threats, and forced displacement. Thus this cluster is considered as a bias one in terms of exposure to violence. Distribution of questionnaire among this cluster was random.

2- The Karada area in Baghdad is considered relatively secure. It consists of a majority of Shia Muslims with minority Christians and Sunni Muslims. Covering such an area within the survey would give balanced results that might comprehend major aspects related to the subject.

Analysis and simple straight forward statistical representation were all done by the author.

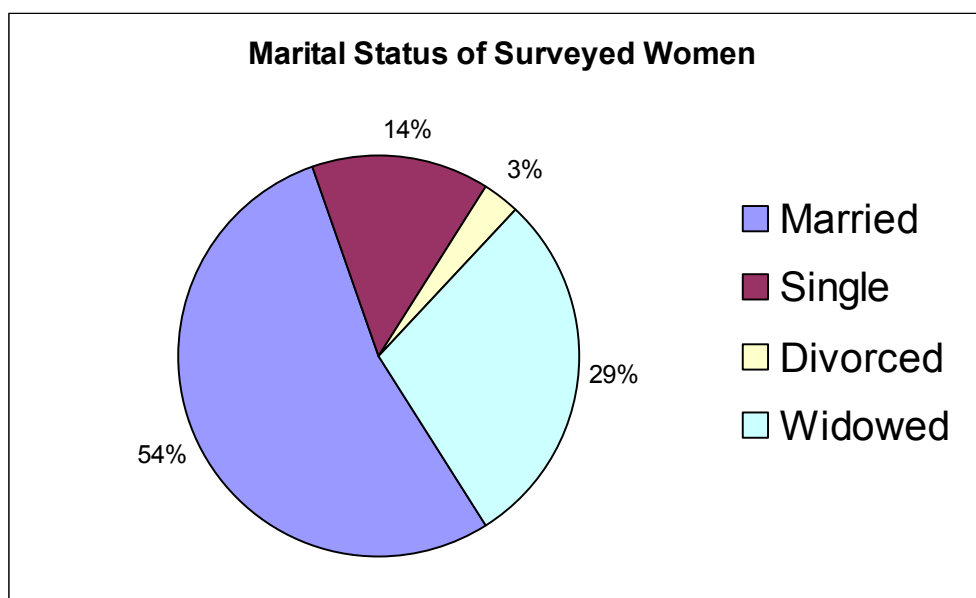
### **Results of Statistical Analysis.**

A- Marital Status: The marital status of the women in the studied population is presented in Table 1:

**Table (1) : Marital Status of Iraqi Women in the Studied Population**

Status of the Women	Number	Percentile
- Married	80	53 %

- Single	21	14 %
- Divorced	5	3 %
- Widow	44	29 %
Total	150	100 %



The above graphical representation of Table (1) gives a very clear idea regarding the high increase in the number of widows amongst the women answering the questionnaire. Causes of this sharp increase in widowed women are due to the excessive killing by occupation forces and occupation created sectarian violence as we will show later on.

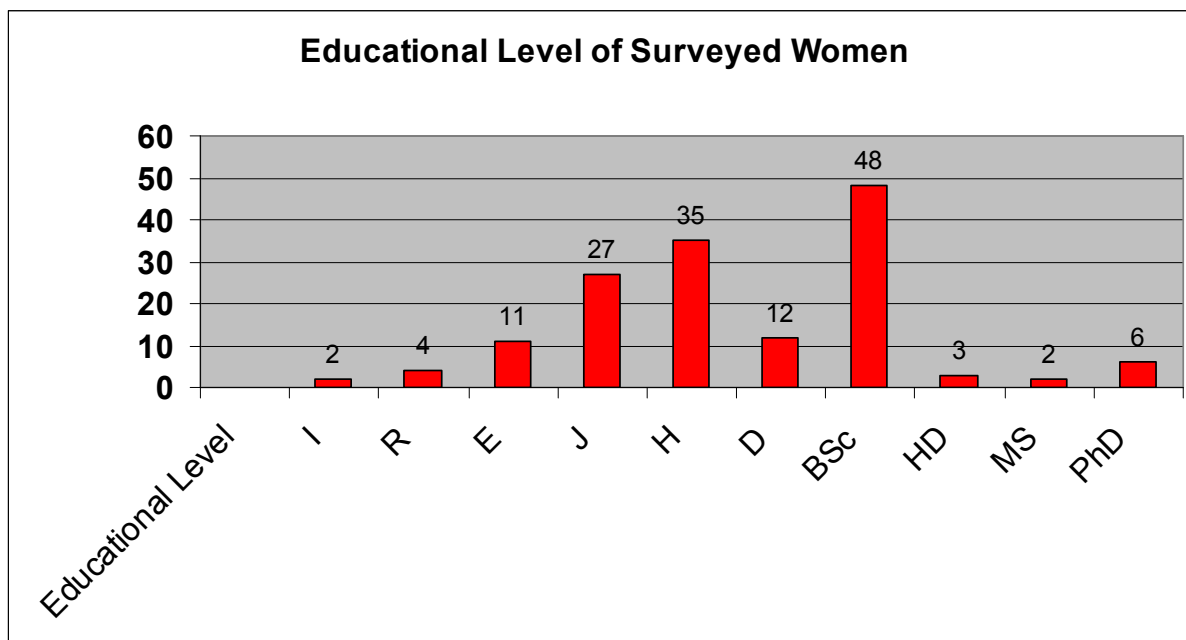
#### B- Educational Level

**Table (2) :** The Level of Education of Women in the Studied Population

Education Level	Symbol	Number of Women	Percentile
Illiterate	I	2	1.333 %
Reading and writing only	R	4	2.67 %
Elementary school graduated	E	11	7.33 %
Junior high school graduated	J	27	18 %
High school graduated	H	35	23.33 %
Post high school diploma	D	12	8 %
B.Sc.	BSc	48	32 %
Higher diploma	HD	3	2 %



Master degree	MS	2	1.33 %
Ph. D. holder	PhD	6	4 %
Total		150	99.999 %



As we can see from Table (2), women with higher education degrees represent 47% of the studied population. If we combine this number with high school diploma holders, the percentage rises to 70.6% which proves the great potential of educated women within the studied population, most of whom were driven out of work due to the previously mentioned reasons.

### C- Age Distribution Amongst the Studied Population:

**Table (3) : Age Distribution Amongst the Women of the Studied Population**

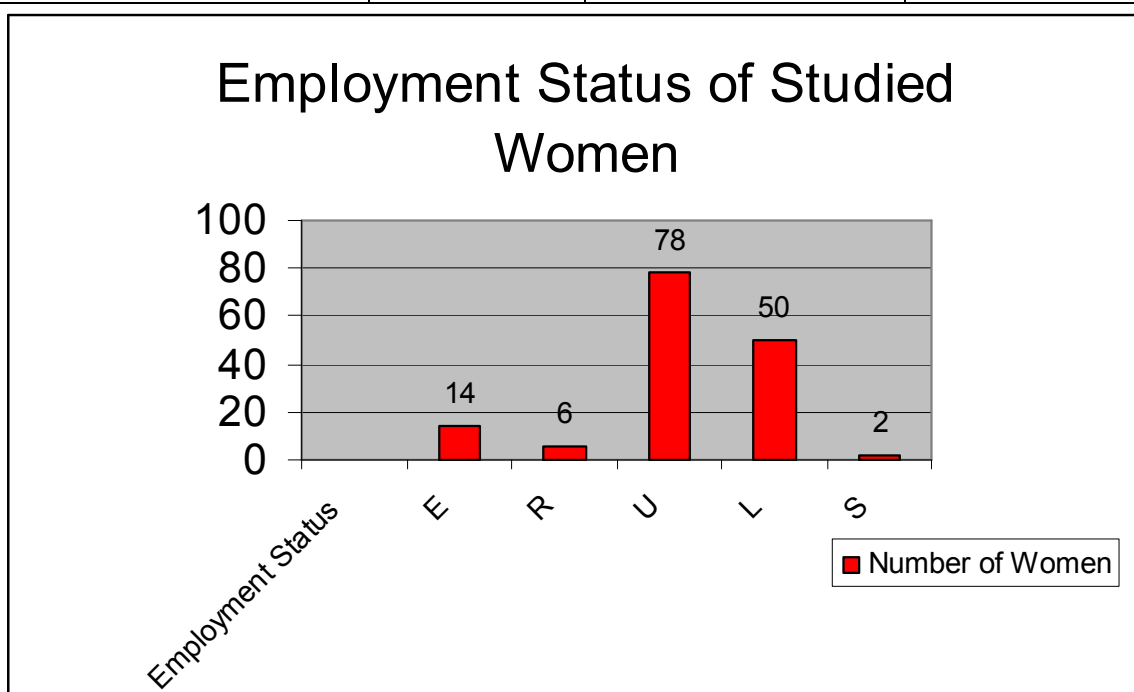
Range	Number of Women	Percentile
Less than 20	6	4 %
20 – 29	20	13.33 %
30 – 39	28	18.66 %
40 – 49	46	30.66 %
50 – 59	36	24 %
60 – 69	12	8 %
70 and above	2	1.33 %
Total	150	99.98 %

As can be seen, the age distribution is normal, with a domination of the 'employment ages', 30 – 60, which represents 73.32 % of the studied population of women.

D- Employment Status of Women in the Studied Population

**Table (4) :** Employment Status of Women in the Studied Population

<b>Employment Status</b>	<b>Symbol</b>	<b>No. of Samples</b>	<b>Percentile</b>
Currently Employed	E	14	9.33 %
Retired	R	6	4.00 %
Unemployed	U	78	52 %
Left work	L	50	33.33 %
Student	S	2	1.33 %
<b>Total</b>		<b>150</b>	<b>99.98 %</b>



This data shows that out of 106 women eligible for employment within the studied population; only 14 of them are currently working. This proves that less than 15 percent are employed and about 85 percent are unemployed.

E- Major Reasons of Current Unemployment:

**Table (5) :** Reasons Behind Current Unemployment of Women in the Studied Population

<b>Reasons</b>	<b>No. of Samples</b>	<b>Percentile</b>
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Lack of security	29	42.6 %
Closing down of private sector jobs	5	7.3 %
Dismantling of certain public sector jobs/offices	2	2.9 %
Debaathification	7	10.3 %
Sectarian favoritism	3	4.4 %
Other reasons	11	16.2 %
Threatened by militias	9	13.2 %
Remain at home to take care of occupation victims	2	2.9

It can be noticed that a major reason of women leaving the work force among the studied population is a lack of security due to sectarian violence, occupation forces, and criminal militias.

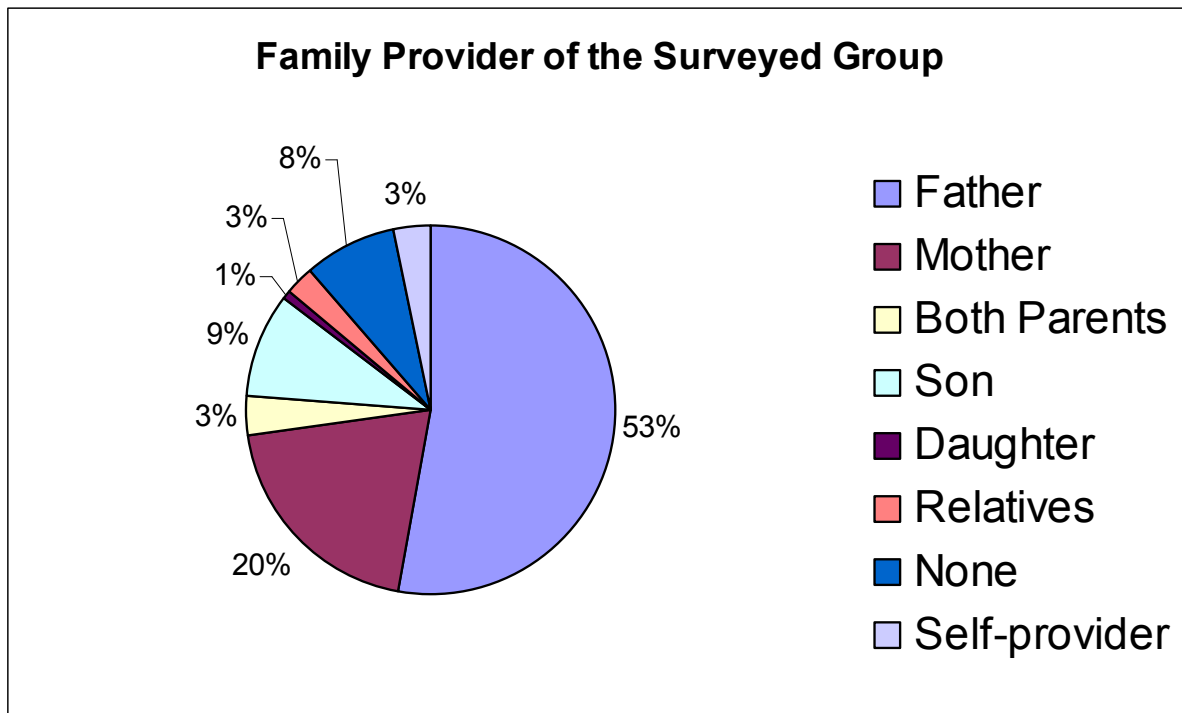
F- Family Provider (Guardian) Amongst the Studied Population:

**Table (6) :** Family Provider of the Families of the Studied Population

<b>Provider</b>	<b>Number</b>	<b>Percentile</b>
Father	79	52.66 %
Mother	30	20 %
Both parents	5	3.33 %
Son	14	9.33 %
Daughter	1	0.66 %
Relatives	4	2.66 %
No provider	12	8 %
Self provider	5	3.33 %
Total	150	99.97 %

As can be seen, there is an obvious retreat of women providing, or helping to provide, for the family even though the family standard of living is within the low-income to poverty level, as we will see from next category.

From the survey, it was also seen through the survey that only 73.3 % of the family providers live with the family, but 26.7 % don't live within the family for security reasons. This represents an extra burden on women in handling the family necessities where there are no services available and there is a collapsed economy and lack of security to deal with.

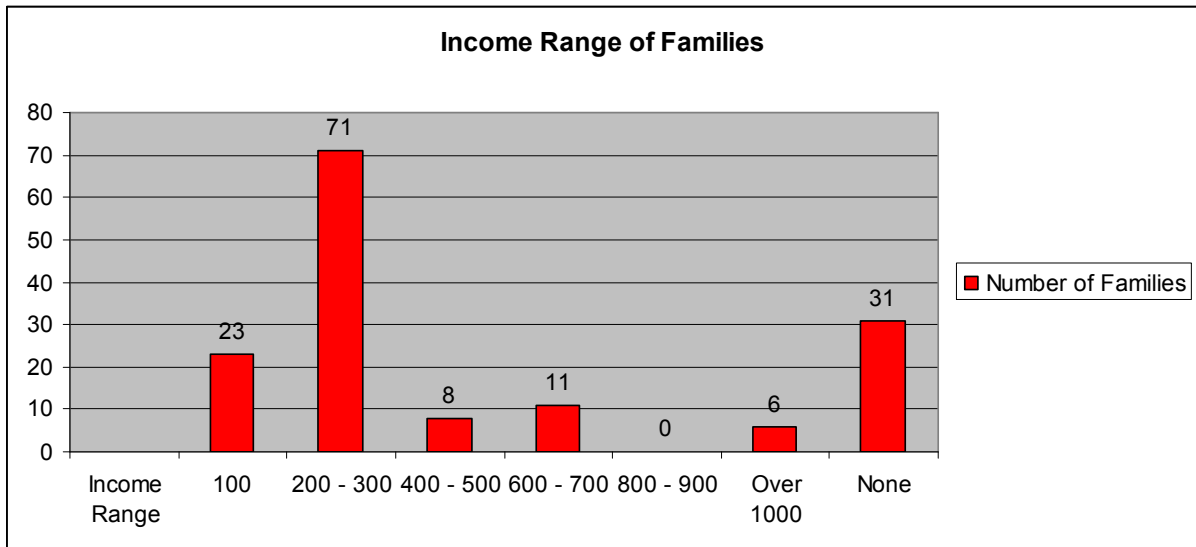


G- Monthly Income of the Families of the Studied Population

**Table (7) :** Monthly Income of the Families in the Studied Population

Monthly Income (\$)	No. of Studied Samples	Percentile
100	23	15.33 %
200 – 300	71	47.33 %
400 – 500	8	5.33 %
600 – 700	11	7.33 %
800 – 900	None	---
More than 1000	6	4 %
None	31	20.66 %
Total	150	99.98 %

We notice from Table (7), that 54 families live with no income or virtually no income with an income of less than \$100. This income level comprises 36% of the studied population. In studying the table with some depth, it will be noted that 70% of the Iraqi population currently lives below the poverty level in one of the richest oil countries in the world [12].



Again, Iraqi women are suffering to feed and take care of the family members under these harsh financial conditions. Children in these conditions leave schools to support the family or women are made to beg for charity or do menial labour or other low paying jobs. An increasing number of Iraqi women abroad and inside Iraq are being coerced or forced into prostitution or even slave labour in order to support children or family.

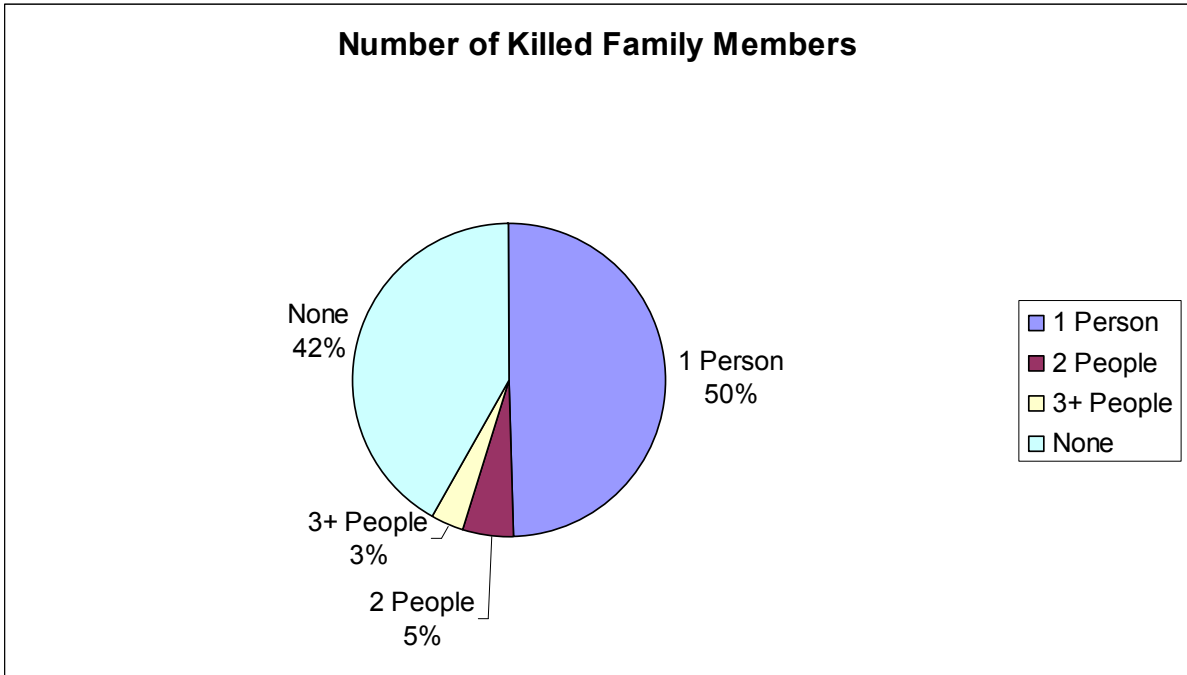
#### H- Family Members Killed During Violence or Conflict

Out of the 150 studied families, 87 of them have family members who were killed with a total number of (97) killed family members out of 503 total persons of the studied population (comprised of 150 households). This represents a mortality rate of 19.3 %, or 193 per thousand. This high mortality rate is understandable among highly affected bias population of the refugees who ran away as a result of being targeted by the occupation forces or sectarian militias. When asked about how many family members were killed, the results showed:

**Table (8) :** The Number of Family Members Killed Within the Families of the Studied Population

Number of Killed Family Members *	Number of Families	Percentile
1	74	49.33 %
2	8	5.33 %
3 +	5	3.33 %
None	63	42 %
Total	150	99.99 %

\* This question was asked regarding first degree family members only- not extended family.



If we consider the estimated mortality rate a representative one for the two million internally displaced Iraqis, and the 2.5 million refugees abroad, the total number of deaths amongst these highly affected by occupation and sectarian violence categories is 868,500 deaths. This number looks reasonable compared to what Johns Hopkins Bloomberg School of Public Health estimated: a mortality rate of 654,956 up until July 2006 [13]. If we consider that the period from July of 2006 to July of 2007 was the bloodiest of the occupation years, the estimated total number of deaths through this study is reasonable compared to other estimated numbers for the whole country's population. This number is estimated at 1,127,552 [10]. This drastic increase of mortalities is due to violence which can be considered a trend of the existing 'Genocide' in Iraq comparing only to other Genocide rates in history.

I- Circumstances of Family Member Deaths :

**Table (9) :** Circumstances of Family Member Deaths Amongst the Studied Population

<b>Cause of Death</b>	<b>No. of Victims</b>	<b>Percentile</b>
Occupation forces during torture	16	16.5 %
Occupation forces during random shootings	1	1.03 %
Ministry of Interior torture victims	6	6.2 %
Target killings by militias	40	41.12 %
Random killing by militias	19	19.6 %
Lack of security (raped and killed)	2 women	2.06 %

Lack of security	4 men	4 %
Car bombs	9	9.27 %
Total	97	99.88 %

As we can see, the highest percentage of deaths by killing is by the sectarian militias, followed by occupation forces excessive use of violence.

#### J- Missing Victims:

The total number of missing members within the families of the studied population are 66 victims. When asked about the circumstances of their disappearance, the following was shown:

**Table (10) :** Circumstances of the Disappearance of the Missing Family Members

<b>Circumstances of Disappearance</b>	<b>No. of Missing</b>	<b>Percentile</b>
Went out and never came back	35	53.3 %
Sectarian kidnappings	6	9.09 %
Accidents due to a lack of security	7	10.6 %
Unjustified imprisonment	15	22.72 %
Women were taken in place of other family members	3	4.54 %
Total	66	99.95 %

Table 10 shows that the majority of missing people cases are due to undefined reasons where young men leave the house for schools, colleges, work, etc. and never return, such a terrible way to lose a loved one.

Again, missing victims represent 13.12 % of the studied population. Missing husbands, brothers, sisters and children are a source of real trauma to the women in the family.

#### K - Existing Chronic Illnesses that Need Special Continuous Treatment

**Table (11) :** Chronic Illnesses Within the Families of the Studied Population

<b>Patient Status within Family</b>	<b>No. of Cases</b>
Father	18
Mother	69
Both Parents	13

Children	11
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Chronic illnesses within the women's families are an additional burden and a source of constant stress considering the inadequate health care system or lack of financial support for Iraqis inside Iraq and abroad.

#### L - Existence of Chronic Illnesses Amongst the Women in the Studied Population

**Table (12) :** Type of Disease Some Women in the Studied Population are Suffering from

Type of Disease	No. of Cases	Percentile
Psychological	16	10.6 %
Psychological with another disease	28	18.6 %
Thyroid	3	2 %
Ulcer	1	0.66 %
Blood Hypertension	1	0.66 %
Sterile	1	0.66 %
Migraine	1	0.66 %
Paralyzed	4	2.66 %
None	95	63.33 %
Total	150	99.83 %

A continuous change of the living environment, losing family members and harsh living conditions all contribute to extra stress on the women in the family. This has resulted in many psychological disorders such as depression, post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD), attention deficit disorder (ADD), etc.

#### M - Displaced Families – Causes of Displacement

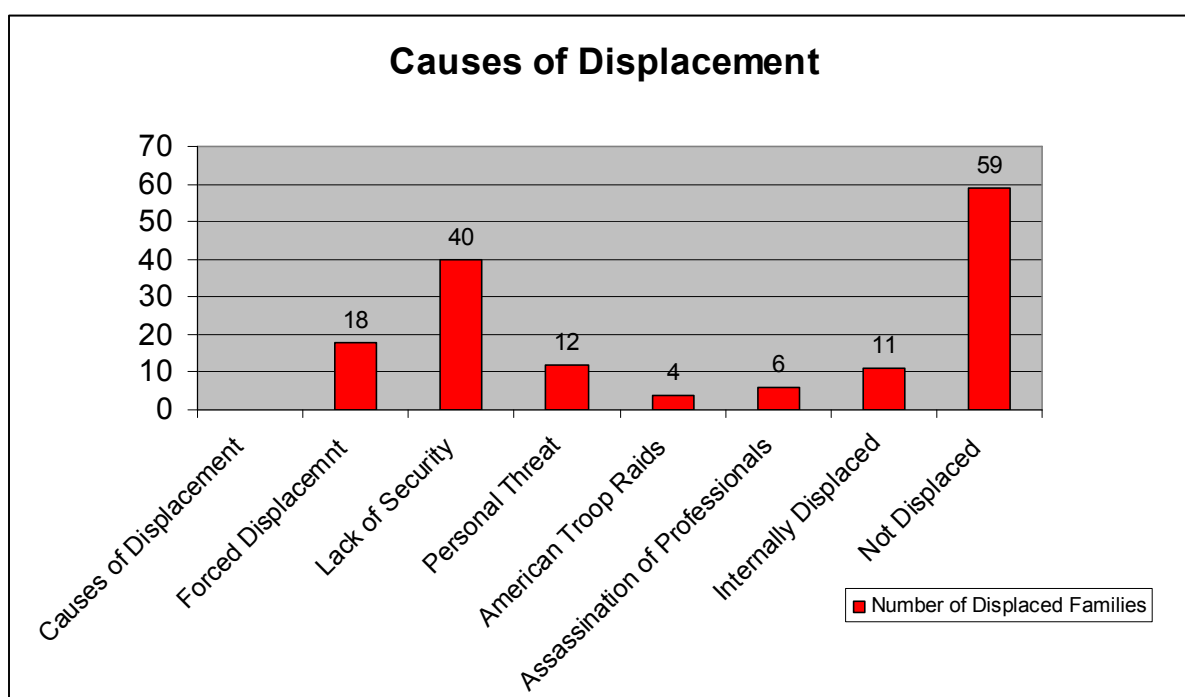
**Table (13) :** Primary Causes of Displacement of the Families in the Studied Population

Causes of Displacement	No. of families	Percentile
Forced Displacement	18	12 %
Lack of Security	40	26.66 %
Personal Threats	12	8 %
American Troop Raids	4	2.66 %
Assassinations of Scientists/ Professors	6	4 %
Internally Displaced	11	7.33 %



Not Displaced	59	39.33 %
Total	150	99.98 %

The 80 displaced families in the Kudsiya area in Syria are amongst thousands of other similar families currently in Syria, Jordan and other countries. Most of them live without financial support, insignificant health care that cannot cover long term disease and disabilities. Wives, mothers, sisters and daughters are sacrificing their education, social life and careers for the basic survival of their families. Thanks to George Bush and the American occupation of Iraq, the condition of Iraqi women inside the country and abroad is worse than it has ever been in the history of Iraq.



N - Family Education and School Attendance Status Indicators:

The total number of family members involved in the studied population is 502.

Males : 248

Females : 254

Number of students amongst them: 318 (172 males and 146 females)

Total number of failing students among the above number is 64:

Male : 40 (which represents 23.2 % of the total male students in the studied population).

Female : 24 (which represents 16.4 % of total female students in the studied population).

Inside Iraq, the higher number of failing male students is largely due to the fact that they are being targeted for kidnappings, imprisonment, raids, assassinations, etc. so they constantly have to move or go into hiding. In refugee areas, male students tend to miss school attendance in order to help support their families financially by taking on menial labor jobs.

**Table (14) : Major Causes of Student Failure in Schools Amongst the Families of the Studied Population**

<b>Causes of Failure</b>	<b>Number</b>	<b>%</b>
Missed attendance	7	10.94 %
Poor teaching techniques	5	7.81 %
Distraction and inability to focus	10	15.62 %
Curriculum differences	15	23.43 %
Emotional damage as a result of having one or more family members killed	19	29.68 %
Raids and imprisonment of a family member	8	12.5 %
<b>Total</b>	<b>64</b>	<b>99.98 %</b>

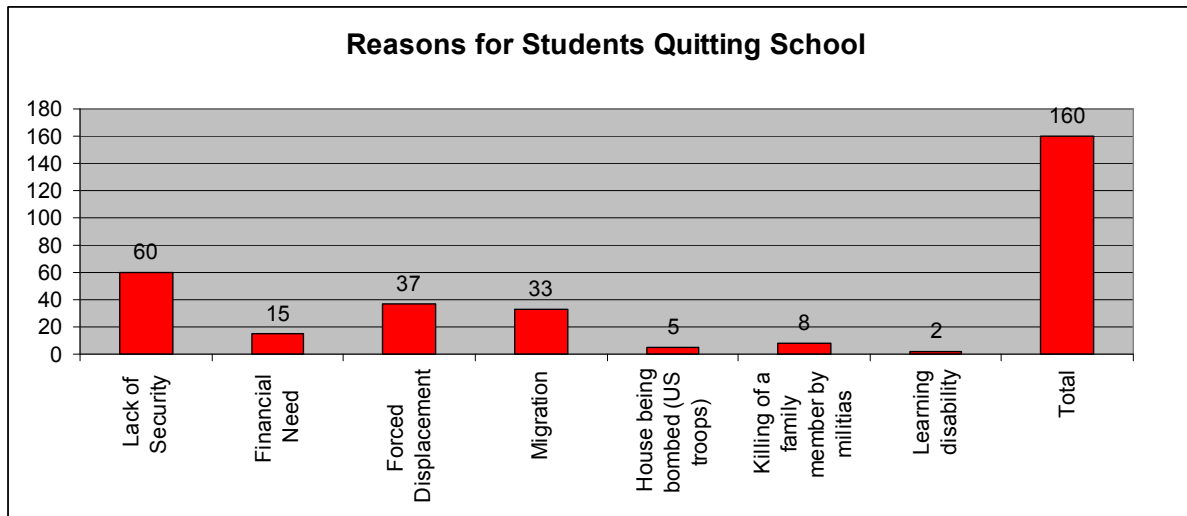
Table (14) shows that a major factor or cause of students failing school is the emotional damage of having close family members killed and the inability to concentrate due to the violence the children and teenagers are subjected to constantly.

### **Number of dropouts from school**

Students amongst the studied population are 160: 94 Males, and 66 Females.

**Table (15) : Causes of Dropping Out of School Amongst the Students in the Studied Population**

<b>Cause of Quitting School</b>	<b>Number</b>	<b>%</b>
Lack of Security	60	37.7 %
Financial Need	15	9.37 %
Forced Displacement	37	23.12 %
Migration	33	20.62 %
House being bombed (US troops)	5	3.125 %
Killing of a family member by militias	8	5 %
Learning disability	2	1.25 %
<b>Total</b>	<b>160</b>	<b>99.98 %</b>



Male school dropouts make up 54.6 % of the total male students in the studied population. Female school dropouts are 45.2 % of the total female students in the studied population. Again, we notice that the percentage of male student dropouts is higher than female student dropouts because the males do not stay in their residential areas and keep away from militias and American troops and police.

It is also noticed that the condition of children in forced displacement families inside of Iraq are worse off than the children of the families who migrated outside the country because the latter have their children register in school once again in neighboring countries while the former prefer keeping them out of school for their own safety.

### Concluding Remarks:

Statistical analysis of the collected data from a population of 150 families composed of 502 members indicated the following:

- 1- Major causes of displacement amongst the studied displaced population include personal threats, lack of security and forced displacement through militias or occupation forces.
- 2- The unemployment rate is 85% amongst women in the studied population.
- 3- 47% of the women in the study hold some form of higher education degrees including Ph.D.s. When this number is added to high school graduates, the percentage rises to 70.6%.
- 4- The biggest reasons of unemployment are a lack of security and sectarian violence in the country.
- 5- With all the degrees and work experience, only 20% of the families rely on the mother providing an income for the family.
- 6- About 36% of the families have with no income or an income of less than \$100/month. Women and children are made to beg or do menial labor or even work as prostitutes to feed their families.
- 7- Out of the 150 studied families, 87 of them have family members who were killed. There is a high mortality rate of 193 per 1000, indicating the existence of genocide amongst the migrated or displaced population. The studied population is a bias group targeted by the occupation forces and sectarian militias. The total number of deaths amongst the 4.5 million internally displaced or force migrated people both inside and outside the country is estimated to be 868,500.
- 8- The highest percentage of killings occur due to sectarian militias, followed by occupation forces excessive use of violence.
- 9- The 66 missing members of the studied families represent 12.69% of the members of the studied population, most of who left home for schools, colleges, work, etc. and never came back. Others were captured by guards and security forces and there is no information regarding their current whereabouts.
- 10- The burden of ill family members with long-term illnesses lies directly on the women's shoulders, since the healthcare system in Iraq has been non-existent since the beginning of the invasion.
- 11- About a third of the studied women in the group have developed some form of psychological or other stress related illness.

12-20% of the students in the studied families are failing school. Major causes include emotional damage as a result of having one or more family members killed and an inability to focus.

13-50% of the students in the studied population are school dropouts. Major causes of quitting include a lack of security and forced displacement or migration. Male student dropouts are higher in number than females.

**The major conclusion** is that the USA occupation of Iraq has intentionally created a catastrophic collapse in the social interrelated structure, infrastructure services, education and healthcare system, and security. All of which have a direct detrimental impact on women's living conditions and women's rights in Iraq. The occupation of Iraq has taken women back to the dark ages. By ending the occupation, Iraqi women have a better chance to earn back what they previously accomplished.

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## Annex 1

This questionnaire is for research purposes. Please answer all questions honestly and clearly. Thank you.

**1 - Sex :** Male  , Female

**2 - Marital Status :** Single  , Married  , Divorced  , Widowed

**3 - Age :**

**4 - Educational Level :** Illiterate  , Read/Write only  , Primary School  , Junior High School  , High School  , Diploma  , B.Sc.  , M.Sc.  , Ph.D.

**5 - Employment Status :** Employed  , Retired  , Housewife  , Unemployed  for the following reasons : Lack of security  , Dismantling of public sector institutions  , Debaathification  , Other  Explain:

**6 - Family Provider :** Father  , Mother  , Son  , Daughter  , Relatives  , None

**7 – Is the Provider living with the family ?** Yes  , No  . If ‘no’ are they currently inside Iraq  , or abroad  ?

**8 – Number of family members :** Male  , Female

**9 – Source of Family Income :** Salary (daily, weekly, monthly)  , Retirement  , Charitable aid  , Other  :

**10 – Family Income Level :** Under \$100  , \$200 - \$300  , \$400 - \$500  , \$600 - \$700  , \$800 - \$900  , \$1000 and above

**11 – Number of children currently at an age of studying :** Male  , Female

**12 – Number of failing students :** Male , Female  For the following reasons: Missed attendance , Poor teaching techniques , Lack of concentration due to poor security , Difference of curriculum for migrating or displaced family , Other  Explain :

**13 – Number of student dropouts in the family :** Male , Female  For the following reasons: Security , Financial , Health , Migration , Forced displacement , Change of curriculum , Other  Explain:

**14 – Were any of your family members killed ? :** Yes , No  . If 'yes', was it because of : Explosions , Random killing by occupation forces , Random killing by governmental forces , Random killing by militias , Killing due to a lack of security , Other reasons  Explain :

**15 – Are any of your family members missing ? :** Yes , No  . If 'yes' , was it: Sectarian abduction or lack of security , Forced detention by occupation or governmental forces , Went out and never returned

**16 – Were any women in the family detained in place of wanted family members?** : Yes , No  . If yes, was she detained by US forces , Governmental forces , Militias

**17 – Are there any critical health conditions in the family that need special treatment ? :** Yes , No  . If 'yes', who is the sick member : Mother , Father , One of the children

**18 – Is the nature of the illness/ condition :** Cancerous , Congenital malformations , Amputation of limbs , Chronic illnesses (heart disease, high blood pressure, asthma) , Psychological disorders , Other , Explain:

**19 – Date of discovery of illness:**  Before the occupation or after ?



**20 – Is there a party helping with the cost of treatment?** Yes  , No  If 'yes' , please specify the party :

**21 – Did you leave Iraq due to :** Forced displacement  , No security  , Personal threat  , Other  , Explain :