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**Agenda Item 4c:** Indigenous peoples and conflict  
prevention and resolution

**Title: Conflicts in Iraq and Resolutions**

Mr. Chairperson,  
Honorable delegate,  
Ladies and gentlemen

The Iraqi community is well known for its multi-religious and multinational characteristics, and all sections of the community suffered from the despotism of the Ba'ath regime. After the occupation, the nature of the conflicts has changed and increased in number. Today, four types of conflicts can be recognized in Iraq, with a fifth being highly probable:

- **Resistance** to occupation
- **Religiously sectarian conflict** – between Shiite and Sunnite
- **Ethnic conflict** – Between Kurds and Turkmen
- **Religious-ethnic conflict** – between Christians and Muslims

The expected fifth conflict factor concerns the **conflict on Kerkuk**, expected to take place in 2007 between main sections of the Iraqi community unless the international community interferes to end the Kurdish attempt to absorb the city.<sup>1</sup>

Resistance to the occupation led to the catastrophic casualties in Telafer, Falluja and various districts of western Iraq and Baghdad. In Haditha, civilians were killed in cold blood and there is evidence of the crime of rape and the psychopathic evens in Abu Ghraib.<sup>2, 3</sup>

Religious sectarian conflict between Shiite and Sunnite accounts daily for the death of hundreds of Iraqis including children, women and old peoples. The number of displaced families is now in excess of hundreds of thousands.<sup>4, 5</sup>

The Kurdish-Turkmen conflict has as of current not escalated into armed clashes, partially due to the great imbalance in power in favor of the Kurds. I would like to emphasize that the Turkmen today are severely marginalized in both local and national administration. The oil wealthy Turkmen region has been subjected to demographic changes by bringing hundreds of thousands of Kurds into the Kerkuk region. The Kurds are building on lands owned by Turkmen and also on lands belonging to the municipality.<sup>6, 7</sup>

The Turkmen of Telafer region, an area of great geopolitical importance, is constantly being raided by USA troops and Kurdish Militia. It has been subjected to two destructive attacks by tanks and helicopters. Houses are frequently being broken into, the doors are broken, the inhabitants insulted and the furniture destroyed. Many have been forced to leave their city, they are enforced to leave their city. Already the number of families who have emigrated from the area exceeds 4685.

The unarmed Iraqi Assyrians are suppressed by the authorities in the Kurdish region and exposed to attacks in various other regions. Thousands of them have left Iraq to neighboring countries.<sup>8, 9</sup>

The number of casualties is huge, the disaster is escalating further, the number of victims is massively increasing, and the divergence and hatred between sections of the Iraqi community is growing. Many authorities who still believe that a state of civil war in Iraq is not yet the case, expect that it is about to be erupt. If this is so, how much worse can one expect the situation to become!

The international community is not able to interfere with the situation in Iraq and the role of the United Nations remains supportive only on a humanitarian level. Thus, the US has been left free to be the offender and the judge at the same time.

The experiences of the occupation years prove the failure of the US to alleviate the deteriorating situation in Iraq. The main reasons that make it impossible for USA troops to improve the situation in Iraq are:

- The perception of the Iraqi people is that they are humiliated by the occupation.
- The huge numbers of casualties, which have been caused by the occupation.
- The false basis on which the war was made.

SOITM advocates need to address the international community to hold conferences to discuss the approaches to the Iraqi case. Leadership should be given to the United Nations to solve the Iraqi dilemma and the American troops should be substituted by troops under the control of the United Nations.

Equal recognition should be granted to the different sections of the Iraqi community. Unfair support, which was given to the Kurdish parties by USA, is one of the main factors of both the Kurdish -Turkmen clash and the forth coming quarrel on Kerkuk between Arabs and Turkmen on one side and the Kurds on the other.

Turkmen and Assyrian cases should be approached individually and honestly. These two groups can not hold power in the Iraqi governments which were formed after occupation. Their representation in the Iraqi Parliament is severely disproportional to their population size. They are exposed to oppression. In both cases the Kurdish hegemony should be discontinued. In case of the Iraqi Turkmen:

- The marginalization in administration should be ended.
- The Kurdification of Turkmen region should be eliminated.
- Hundreds of thousands hectares of Turkmen lands, which have not been returned by Kurd staffed Property commission, should be returned with out delay to the Turkmen owners.
- Investigation should be made into the tragedy of the Turkmen of Telafer and the forced emigration should be ended.

Regarding the unity of Iraq that it should be stressed, it is highly risky to split it into federations. The multinational and multi-religious Iraqi community is so highly mixed that the boundaries cannot be differentiated. For example, Erbil city, which has now been made the Capital of Kurdish region, is a highly mixed Turkmen-Kurdish city whereas it was an almost purely Turkmen city in the turn of 20<sup>th</sup> century. A large number of Assyrian towns have recently been Kurdified.

I would also like to highlight that the Iraqi general elections and referendum on the constitution have been extensively manipulated; therefore, large sections of the Iraqi community remain dissatisfied and their rights have not been guarded in parliament. A national unity government should be established and the constitution rewritten.

It is crucial that Iraqis are taught about human rights and democratic basics to determine the limits of demands. To achieve these goals, effective independent civil society organizations should be instituted.

The leaders can be persuaded to change the policy in order to alter the context and environments of divergence and hate between the ethnic and religious groups. Suggestions and strategies for conflict resolution include:

- Institution of committees to analyse and solve conflict

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- Establishment of organizations and movements to eliminate barriers between races as well as to discourage racial division
- The office of Parliamentary Ombudsman should be instituted and departments should be opened in the provinces.
- Notables, religious men, politicians, officials and members of the different ethnic groups can participate:
  - In meetings to discuss the problems
  - In programs in visual media; and
  - To celebrate the national days
- A day of Iraqi brotherhood can be officially declared during which the festivals are arranged in the level of peoples and government
- Visits should be arranged by religious men or politicians from one group to visit the mosques or headquarters of the others
- Soldiers, policemen, security agents and even officials should follow special course to help them deal with the mixed communities.

Thank you

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