

**Women's Rights Situation in Northern
Iraq
Annual Report
2007**

Asuda for Combating Violence against Women

Sulaymaniyah, Iraq

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Introduction:

Women's rights in Kurdistan Region undoubtedly continues to be one of the key issues that constitutes the focus of work and activities of NGOs and Government institutions as well as figures. Women's rights issue has been historically closely tied with human societies and had significant impact on the development of communities and nations. Factors and issues that affected the entire community have had similar impact on the status of women and their rights. The Kurdish community like others, was affected by factors that had positive and negative aspects.

The protection of women's rights on the local and international level occupies a wide area of attention, international efforts to protect women's rights have intensified through international laws and conventions that call for protection of women from abuse. Likewise, communities at the local level need to have local laws and to ensure protection of women's rights and providing a prosperous and free life for women.

During Baath party's era, Women in Iraq and Kurdistan did not only deprive women from their basic rights, but Iraq's regime was exercising systematic violation of human rights and persecution of its own citizens. Following the ousting of the Saddam's regime, doors opened in Kurdistan for freedom. This brought about a situation where women's rights continued to be a vital issue in the day to day life of the people in the region. However, despite the efforts to improve women's rights situation, abuse of women continue to be a phenomenon in the region and its intensity and magnitude varies from one area to another.

Due to the abnormal situation of the social, political and economical system as well as cultural life in Iraq, violence and the use of force continue to dominate the community and violence and the use of force are used to settle differences. Although differences amongst people and communities are normal, and sometimes essential, what is more important is that differences produce tolerance and coexistence. In the case of Iraq, the picture is quite the opposite, differences produce a ongoing cycle of violence and revenge instead of tolerance and coexistence. The current ongoing violence may lead to a long term violence and wars in the future.

This appalling situation is affecting all communities and social fabrics of the society and does not discriminate ethnic and religious origin or gender. Women constitute a key segment of the population that has suffered most from the violence.

In most societies worldwide, the protection of women's rights reflects the protection provided to all human beings in any given community and gives a picture of level of rights women enjoy in the society. This has become an indicator for assessing human rights in any country and identifying the violations and abuses of human rights in any society and the impediments hampering the efforts to bring about intellectual, political, social and philosophical ideals with the aim of protecting human rights and women's rights in particular.

Women's rights conditions in Iraq continue to change as a result of the continued political, economical and security developments in the country. Due to the ongoing changes and developments in all aspects of life in Iraq, more changes and developments are expected in all aspects of life countrywide. However, the changes have been mostly negative and have had bad impact on the living conditions of Iraqi citizens. Women have been a key victim for the events in Iraq and continue to suffer most of the violence in this country.

Asuda for Combating Violence against Women prepared this Annual Report for the second consecutive year on women's rights situation In Northern Iraq. This report aims at providing an overview of the situation of women in the region and depicts the picture of women's living conditions. The reports also highlights negative aspects of women's rights issue aiming at bringing them to attention of the relevant authorities and institutions and call on them to act seriously to put an end to abuse of women and violation of women's rights in the region in order to improve human rights conditions of women.

Theme One: Violence against Women Statistics

I. Burning and Self-Immolation of Women:

The phenomena of burning and self-immolation of women are amongst the most recurring incidents amongst women in the Kurdish community and constitutes a continued serious threat to the life of women. Below are statistics about those phenomena:

- According to figures provided by the Department of Violence against Women in Sulaymaniyah and Garmian, during 2007, 313 crimes against women recorded in Sulaymaniyah and 104 crimes against women were recoded in Garmian area. According to the same source, 96 cases of self-immolation were reported 36 of which were from Sulaymaniyah city Center and 60 were from the surrounding of Sulaymaniyah. The majority of the cases were 18 from Sharazur and 11 in Rania and 9 in Pishdar. Out

of the total cases, the perpetrators of 71 cases were unidentified and 23 of them the perpetrators were identified but not detained or released on bail and 40 files were closed. Self-immolation cases were 27 in Sulaymaniyah, 13 of which inside the city and 14 outside. The majority of self-immolation cases were from Bakrajo in the suburb of Sulaymaniyah and Arbat outside Sulaymaniyah. Out of the total 27 cases, perpetrators of 13 cases were unidentified and the perpetrators of 10 cases were detained and the perpetrators of 4 cases are yet to be detained. Out of the total 27 cases, 7 were closed, and 20 are still under investigation.

- Based on figures by the Department of Follow Up of Violence against Women, out of the total 104 cases of burns in Garmian, 8 were non deliberate incidents and 4 were self-immolation.
- According to Shaheed Peshraw General Hospital reports in Chamchamal, 8 cases of women self-immolation were recorded at the hospital from the outset of 2007 up to end of June.
- A report from Bzavi Zhiyan [Life Movement] Association for Cultural and Social Reform published on 22 September 2007 entitled [Bzavi Zhiyan Report on Monitoring Violence against Women in the Kurdish territories], states within the first 6 months of 2007, 201 women committed self-immolation or suicide in Erbil and Sulaymaniyah. Also, the reports adds, one third of victims were under 14 years of age and that the rate of murder of women are higher in Erbil while self-immolation of women is more in Sulaymaniyah where most victims are young girls and women are often killed
- According to a report published by the Sulaymaniyah Heath Department published on 18 August 2007, 120 women died as a result of burns in Sulaymaniyah and its outskirts of which 103 were acts of self-immolation aged between 15 to 44 years and 9 of which were of age between 5 to 14.
- A report by the Department of Violence against Women states, in the first half of 2007, 149 women were killed or committed self-immolation in Erbil, Duhok and Soran. In Duhok, 35 women died as a result of burns and in Erbil 45 women died as a result of burns.
- According to statistics of Emergency Hospital in Sulaymaniyah, from April to October 2007, 893 citizens suffered burns the age of whom were from 10 to 5 years. Out of the total number, 467 were women and the causes of burns were unknown.
- Human Rights Directorate in Chamchamal reports, during January 2006 and May 2007, 19 women and 5 girls burned or committed self-immolation in Chamchamal. 12 of the total number lost their lives.

- According to a report published by the [Committee to Follow Up Violence against Women] set up by the KRG Ministry of Human Rights published on the international Day of Violence against Women on 25 November 2007, within the first four months of 2006, the rate of burns were 54 in Erbil and 53 in Sulaymaniyah and 16 in Duhok totaling 123 cases. During the first four months of 2007, 62 cases of women burns were recorded in Erbil and 16 in Sulaymaniyah and 12 in Duhok totaling 99 cases. This shows a decline in the rate burns during 2007.
- From 27 to 29 October 2007, UNAMI held a Seminar [Protection of Human Rights by Eliminating Terror]. A report were disseminated during the seminar that revealed, 195 women lost their lives suffering from burns during 2006 in Erbil, Sulaymaniyah and Duhok.
- The Statistics Department at Rania General Hospital reports, during January to 10 December 2007, 36 cases of self-immolation were recorded at the hospital alone.
- Soran General Hospital statistics reveal 363 cases of women burns recorded at the hospital during 2007.
- Kurdistan Women Union Kalar's Office reports 5 cases of self-immolation in Garmian area during 2007.
- Asuda for Combating violence against Women figures shows 103 cases of women burns and 31 cases of self-immolation during 2007. The highest rate was in Erbil at 47 cases of burns and 17 self-immolation, and 34 cases of burns and 9 self-immolation cases in Sulaymaniyah while in Duhok there was 22 cases of burns and 5 self-immolation. Most of the incidents were outside major urban centers.

II. Murder and Suicide of Women:

This report presents figures about murder/honor killing and suicide of women.

- According to Violence against Women Follow Up Department, in Sulaymaniyah and Garmian areas, 17 cases of murder were recorded during 2007 of which one case was by mistake and 13 cases of murder were recorded outside Sulaymaniyah city Center.
- According to the Violence against Women Follow Up Department in Sulaymaniyah and Garmian areas, 8 cases of suicide were recorded in Sulaymaniyah of which 5 were inside Sulaymaniyah city Center and 3 cases were outside the city center. Out of the total 8 cases, perpetrators

of 4 cases were identified and one perpetrator was arrested and the perpetrators of the remaining 3 cases were released on bail. Files of 4 cases were closed and 4 cases are still under investigation.

- A report from Shaheed Peshraw General Hospital in Chamchaml states, from the beginning of 2007 up to end of June, 4 cases committed suicide using self-poisoning by taking extra dosage of medicines. The same report adds, 6 women were shot dead or wounded and 2 women were killed by their husbands after being accused.
- A Sulaymaniyah Health Department report published on 18 August 2007 states, during the first seven months of 2007, 89 women were killed in Sulaymaniyah and its surroundings whose age were between 15 -45.
- According to statistics of Kurdistan Women Union in Duhok, 26 cases were killed in Duhok Governorate under pretexts of honor during 2007.
- Chamchamal Human Rights Directorate report published on 8 December 2007, from January 2006 to May 2007, 1 woman and 4 girls were killed in Chamchamal, one was killed by her husband and 2 by brothers and 1 by relatives. One cases was killed by people.
- Chamchamal Human Rights Directorate also reports, from January 2006 to May 2007, 5 women committed self-poisoning by taking extra dosage of medicine.
- Chamchamal Kurdistan Women Union report states, 761 cases of violence against women were reported during 2007 in Chamchamal and its surroundings of which 6 cases lost their lives.
- According to a report published by the [Committee to Follow Up acts of Violence against Women] set up by the Conference entitled [Yes for a Life Free from Violence] held by the KRG Ministry of Human Rights on 25 November 2007, during 2005 59 women were killed in Kurdistan Region, this figures was doubled during 2006 to 118 cases.
- The same report adds, during the first four months of 2006, 8 women were shot dead in Erbil and 5 in Sulaymaniyah ad 8 in Duhok. During the first four months of 2007, women shot dead in Erbil were 10, and in Sulaymaniyah 6 and in Duhok 11 cases.
- A report published by UNAMI during a Seminar held from 27 to 29 October 2007 revealed the following:
 - During 2006, 88 women of age between 15 to 45 were shot dead of which 41 died.
 - From 1992 to 2007, only 42 cases of honor killing were reported by the KRG while the actual figures was far higher than this. Of this

published figure, 32 cases were shot dead in Erbil.

- From 1 January to 19 July 2007, 14 cases of honor killings were recorded in Sulaymaniyah the perpetrators of only 5 cases were arrested.

- Akre Hospital reports 14 cases of women suicide during 2007 in Akre.
- In one of the most terrible incidents on 7 April 2007, the most brutal and inhumane act of violence against women was committed against Duaa Khalil Aswad of 17 years age. Duaa from Bahzan village in Baashiqa and her lover [Muhannad brahim Khalil] were brutally stoned to death in. They couple were seen together a public park between bahzan village and Baashiqa on 3 April 2007 by Duaa's father Khalil Aswad who was a Police Officer during Saddam's era and Duaa's Uncles. Duaa and Muhannad seek refuge at the Kurdistan Democratic Party's office seeking protection and fearing from being killed by their families. The same day, Muhannad was handed over by the KDP to Bartalla Police Station and Duaa stays at the KDP office until 7 April. Afterwards a key Yezidi figure called Suleiman Sabo asks the KDP to hand Duaa over to him and gives assurances of protecting her. The KDP officials hand over Duaa to Suleiman Sabo and they head back to Baashiqa. Upon arrival of Duaa to Baashiqa, a large crowd of men and women receive them and Duaa was then stoned to death and her body were inhumanely mutilated.

Following the incident, many local and international parties and organizations condemned the incident including:

- Amnesty International.
- Swedish Left Party.
- Kurdistan National Assembly, Kurdistan Parliament.
- Yezidi Supreme Spiritual Council.
- Kurdistan Referendum Movement.
- KRG Ministry of Endowment and Islamic Affairs.
- Kurdistan Regional government.
- Some 125 figures and prominent organizations in Kurdistan marked 7 May 2007 as a memorial service for Duaa and condemned attack on Yezidis.
- This incident was reported by some 46 websites and 26 local TV stations and 7 international TV stations and many newspapers and radio channels. The video of Duaa's stoning to death were widely disseminated.

Many demonstrations took place such as:

- On 29 April a large demonstration took to the streets and headed to Kurdistan Parliament. Demonstrators handed over a petition to the parliament signed by 75 organizations and figures in Erbil and Sulaymaniyah and called upon the Parliament to act to stop such incidents.
- On 30 April 2007, over 2000 Yezidis demonstrated in Sharba town of Duhok Governorate and called upon the authorities to take legal action against murderers of Duaa and prevent similar cases in the future.
- On 29 April 2007, 13 organizations and figures inside and outside Kurdistan launched a campaign against stoning of women. The campaign called for an end to violence against Women.
- According to statistics of Asuda, during 2007, 58 cases of murder and 36 cases of suicide were recorded in Kurdistan Region. Out of the total figure, 23 cases of honor killing and 19 cases of suicide were in Erbil, 21 cases of murder and 11 cases of suicide were in Sulaymaniyah, 14 cases of murder and 6 cases of suicide were in Duhok. Most of the incidents were outside city centers.

III. Domestic Violence:

The Report on Situation of Women's Rights in Kurdistan Region during 2007 reveals the following statistics about domestic violence:

- According to Violence against Women Follow Up Department in Sulaymaniyah governorate and Garmian, during the last five months of 2007, 75 cases of physical abuse and domestic violence were reported. Out of the total, 46 cases were outside cities and 29 cases were inside city centers. Perpetrators of 45 cases either not arrested or released on bail. Perpetrators of 30 incidents were not arrested. 25 incidents were closed and 50 others are under investigation. In most incidents no tools were used.
- Also according to the Violence against Women Follow Up Department in Sulaymaniyah and Garmian, during the last five months of 2007, 62 cases of threatening were reported of which 41 were outside cities and 21 inside cities. Perpetrators of 58 cases were arrested and later released on bail and perpetrators of 4 incidents were unidentified. 27 cases were closed and 35 are under investigations.
- Kalar's Women Union reports 75 cases of domestic violence. According to the report, 75 women faced various forms of violence by their father, brother and other members of their families.

- Chamchamal Human Rights Office Statistic Department reports 170 cases of domestic violence against women during 18 months. The report states an increase by 50%.
- Chamchamal [Shaheed Peshraw] General Hospital reports, since the outset of 2007 up to end of June 2007, 15 women were physically abused by their husbands.
- Human Rights office in Chamchamal reports 41 cases of threats against women and girls in Chamchamal from January 2006 to May 2007.
- According to a field survey conducted by Dr. Yousif Osman Hamad, a psychological expert, during 2006 to 2007, 435 women were abused or sexually assaulted by Ministers, Director Generals or their superiors in Kurdistan Region.

IV. Female Genital Mutilation [FGM]:

- On 29 May 2007, Hawlati newspaper published a report on FGM in which the newspaper stated a women in Takia town of Chamchamal district in Sulaymaniyah governorate conducted FGM for 15 girls. The woman was arrested after the 16 cases suffered bleeding and was hospitalized.
- A report by WADI German NGO published on 24 June 2007 states, during 2006 and 2007, 116 2043 girls were circumcised in 116 villages in Kurdistan Region.
- 6 February of each year marks the day to combat FGM. According to a WHO report, some 140 million girls were circumcised. However, the most recent report of the UN in 2006, there are 160 million circumcised female worldwide of which 79% are from Africa, 12% from Asia. Amongst the European countries, Germany has the largest number of circumcised female of about 20,000. The latest statistics published in march 2007 show a decline in the rate of FGM in Kurdistan as follows:
 1. 2002 and 2003:
 - in Erbil out of total 4000 families, 3070 women were circumcised which is about 60%.
 - in Sulaymaniyah governorate, out of a total 4200 families, 3065 girls were circumcised which is about 55%.
 2. 2005:
 - in Garmian area, out of a total of 1544 families, 907 girls were circumcised, which is about 58%.
 - in Rania, out of a total of 1544 families, 403 girls were circumcised, which is about 26%.

3. 2006:

- in Garmian area, out of a total of 1544 families 310 girls were circumcised, which is about 20%.
- in Rania, out of total of 1544, 207 girls were circumcised, which is about 13%.

These rates show that FGM in Kurdistan Region has slightly decreased. However, Women's Rights and other concerned institutions continue to endeavor to eliminate the FGM phenomenon. The latest campaign of petition collection was launched by WADI NGO since early March in Sulaymaniyah, Halabja and Garmian and 2000 signatures were collected. The signed petition was sent to Kurdistan Parliament, Kurdistan Region's Presidency, and the Council of Ministers. The petition highlighted, 60% of Kurdistan's girls were circumcised and called upon the authorities to issue a special law to put an end to this form of violence against women.

The Women's Rights Advocacy Committee at the Kurdistan Parliament submitted a draft project proposal on 21 November 2007 entitled "Prohibition of FGM" to Kurdistan parliament and called for an appointment to start discussion about the draft law. The same committee is currently drafting another draft law to combat violence against women. These efforts comes amid increasing rates of FGM according to WHO, 6,000 female are circumcised every day worldwide.

V. Marriage and Divorce:

- Iraqi Ministry of Planning revealed in June 2007, there are 8.5 million women in Iraq of which 1 million are widows or divorced. The ages of these were between 16 to 70 years.
- Duhok Personal Status Court reports an increase in divorce during 2007 compared with 2006. According to the court, 172 women were divorced during 2007 and 3040 marriage were certified in the court in the same year against 151 cases of divorce and 4830 marriages in 2006. These figures show increase in divorce and a decrease in marriage.
- Erbil Personal Status Court report from 2006 to May 2007, 12935 cases of marriage were reported and 1718 cases of divorce were recorded. The same report shows that age of married women were under 18 and the highest rate of divorce is amongst women of 15 to 18 years of age.
- In Sulaymaniyah, the Personal Status Court reports 244 cases of domestic problems from 1 June to 25 June 2007 of which 169 cases were divorce.

- According to Erbil Personal Status Court, from 1 January to 30 June 2007, 57 men approached the court for marriage of a second wife, after getting consent of their first wives, their second wife marriage were certified.
- Erbil Court of Personal Status reports, from 1 January to 30 June 2007, 4614 new marriages were certified of which 4325 were done inside the court and 289 cases were done earlier outside the court. The court reveals that 827 cases of divorce were reported of which 470 divorces were settled by the court.
- A report prepared by a committee comprising representatives from Kurdistan Islamic Clerics Union, Ministry of Human Rights and Kurdistan Women's Union, showed 5,000 girls were married before reaching marriage age during the last three years in Pishdar and Bitwen areas in Sulaymaniyah governorate.
- Erbil Personal Status Court reports, within the first half of 2007, 4671 marriage cases were certified in Erbil and 827 cases of divorce were endorsed by the court.
- According to Sulaymaniyah Court of Justice, the rate of marriage in Sulaymaniyah has declined as follows:

Year	Marriage
2004	18993
2005	19426
2006	7893
2007	3855

The above shows a considerable decrease in marriage. The rate of divorce according to the same source were:

Year	Divorce
2004	1025
2005	840
2006	1955
2007	247

[from 1 February to 30 June 2007]

- Erbil Personal Status Court of Appeal statistics show during the second half of 2007, 4325 marriage cases were certified in Erbil and 1124 cases of divorce were endorsed by the court. The same source states, during the same duration 57 men married a second wife and 289 cases were done outside courts

- According to Sulaymaniyah Personal Status Court, during 2006 985 applications for divorce were received of which 375 were endorsed and 478 were rejected and 312 are pending for 2007. The same court reports during 2005 divorce applications at 2786 of which 1254 were endorsed and 1085 were rejected and 447 were kept pending for the next year.

Comparing the figures of the two years show an decrease in divorce by about 1/3 which shows some form of social, economic and psychological stability of Kurdish families. In the absence of precise figures and statistics on women widows [particularly those under 40 of age], it is clear that the Kurdish society view widows in an insulting and suspicious way which causes widows to behave on the basis of that treatment.

- The rate of marriage of young boys and girls during 2006 was 7839 marriages according to the Sulaymaniyah Personal Status Court.
- According to Soran Personal Status Court, 104 of divorce were recorded during 2007 of 96 were pending and 8 were postponed to 2008. 1091 cases of marriage were endorsed by the court.

Theme Two: Civil Society Activities

During 2007 many civil activities were carried out on various issues of women , the key activities are summarized below:

One: Personal Status Code Amendment

This is an effort to amend the applied Personal Status Codes that are in effect. The code no. 188 of 1959 sets out regulations on polygamy and definitions of marriage and divorce and mutual responsibilities of spouses. The proposed amendments are to articles 3 paragraphs 1,4,5,6,7 and article 5, article 6 paragraph 1, article 7 paragraph2, article8, article9 paragraph 2, article 10 paragraphs 2 and 5, article 17, article 19 paragraph 1, articles 24, 25, 26, 29, article 30 and article 33, article 34, articles 38, 39, 40, 41, 42, 42, 43, 46, 50, 57, 58, 60, 89, 90 and 91.

The key proposed amendments are:

1. Paragraph 4 article 3 reads "No one has the right to marry more than one wife, unless agreed by a judge and on the following two conditions:
 - a. The man must be capable to provide a living for more than one wife.

b. A legal and Sharia interest must exist in the marriage

The proposed text to replace the above is : "Polygamy is prohibited".

2. Article 8 describes legal qualifications required to build a family [set at 15 years], the proposed age is to be set at 16 years.
3. Article 5 paragraph 10 reads: "Anyone marries outside court is subject to imprisonment of 6 months to one year and a fine of ID 300 to ID 1000. Anyone marries for a second time outside court is subject to imprisonment of 3 to 5 years"
The proposed new draft is : "Anyone marries outside court is subject to imprisonment of 1 to 3 years, anyone who marries a second wife outside court is subject to imprisonment of 3 to 5 years".
4. Article 17 reads: " Muslim woman is not allowed to marry a non-Muslim man", the proposed amendment is to delete this article.
5. Articles (24, 25 and 26) describe men's responsibility to finance the family. The proposed amendment is to delete the articles and replace them with the following : "men and Women share the responsibility of financing the family affairs and children each according to his/her capacity..."

This project was launched on 20 September 2006. Several conferences and seminars were held on this subject as follows:

1. A conference was held by the Women's Rights Advocacy Committee at Kurdistan Parliament on 18 February 2007 attended by religious figures, lawyers, Ministries' representatives, University Professors and Women's organizations and activists. The conference decided to amend Personal Status Code no. 188 of 1959.
2. The Kurdistan Parliament held a session on 21 February 2007 to discuss the draft project called for the Women's Rights Advocacy Committee the parliament.
3. On 26 march 2007, the Women's Rights Advocacy at the Kurdistan parliament submitted the draft amended law to Kurdistan Parliament and called on the Parliament to set a date for discussing the draft amended law.

Two: Marking International Women's Day, 8 March 2007:

Every year women and women's rights advocates and relevant institutions and organizations mark 8 March as International Women's Day and carry out various

activities. On International Women's Day in 2007, many activities were carried out including the following:

1. From 8 to 11 March 2007, a Short Film Festival entitled "Tawar" was organized in Sulaymaniyah. 24 short documentary films were presented on the situation of women. Several films were awarded prizes during the festival.
2. The Sulaymaniyah Publishing House of the Ministry of Culture published three books on women namely [Women's Rights, Violence and Women's Rights Situation in Kurdistan].
3. On 8 March 2007, the International Women Conference was held in Erbil entitled "Peach Equality for Kurdish Women Worldwide". The conference was sponsored and organized by Kurdistan National Conference in North America in cooperation with KRG Ministry of Region for Women Affairs.
4. Various activities were carried out in most cities and towns in Kurdistan including assorted artistic activities of poem reading, painting exhibitions, seminars, festivals and various training courses. The activities were sponsored by NGOs and government institutions.

Three: Activities against Issuing new G-series passport to adult women only after getting consent of her custodian or husband:

After the decision by US, UK and many European, Asia and African countries to reject old S-Series Iraqi passports, the Iraqi Government issued a new G-Series passport and this caused serious problems for women. According to new regulations, women over 18 years of age can only be provided with new G-passports after the female custodian or male next-of-kin signs and agrees to provide her with a passport. The new regulations stipulate, even when they get a new passport, women can only travel after getting consent from her custodian.

This reports highlights this issue as follows:

1. According to Personal Status Code no. 188 of 1959, every citizen legally qualified [i.e. over 18 years of age] can carry out his/her duties and responsibilities without the need to get consent of his/her custodian. Therefore, the new regulation on G-passport is against this law.
2. According to Universal Declarations of Human Rights, the right to travel is a right tied with the will of every human being and nobody has the right to take away this right. Therefore, the new regulations on provision of G-passport are against the Universal Declaration of Human Rights.

A campaign against this new regulation was launched by the Women Information and Cultural Center and is ongoing. The campaign covers all towns and cities in Kurdistan Region and aims at collecting signed petitions against the regulation.

Four: Various Activities

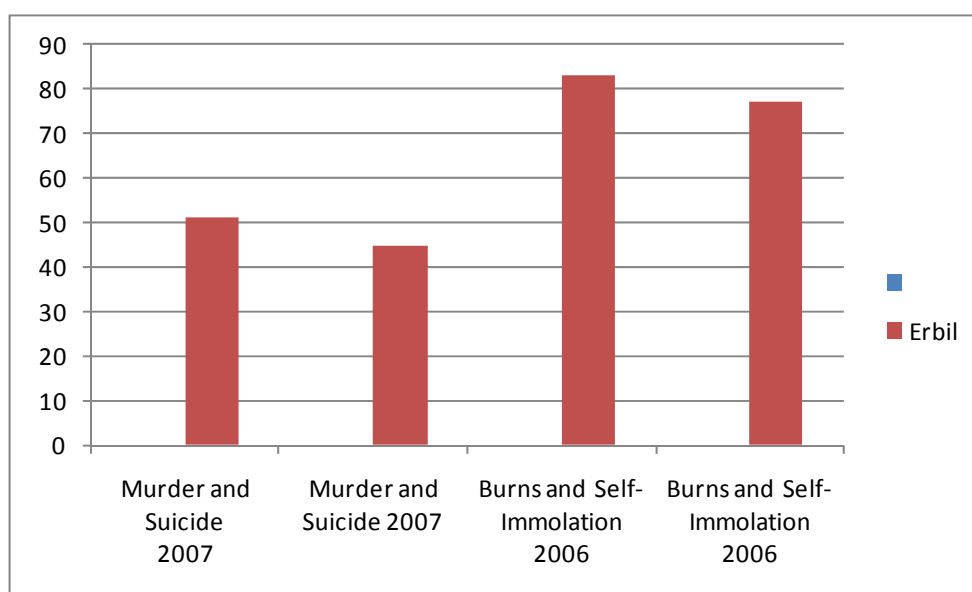
1. According to an agreement between Heartland Alliance and the Ministry of Endowment and Islamic Affairs, as of 10 May, Islamic clerics will talk about violence against women in Friday Sermons and work promoting the awareness of the public about the consequences of this phenomenon.
2. On 19 May 2007, Women's organizations Network to combat violence against women was declared in Erbil. The network comprises 44 Civil Society NGOs.
3. To investigate the phenomenon of violence against Women and finding appropriate mechanisms to combat it, on 17 June 2007 the Council of Ministers held a meeting with the Ministries of Human Rights and Justice, Women Affairs as well as women organizations with relevant institutions and associations. The government expressed full support to issue of women's rights and the endeavors to combat violence against women.
4. On 9 July 2007, Women's Rights Advocacy Committee at the Kurdistan Parliament submitted a memorandum to the Parliament in which they expressed concern over continued acts by political parties [particularly the Patriotic Union of Kurdistan (PUK) and the Kurdistan Democratic Party (KDP)] to protect perpetrators of acts of violence against women from legal procedures and punishment. The memorandum also expressed concern over the parties' attempts to block endeavors to bring perpetrators of violence against women to courts.
5. On 11 July 2007, the Islamic Cultural Center in Erbil held a seminar for Professor Dr. Mustafa Ibrahim Zalmi, an expert in Islamic Shariaa. The seminar was attended by 200 Islamic cleric and figure. The participants unequivocally condemned all forms of violence against women under any pretext.
6. On 15 April 2007, a conference was held for Dr. Ziryan Osman, KRG Health Minister in coordination with WHO, Iraqi Health Ministry and KRG Health Ministry. The Conference's main theme was on women breast Cancer. The Minister made presentations on ways of protection and diagnosing breast cancer as well as treatment of the disease. The Minister also presented statistics about deaths amongst women as a result of breast cancer in Kurdistan which reached 13% of women fatalities according to the Minister.

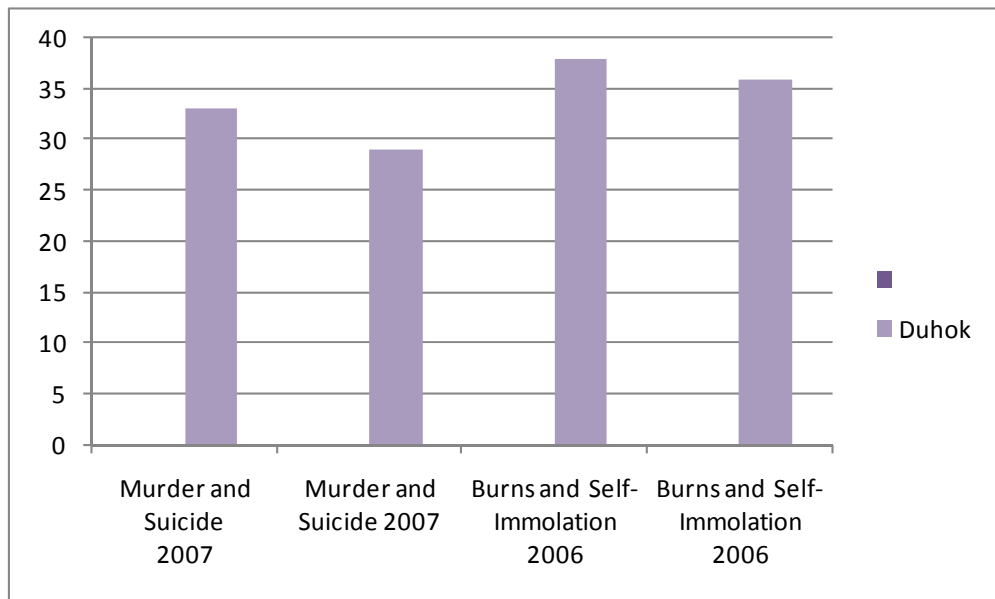
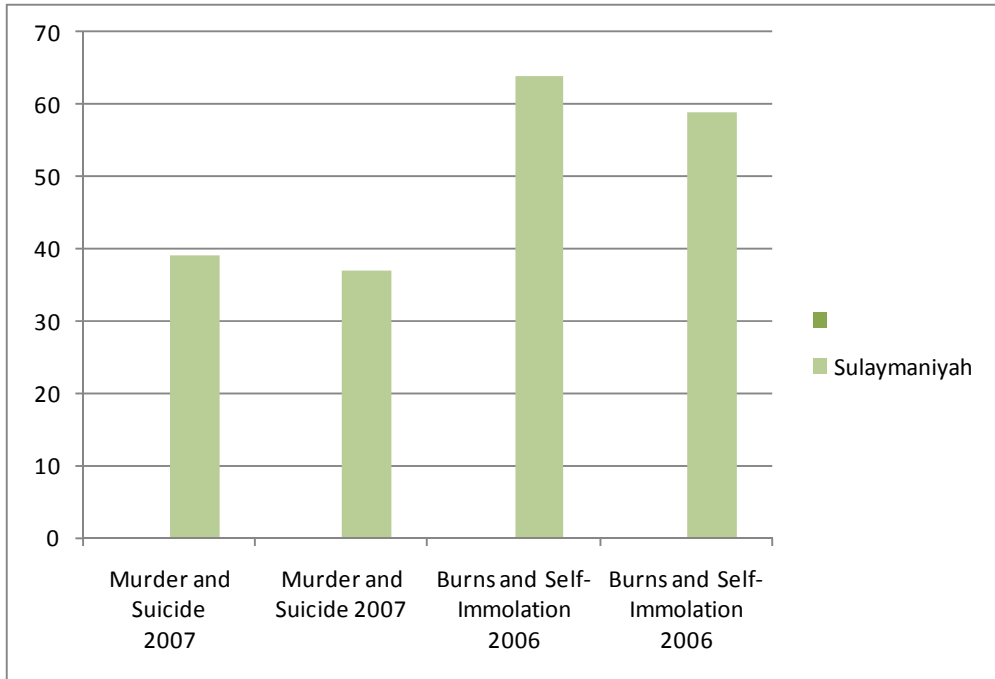
7. The Violence against Women Follow Up Directorate was opened by the Police Department to pursue cases of violence and abuse of women. This Directorate demonstrated actively ability to respond to cases of violence against women and carry important activities and thus becoming an important government institution. This directorate was able to work actively of women issue with the support of women NGOs in general and Asuda in particular. The support of NGOs and Asuda was instrumental to assist in the establishment of this directorate.
8. On 11 August 2007, a media campaign was launched entitled "A week to Combat Violence against Women in Sulaymaniyah". Most of the key media outlets actively participated in the campaign. In addition to media channels, several NGOs, groups and networks also took part in the campaign such as [Women's legal and civil rights advocacy campaign, Duaa network, KRG Ministry of Interior. The campaign aimed at highlighting the negative aspects of the phenomenon of violence against women and underscoring the positive role media outlets can play in promoting the awareness of the public regarding this issue. The campaign published and disseminated many posters and leaflets and used SMS text messaging to reach the people using the two major mobile phone operators in the region sending about 80,000 SMS messages to various people on violence against women. The SMS were sent free of charge by the operators as contribution from the companies.
At the end of the one-week media campaign in Sulaymaniyah between 11 t 17 August 2007, Duaa network, Women's legal and civil rights advocacy campaign declared they plan to disclose a list of 10,000 people involved in crimes of violence against women to be brought to justice. However, up to date, this list was not yet prepared. The campaign also submitted several other requests to the authorities including:
 - regard honor killing as a crime under law and perpetrators to be brought to justice.
 - a special law on domestic violence has to be issued by Kurdistan Parliament to eliminate violence against women.
9. On 22 August 2007, three KRG Ministries of Interior, Justice and Health as well as Universities and Women's Committee at Sulaymaniyah Governorate prepared a draft document to combat honor killing in Kurdistan. This draft law describes the key social, legal and cultural steps to be taken to put an end to honor killing phenomenon in Kurdistan Region.

10. In its most recent report published 11 October 2007, UNAMI criticized human rights situation in general and women's rights in particular in Iraq. The report specifically highlights women's rights situation in Northern Iraq showing evidence of women's right abuses with particular focus on the murder of Duaa Khalil Aswad. The report calls on the Iraqi government to assist the KRG to follow up this issue and find appropriate solutions for the problem. The report also underscored that there is no special unit under the KRG institutions which responds to sexual assaults.
11. In October 2007, the Violence against Women Follow Up Department was inaugurated in Erbil. This was the first attempt of this kind in Erbil by the Police Department. During the first two month of operation, the department responded to 70 cases of complaints by women on issues of violence. The department has received during that period 90 complaints from women.
12. On 10 December 2007 and on the day of Universal Declaration of Human Rights, the Women's Rights Advocacy Committee at the Kurdistan Parliament called in the Minister of Youth and Sports, Minister of Culture, Minister of Region for Women Affairs. The Parliament session attended by the Ministers discussed the problem of women self-immolation and violence against women. The concerned ministries promised to endeavor to minimize those phenomena.
13. Women's Rights Advocacy Committee at the Kurdistan Parliament submitted a draft resolution to the KRG Ministry of Higher Education and Scientific Research to open a special college for women issues studies in a scientific way. The project is being considered by the Higher Education and Scientific Research Council.
14. On the day of combating violence against women on 20 October 2007, several activities were carried out in Sulaymaniyah, including:
 - Screening of 3 films on violence against women at the Sulaymaniyah prison.
 - A carnival entitled "At what fault?" was demonstrated at the Azadi Park.
 - continued campaign for promotion of awareness on violence against women by joint network of women's NGOs together with the Violence against Women Follow Up Department and Women's Committee at the Sulaymaniyah Governorate. The campaign covered 52 girl intermediate and secondary schools.

Comparison between rates of violence against Women in 2006 and 2007

Governorate	Murder and Suicide 2006	Murder and Suicide 2007	Burns and Self-Immolation 2006	Burns and Self-Immolation 2007
Erbil	51	45	83	77
Sulaymaniyah	39	37	64	59
Duhok	33	29	38	36
Total	123	111	185	172





Sources:

- Violence against Women Follow Up Department, Erbil.
- Violence against Women Follow Up Department, Sulaymaniyah.
- Women's Rights Advocacy Committee at Kurdistan parliament.
- Emergency hospital, Sulaymaniyah.
- Emergency Hospital, Erbil.
- Duhok General Hospital.
- Chamchamal general Hospital.
- Chamchamal Human Rights Directorate.
- Rania General Hospital.
- Soran General Hospital.
- Akre General Hospital.
- Sulaymaniyah Health Department.
- Erbil Personal Status Court
- Erbil Personal Status Court of Appeal.
- Duhok Personal Status Court.
- Sulaymaniyah Court of Justice.
- Iraqi Ministry of Planning

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- Kurdistani Nwe Daily.
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