

Iraq:Trade Unions and Civil Society Organizations Reconfirm Their Rejection of the Social Security Law

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Iraqi trade unions reiterated their opposition to the draft social security law approved by the Iraqi Council of Ministers earlier this year, in “The Future of Social Security in Iraq” conference. According to the trade unions, the draft law is incompatible with the Iraqi constitution and fails to meet even the minimum standards of social guarantees ensured by existing International Labor Conventions. In short, if passed in its current form, the draft law will deny many of the basic protections to workers which are recognized by both national and international laws currently in force.

The conference took place on 19 October, organized by the working group on social justice and employment within the framework of the ‘Mesopotamian Youth’ project funded by the European Union. The conference was attended by more than 70 representatives representing the Iraqi Council of Representatives “Labor and Social Affairs Committee”, the Ministry of Labor and Social Affairs, the Ministry of Planning, Trade and Labor Unions, the Iraqi Industries Federation and number of lawmakers and academics interested in issues of social protections. There was general consensus on opposition to the draft law by most of trade unions, civil society organizations and the Iraqi Industries Federation, and most of the reasons for this joint opposition reflected the views already voiced by the various parties on several earlier occasions. Delegates and representatives from the Iraqi Industries Federation, trade unions and civil society organizations challenged the draft law directly by citing contradictions and ambiguities in some of its articles, as well as its explicit lack of social guarantees.

Participants suggested that the draft law be presented to the International Labour Organization (ILO) for review and technical advice, and for legislative and executive bodies in Iraq to listen to views of stakeholders of the law in an open public dialogue in order for the government to ratify the draft law in accordance with the International Labor Convention No. 102 which states clearly the minimum social security benefits that should be guaranteed by the state, and which any draft law should include. The participants pointed out the importance of communicating with the media and informing the public about this critical issue that affects the lives of millions of Iraqi people.

Within the working group, Iraqi Industries Federation and Unions along with civil society organizations will gather together their conclusions about the draft law, explaining their reasons for rejecting it in detail. They will form a team dedicated to coordination between these organizations and other trade union organizations, consolidating their vision for the draft law, and meeting with legislative and executive bodies responsible for social security in Iraq.

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Iraqi Civil Society Solidarity Initiative
<http://www.iraqicivilsociety.org/archives/8042>