

Nesreen Barwari, PhD

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Extensive action-oriented field experience and substantial executive leadership experience at regional and national ministerial government levels in Iraq that have generated observable, measurable results achieved during periods of intense political turbulence and active security threats that severely challenged progress in the provision of sustainable, essential public services.

After serving with UN organizations in collaboration with international and local nongovernment organizations (NGOs), and after serving at executive ministerial government levels in Iraq, founded a local NGO and served as country representative of an international NGO, taught at the university level and conducted community-based research, advised and served as consultant to regional and local government organizations, participated in international conferences, networked with foreign governments and assistance organizations, published technical books and articles, and completed requirements for a PhD degree from a German university.

To strengthen leadership capacities, extensive field experience enabled admission to the Harvard University Kennedy School of Government public policy and management degree program, its executive educational programs, becoming a Fellow of the Institute of Politics, and also enabled participation in an executive education program at the Tufts University Fletcher School of Law & Diplomacy where English was the language of instruction. After returning to Iraq, I was appointed cabinet minister in the Kurdistan Regional Government in Erbil, which further strengthened my qualifications and experience to be appointed cabinet minister at the national level in the Government of Iraq in Baghdad.

Occasional intense life experience through political conflict, being born and growing up in Baghdad where I completed my first degree with Arabic as the national language of education at school and university levels. With Kurdish as my home language, as the only daughter with eight sons, my family, facing war and direct political threats, relocated to our ancestral homeland in Iraqi Kurdistan. In 1991, another war forced us to flee into the mountains along the Iraq-Turkey border to become refugees. Upon returning, assisted hundreds of families to also return who recently fled their homes, and also other refugees in Turkey and Iran who fled Iraq earlier during the 1970s and 1980s. Successful experience in reconstructing and resettling hundreds of destroyed settlements to build resilient and sustainable communities at the regional level, which strengthened leadership capacities to serve all of Iraq at the national level.

Proven expertise in:

- Public Policy and Program Development
- Strategic Planning & Analysis
- Effective Decisionmaking
- Government & NGO Affiliations
- Problem Resolution
- Crisis Intervention
- Multicultural Approaches
- Leadership & Management

HIGHER EDUCATION AND TRAINING

- **BSc Architecture and Urban Planning**, Baghdad University, Iraq (August 1991)
- **MPA (Master's in Public Administration) Public Policy and Management**, Harvard University Kennedy School of Government, USA (July 1999)
- **International Leadership and Management Certification**, Fletcher School of Law and Diplomacy, Tufts University, USA (Fall 1998)
- **Senior Managers in Government Executive Education Program**, Harvard University Kennedy School of Government, USA (July 1999)
- **Global Leadership and Public Policy for the 21st Century Executive Education Program**, Harvard University Kennedy School of Government, USA (December 2008)
- **PhD Spatial Planning**, Technical University of Dortmund, Germany (February 2015)
- **Teaching Methodology Certification**, Nawroz University, Iraq (Spring 2016)
- **Teaching and Research Methodologies Certification**, Technical University of Dortmund, Germany (Summer 2016)
- **Travel Risk Awareness-Security and Travel Risk Awareness-Medical Certification**, International SOS, Geneva (February 2020)

EMPLOYMENT

UNITED NATIONS

- **International Organization for Migration (IOM), Duhok, Iraq. Executive Administrative Assistant (1991-1992)**
Provided administrative and logistics support to major repatriation program assisting refugees in Turkey and Iran to return to Iraq following the 1991 Gulf War.
- **United Nations Iraq Relief Coordination Unit (UNIRCU), Duhok, Iraq. Executive Administrative and Program Assistant (1992-1996)**
Provided administrative, logistics, and coordination support to more than 50 international humanitarian organizations involved in rehabilitation, reconstruction, resettlement, and relief operations for displaced families and residents in the Kurdistan Region of Iraq.
- **United Nations Office of the Humanitarian Coordinator for Iraq (UNOHCI), Duhok, Iraq. Executive Administrative and Program Assistant (1996-1997)**
In cooperation and coordination with UN agencies, provided administrative, logistics, and coordination support to international organizations involved in providing humanitarian assistance to the residents of the Kurdistan Region of Iraq suffering from the adverse impact of UN-authorized sanctions on Iraq.
- **United Nations Human Settlements Programme (UN-Habitat), Duhok, Iraq. Head of Field Office (1997-1998)**
In cooperation with local government, headed and managed administrative, program, and financial aspects related to the reconstruction and resettlement of destroyed communities under the UN Oil-for-Food program during the period of UN-authorized sanctions on Iraq, responsible for a community construction budget exceeding US\$10 million that contributed toward helping thousands of families to rebuild their communities and reestablish their lives with resilience and sustainability following decades of war and forced displacement.

SENIOR GOVERNMENT

- **Kurdistan Regional Government (KRG), Minister of Reconstruction and Development, Erbil, Iraq (1999-2003)**

In charge of a regional ministry that aimed to establish peace in a post-conflict situation in the three provinces of the Kurdistan Region of Iraq. Promoted community-based practices and methods through reconstruction and resettlement of destroyed communities with support and cooperation of the international community and regional, provincial, and local government authorities. In addition to KRG sources, substantial funding administered by the UN was made available to invest in dozens of projects to improve health and education, water and sanitation, housing for displaced people, demining, and income-generation activities including food security and nutrition activities through agriculture development.

- **United Nations Headquarters**, New York (June 2003). As KRG Minister of Reconstruction & Development, appointed deputy head of the first Iraqi delegation to the United Nations following regime change. Spoke with country delegations at the UN General Assembly and UN officials to mobilize support and investment for Iraq.

- **Government of Iraq, Minister of Municipalities & Public Works, Baghdad (2003-2006)**

Following the 2003 regime change in Iraq, headed a major ministry with 45,000 staff members serving 15 of Iraq's 18 provinces to meet infrastructure requirements in urban areas including improving water and sanitation systems to provide a clean environment. (The other three provinces were administered by the Kurdistan Regional Government.) The dramatic change in governance offered opportunity that enabled institutional reform through decentralization with community participation at the provincial and local government levels. Actively promoted women in government by introducing and promoting a minimum quota of 25% women members in all representative bodies. Instituted programs to build leadership among youth and women. Attracted and secured major investment in public works. Improved employment through public works projects. Represented Iraq as a member or head of delegations meeting with foreign governments at ministerial levels. Officially represented the Government of Iraq by participation in numerous delegations and conferences, among them:

- **UN 48th, 49th and 50th sessions of the Commission on the Status of Women, New York** (2004, 2005, 2006). Headed Government of Iraq delegation.
- **World Urban Forum (WUF2)** Barcelona, Spain (2004), headed Government of Iraq delegation
- **Arab League**, represented Iraq in bilateral discussions, honored as one of ten distinguished women in the Arab world (2004, 2005)
- **World Bank**, headed Government of Iraq delegation to discuss loans to the water and sanitation sector (2004, 2005, 2006)
- **Iraq Reconstruction Conference**, Dead Sea, Jordan (May 2005), participated as Iraqi Minister of Municipalities & Public Works
- **World Water Conference**, Dead Sea, Jordan (2004), participated as Iraqi Minister of Municipalities & Public Works
- **World Conference on Women**, Beijing, China (2004), headed Government of Iraq delegation

- **Iraq Reconstruction Conference**, Madrid, Spain (2003), participated as Iraqi Minister of Municipalities & Public Works
- **United States Government**. First Iraqi citizen representing the Government of Iraq to meet with the President of the United States. Met with department secretaries, officials, and legislators. Purpose: reconstruction of Iraq following the 2003 regime change.

ACADEMIC AND RESEARCH

- **Harvard University, Kennedy School of Government, USA (2006)**
Taught “Reinventing Iraq: Deconstructing and Constructing a Nation” with a view toward sustainable development to reform and rehabilitate the country. Led discussions, panels, and workshops on topics pertaining to Iraq including the Kurdistan Region.
- **Fellow of the Harvard University Kennedy School of Government Institute of Politics. (2006)**
Mentored a cohort of undergraduate students on topics of interest relevant to public service experience in Iraq.
- **George Washington University, Elliott School of International Affairs, Washington DC, USA (January-June 2010)**
Taught courses on democracy, democratization, and participatory planning.
- **Duhok University, Duhok, Iraq (September 2011-present)**
Taught strategic planning, urban planning, cultural planning, housing policies, investment policies, governance, and professional practice in the Department of Architecture and the Department of Spatial Planning. Supervising student advanced urban projects and graduating class thesis. With faculties of the University of Duhok and Dortmund University advising on the establishment and management to improve the Department of Planning and Applied Sciences as a faculty board member.
- **United States Institute of Peace (USIP), Research Consultant.**
Authored a toolkit and trained governing council and government staff members on participatory budgeting. (2016-2017)
- **London School of Economics & Political Science (LSE) Middle East Centre and the American University of Dubai (AUD), Research Consultant**
Collaborated on ‘The Complexity of Humanitarian Response in Iraq’ project. (September 2016-March 2018)
- **Cardiff University, UK, Research Associate.**
Iraq case study on the informal economy in fragile cities project. (March-July 2018)
- **GIZ Germany, Team Leader and Lead Author**
Stabilization of water supply and sanitation services for refugees, IDPs, and residents of Duhok Governorate, Iraq. (March-November 2018)
- **GIZ Germany, Research Consultant and Author**
Baseline Study in Iraq for the Global Project on Culture and Creative Economy. (November-December 2018)

- **DCAF-Geneva Centre for Security Sector Governance/World Bank, Consultant and Country Expert**

Advising on ‘Improving Service Delivery Through Security Sector Governance and Partnering for Development and Peace’ at the Fragility Forum 2020. (February 2020-present)

HONORS/DISTINCTIONS

- **UN-Habitat Scroll of Honor**

Award for “outstanding commitment to the welfare of displaced and vulnerable persons in Iraq Kurdistan.” (November 2003)

- **Arab League**

Selected as one of ten distinguished women in the Arab world. (April 2004)

- **World Economic Forum at Davos**

Invited as a prominent leader and selected as a member of the Young Global Leaders Forum. (May 2005)

NONPROFIT/VOLUNTARY

- **Breeze of Hope (NGO), Founder and President, Iraq (2006-2013)**

Breeze of Hope focused on women and youth development in Iraq. Initiated and conducted training and dialogue on democratic thinking and processes with a focus on women, youth, and vulnerable groups for advancement and capacity building. Provided humanitarian assistance refugees and internally displaced persons (IDPs) caused by ISIS and intense strife in Syria.

- **Friends of Waldorf Education (NGO), Country Representative, Iraq (2014-present)**

Provides psychosocial support/trauma pedagogy to improve the well-being of Iraq’s children. Over one million refugees and internally displaced persons (IDPs) who faced armed conflict, persecution, violation of human rights, and violence in their homeland fled to the Kurdistan Region of Iraq. To address their educational needs, teaching staff, school social workers, and other teachers and trainers participate in capacity building exercises that aim to provide child protection and develop education quality. Running Sport for Development training with youth and children to promote peace and social cohesion through sport.

- **US State Department Future of Iraq Project, Member of the Economy and Infrastructure Working Group, Washington DC (2002-2003)**

Participated in workshops to plan for the “day after” regime change in Iraq. Advised and drafted policy papers on post-war Iraq reconstruction.

- **Institute for Inclusive Security, Network Member, Washington DC (2003-present)**

Contributing to strengthening women leaders through targeted training and mentoring, assisting to build coalitions, and connecting to policymakers working with partners in the US and elsewhere to build just and sustainable peace. This program recognizes that women not only have a right to be at the table, but that their involvement is critical to ending war and realizing sustainable peace. It aims to provide expert advice grounded in research that demonstrates women’s contributions to peace building.

- **Ministry of Education Higher Consultative Board, Member, Erbil, Iraq (2010-2014)**

Advised the Ministry on educational and institutional policies and structure, reform agenda to promote active learning and improve quality of education. Contributed to drafting legislation on ministry structure and policy regulations for private education, decentralization of educational governance, supervised the introduction of peace and coexistence materials with art and storytelling. Assisted in establishing teacher training programs and institution.

- **US-Iraq Joint Trade Committee, Member, Baghdad, Iraq (2011-2014)**

Promoted trade and economic relationships between the United States and Iraq through exploring the challenges that hinder such development. Drafting proposed changes to existing laws and regulations.

- **Higher Planning Steering Committee, Member, Duhok, Iraq (2014-present)**

Advising on regional planning and participatory approaches to governance. Providing guidance to Governors and local government departments on strategic planning with the promotion of participatory planning to allow for broad participation in visioning development and budget planning for the Governorates' Development Plans.

- **Steering Committee of Peace and Human Security Center at the American University of Kurdistan (AUK), Member, Duhok, Iraq (2015-2018)**

Examining major contemporary challenges to security and peace, sources of conflict and violence, and several key mechanisms for conflict resolution and prevention. The center is focused on the epistemic foundations on which international security and peace are being built, the challenges that they are facing, and how they are likely to evolve.

- **Expert Group Meetings of UN-Habitat, Member, (2014-present).**

Continuing participant and contributor to UN-Habitat discussions and decisionmaking pertaining to the themes of Gender-responsive Cities, Right to the City, Decade of Change, and Gender and Green/Sustainable Housing. Some highlights among others:

- **World Urban Forum (WUF7)** Medellín, Colombia (2014), speaker.
- **World Urban Forum (WUF10)** Abu Dhabi, UAE (2020), moderator and speaker at opening session, repertoire of the Women's Assembly report
- **UN-Habitat State of Arab Cities Report 2020**, Reviewer. (2020)

PUBLISHING AND MEDIA

Appeared on several television and radio programs to discuss Iraq, the Middle East, women, and political and social issues of the Middle East.

BOOKS

- **“Decentralization in Iraq”**

A book that reflects on the governance and political development of Iraq. May 2015. Hasan Modern Library Publishing House, Beirut, Lebanon

- **“Participatory Budgeting Toolkit: Principles, Questions and Answers, and Case Studies”**. United States Institute of Peace, Iraq. May 2017

CHAPTERS IN BOOKS

- **Commanding Heights, Strategic Lessons from Complex Operations. Essay 3 ‘Reflections on Post-Conflict Politics of Reform: a Voice from Inside Iraq’.** National Defense University, Washington DC, 2010.
https://cco.ndu.edu/Portals/96/Documents/books/commandingheights/commanding_heights.pdf
- **Rebuilding Peace: Land and Water Management in Northern Iraq.**
http://www.environmentalpeacebuilding.org/assets/Documents/LibraryItem_000_Doc_162.pdf.
This chapter appears in “Land and Post-Conflict Peacebuilding”, one of six edited books in the series Post-Conflict Peacebuilding and Natural Resource Management. Routledge. November 2013

ARTICLES

- **Urban Planning: A glimpse into global challenges through global experts.** Citiestobe newsletter. 2017.
<https://www.citiestobe.com/a-glimpse-into-global-challenges-through-global-experts/>
- **The Kurdistan Region of Iraq: From Tragedy and Trauma to Urban Development,** an essay in the booklet: “Kurdistan Regional Government: Twenty-five years of hope, challenges and progress”. Publication. September 2017.
<https://www.25years.gov.krd/media/1380/25yearskr.pdf>
- **Understanding the Political Economy of the KRI: The way forward toward better governance** by Dr. Nesreen Barwari. 2018.
<http://blogs.lse.ac.uk/mec/2018/04/24/understanding-the-political-economy-of-the-kri-the-way-forward-toward-better-governance/>
- **Going Back or Staying Better: Processes of Return After Displacement due to ISIL** by Dr. Nesreen Barwari. 2018.
<http://blogs.lse.ac.uk/mec/2018/02/14/going-back-or-staying-better-processes-of-return-after-displacement-due-to-isil/>
- **Culture and Creative Industries in Iraq: A Baseline Study.** Author. Funded by Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit (GIZ). January 2019.
- **Informal Economy and Conflict: Duhok-Kurdistan Region of Iraq as a case study.** Qallati Zanist Scientific Journal, Lebanese French University, Erbil, Iraq. Vol. 4 Issue 2, spring 2019.
<http://journal.lfu.edu.krd/index.php/Files/article/view/135/pdf>
- **Decentralized/Semi-Decentralized Sanitation Solutions in Duhok Governorate.** Paper ID: 1570618280 presented at the 6th International Engineering Conference (IEC2020) in Erbil, Kurdistan Region-Iraq on February 26-27, 2020.