**International Solidarity Committee for the ISF Chat 6-5-13**

**Agenda:**

1. **Updates on the situation in Iraq and escalation of violence**
2. **Updates by the Iraqis on their work for ISF on the ground**
3. **Review of possible contributions by internationals to the ISF process**

**Situation in Iraq and escalation of violence**

From Ayat (yoyo shosh) member of Tammuz org and of Secretariat of the ISF:

Preparations continue for the Iraqi Social Forum for the end of September, in spite of some of the security breaches that have occurred in the capital Baghdad in the past days. The media tried to amplify the situation very large.

During the past few days have been encounters among many Iraqi politicians for an end to violence and I think that these steps sound very good, and at the same time there are moving from democratic civil society forces to hold a series of meetings in order to maintain civil peace and resolve differences between the political parties, and at the same time there is the mobility of civil society organizations and activists in many campaigns to stand against terrorism and build a state of peace.

What is happening in Iraq from a political dispute accompanied by a security disorder is rejected by all Iraqi citizens, and the interaction with sectarians calls in this time is very very weak from the Iraqis because they are tired from frequent wars and violence experienced by Iraqis throughout that period

**Iraqis’ work for ISF on the ground**

From Ayat (yoyo shosh): preparations now ongoing with number of government agencies in order to arrange things including the venue of the forum. Also invited a large number of activities and organizations. Regular meetings of the Preparatory Committee work was divided into committees now the Information, the Media and the Volunteers Committees.

QUESTIONS:

Do you a platform, a text with objectives, issues, etc. for ISF?

SEE: <http://openfsm.net/projects/iraq-social-forum/project-home>

SEE ALSO THE CHARTER THAT IS BEING SENT ALONG WITH THESE NOTES.

Is there a committee to facilitate visas?

No. Invitations will be send by the ISF Secretariat and internationals will need to ask for visas in their countries at the Iraqi embassy.

Suggest one member of the Secretariat works as liason with the govt. to facilitate visas if necessary

If the ISF gets some support from friendly institutions Secretariat will ask them to send support letters;.

On the visa, it's almost sure that everybody will need to pay about 60 EUR, it's always like that with the iraqi gov, and we are not in a position to ask favours to this government, it's not a friendly one at all.

Lodging/boarding?

There will be a registration and reception committee

Is there any preliminary publicity material?

A poster even without venue would be a very good idea and should be out very soon; check the Tunis WSF poster

We will print a special folder online as well as a poster and some other ads distributed to all the provinces as well as Facebook bulletins and newspapers

We also have a number of camera gap volunteers will produce a simple movies and will puplished on YouTube

one thing the ISC can do is propose some similar materials posters in English; not examples but proposals

usually posters are defined locally, then we can do the english version, I dont know what others think

(ah by the way speaking of publicity  - the ISF event  is announced in the wsf calendar released this week by a working group in IC : see line 12 http://openfsm.net/projects/wsf2012-support/wsf2013-calendar - ali taif martina  ismaeel are in the mailing list of event organizers associated to this calendar )

Slogan for the Forum?

“Another Iraq is Possible with Peace, Human Rights, and Social Justice”

Feroz is asking when we can have the first materials ready.... iraqis need to define the logo, can we make a time forecast?

There will be pre-event posters and publicity in the beginning of July; beacuse our volunteers are students and they wont be available till the end of June;

Videos you will receive before 15th of July

this an example of what we want to do

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=bmsY0frrYO4&list=UUPbkaxUbspgCRa5aPqHnWPQ>

Pierre: and the videos can be linked to the isf space  as lively infos -- pre-event videos right?

Feroz: Can we make a list of publicity material needed urgently?

1. Poster: with dates, logo and city
2. Charter with logo
3. The above mentioned themes/axes on letterhead with logo
4. General letter of invitation with address of the secretariat
5. A call for the participation of Iraqis
6. A call for the participation of internationals

Martina suggests: in order to organize strong activities some work needs to be done on each thematic axes, to prepare networks and events, most of all in iraq but also internationally. for example we know that Save the Tigris campaign is planning to hold meeting starting soon, in different cities of iraq, to prepare the event at ISF

Iraqis should organize a program committee as soon as possible to draft the program, and also help thematic groups to start working and mobilizing towards ISF (unions, human rights groups, peace organizations, women organizations...)

In the ISF we have proposed topics for discussion at the Iraqi Social Forum 2013 which are:

1- Building a civic, democratic country.

2- International Solidarity campaigns, including: (Freedom of Expression campaign, Save the Tigris campaign and the Private Military Companies campaign).

3- Iraq's minorities and the nationalism problems.

4- Equitable distribution of wealth and social justice.

5- Labor unions, trade unions and peasant associations.

6- Women, youth, and childhood (challenges, solutions and prospects).

7- The economical, social, and cultural issues.

8- Nonviolence as a way of social, cultural, and economical change in Iraq.

wonderful, but n. 7 too broad. culture deserves one item! linked with social of course

There will also be cultural activities and events of sports against violence

Italians will hold a meeting to discuss supporting the program

At present our ideas about the workshops as well as themes are planned to set up but did not hear anything about the initiatives or axes so we are trying at the coming period to activate this side

Martina proposes that we dedicate our next chat, in two weeks, to share views on the program, and eventually on the thematic axes too. Organizing a program is not easy, expecially if you have few days, and I'm sure internationals can give good suggestions before you set up this work

Please clarify : these are themes - where self organized activities are being placed by their organizers right?

YES

Pierre: one last logistical point for iraqi friends: please make sure  that there is as good internet as possible in the premises of the forum; this may require some care & anticipation.

**Our contributions as internationals**

Martina made a summary list of six activities – the notes include discuss points and next steps that we agreed to:

1. **Call for internationals’ participation in the ISF.**

Feroz and Alessandra will draft based upon the document that Taif sent (a brief charter of the ISF with objectives and axes) THIS DOCUMENT IS BEING RESENT ALONG THESE NOTES.

**2) Draft a project proposal and prepare trainings for translators**

Judith sent some proposals to Ismaeel

it might be TOT so then there can be follow-up

Discussion of funding needed – do we only need to look for funding of the interantional trainer to erbil, or also funding of iraqi translators to erbil? and accommodation for all?

If we do it in baghdad we dont need for Iraqis only the translaters , but this may change if in August we cant do for scurity reasons such trainning in Baghdad and we need to do it in erbil so in the plan we can also think about some costs for Iraqis not so much and then we see together , Judith and babels have done such ex in tunis and they might have ideas about posible doners we need realy to work on this with them

Martina will contact Judith and help her drafting the proposal and looking for donors then we send you the draft and you give inputs if you can help

by JUNE 15

**3) Prepare online training for extension**

Pierre will work with Iraqis to do this via from europe through skype - what is most needed is to form a small team of iraqi with some portable computers and willingness to make extension happen and a 2 /3 video projectors and ..internet in the premises; starting early and practising along the way

so question to the Iraqis: do you think a small team of volunteers can follow an online training of Pierre to prepare and do internet connection during the forum with parallel events in iraq and abroad?

this could start in july, when volunteers are available

its an idea to start a working group of iraqis want to work on the expanded froum and the brodcasting; isf dont have now , but its good idea we can propose one can start with 1/2 people .. and make it grow as it becomes more concrete throgh practice

Pierre wrote: regarding build up of extension:- it would be good  to start working as a team now during  june with  a 1/2 iraqi people team identified to start with  dedicated to extension  in ISF  interested to develop this

so they can  start communication with the rest of the world circulating a proposal dimensionning several such tele-meeting inside ISF on the various themes announced   and  develop  preliminary  contacts (via skype)  with those organizations interested  abroad and those itnerested inside ISF

those preliminary skype contacts can be in some case the same as those described by martina/feroz for the mobilisation build up events - that is when interested organisation plan to send people to iraq AND to organize tele meeting at home

Martina: our friends told us in the beginning that the majority of iraqi volunteers will be available in july, now they have exams at unviersity, and I don't want to stress the secretariat too much, but I leave it to their evaluation... I think we can start working on extension in july

for your information  i will be less available from july 5 to august 18 - because travelling in maybe  not well connected places  - so if a starting team as described above  can be set up before july 5th that would be good - the basic team would be preferably not only students  :)

**4) Propose Palestine space in ISF**

We will consider this in more depth when we discuss program on the next chat.

**5) Review translation of social forum guidelines**

The guidelines in English are here:

<http://openfsm.net/projects/ic-methodology/metcom-principiosguias-versao2011-en>

Ayat (yoyo shosh) will translate to Arabic.

Pierre wrote: yoyo feel free to send questions regarding the guiding principles document)

**6) Organize events in our countries to speak about social movements in Iraq and ISF**

Iraqis will work to be available via Skype for these events.

**NEXT CHAT IS ON WEDNESDAY 19TH OF JUNE SAME TIME AS TODAY**