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STATEMENT

Broken Chalk's Concerns Regarding the Proposed Amendments to Iraqi Personal Status Law No. 188 of 1959

Broken Chalk is deeply concerned about the proposed amendments to the Iraqi Personal Status Law No. 188 of 1959 and appeals to the government to safeguard the interests of children. If enacted, these amendments would pose a significant threat to the rights of women and children in Iraq.

The proposed changes aim to reinstate religious laws over the current constitutional laws that govern Iraq. A particularly alarming aspect of this proposal is that it would allow for the legal marriage of girls to be 9 years and boys 15 years. Currently, Iraqi law prohibits marriage under the age of 18, ensuring a level of protection for children.

The enactment of this proposal would have far-reaching consequences, not only economically and politically but also in terms of education. Every child has the right to education and to be treated as a child. As a signatory to the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child, Iraq is obligated to protect the interests of its children. This proposal represents a serious deviation from Iraq's commitments under the UN Convention and would likely result in grave human rights violations.

Research has consistently shown that child marriages reduce educational opportunities, increase school dropout rates, and restrict the freedom of children. Moreover, this law would likely exacerbate gender-based violence and further diminish accountability for perpetrators who target children. Additionally, Islam also requires people to obey the laws of the land in which they live and most Muslim countries also agree that 18 is the minimum legal age of consent.

Broken Chalk strongly urges the Iraqi government to safeguard the interests of children and to protect their childhood and freedom by rejecting this harmful proposal.

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