



## INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE OF THE IRAQI POLITICAL RESISTANCE

Gijón-Xixón, Asturias, Spain, June 18-20, 2010

**The Spanish Campaign against the Occupation and for the Sovereignty of Iraq (CEOSI) will hold its first international, public and united meeting of the main currents in the Iraqi resistance, those who to their project for the full recovery of Iraq's sovereignty add an integrated, democratic and non-sectarian reconstruction of its institutions. This meeting, which aims to encourage the convergence process of the anti-occupation field and promote their openness to the international community, will take place in Gijón, Asturias, Spain, June 18-20, 2010, under the title: *International Conference of the Iraqi Political Resistance*. This initiative will coincide with the beginning of the eight year of the occupation of Iraq and will be held while Spain holds the presidency of the EU.**

The forgotten news from Iraq does not mean that the situation has improved, or that the end of the occupation is near. The Iraqi people are at a critical moment as they face their immediate future. On March 7, 2010, new legislative elections will be held, whose objective is to conclude the consolidation process for internal control in Iraq, with a view to a complete withdrawal of the United States in 2011. As in previous instances, the anti-occupation field will not participate in elections it considers illegal, though it will not interfere with popular participation in those elections.

Iraq's occupants have submitted the country to the old colonial logic of social fragmentation. The occupation, instead of bringing democratic policies to Iraq, as its invaders claimed in 2003, has brought formal power to certain people and sectarian organizations linked with the occupiers themselves or with countries in the region, without any legitimacy whatsoever. Their game is not that of representing and defending one or another of the Iraqi communities, but to serve their foreign masters while enriching themselves without impunity. The upcoming elections in March 7 will only exacerbate this failed dynamic and instead of enabling the democratic expression of the Iraqi people, they reflect the fight between US and Iran, for the control of Iraq. For this reason, extremely bitter conflicts are developing within the collaborationist camp itself: according to general opinion in the streets of Iraq, the latest massive attacks in Baghdad and other cities are the result (either through the direct involvement or passivity of the security services) of a ruthless struggle between sectarian groups, who are resolving their political differences at the cost of the lives of hundreds of innocent Iraqis

The country's subjection to occupation has cost up to a million lives, according to the estimates of prestigious international institutions. According to the UN, during 2005 and 2006, up to a hundred Iraqis were killed every day by death squads linked to the new Iraqi authorities, and therefore, either directly or indirectly, to the occupation forces. Officially, 40,000 Iraqis are being held by the US or the new Iraqi authorities. Furthermore, the terror and repression have led to the greatest exodus in recent history. According to the UN, since the beginning of the occupation, nearly five million Iraqis have become internally displaced or forced to find refuge outside the country: Iraq has more people who have had to abandon their homes than any other country in the world: 16% of its population. For these Iraqis, return to their homes is not feasible.

Inside the country, elections have not stirred any hope of an improvement in the daily situation which has not ceased to deteriorate from day to day since 2003. Iraq, one of the richest countries on the planet, formerly with a large professional middle class, today demonstrates paltry

indicators in the areas of education, health, electricity and potable water supplies, as well as in respect to human and social rights. Iraq is the fourth most corrupt country in the world: in the strategic oil sector that is gradually being privatized, no-one knows where the revenues from oil sales will end up. It is the political class imposed by the occupiers that makes up a new oligarchy which legitimizes the theft and dismantling of public institutions through regressive legislation, and which nullifies the concept of citizenship and subjects the lives of Iraq's women and men to arbitrariness and helplessness.

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Against this background, the project for the recovery of Iraq's sovereignty is inexorably linked to the democratic and integrated reconstruction of its institutions. The military occupation must not give way to a puppet regime or to the fracturing of the country into areas influenced by neighboring governments that could facilitate the unhindered plunder of its wealth in the future. The Iraqi people want to fully recover their sovereignty and the greatest inheritance of their past, one that was embodied in an integrated and dynamic society, despite the adversity of its recent history. This is the project that the Iraqi resistance embodies and wishes to materialize, and that the meeting at Gijón aims to further, in an atmosphere of trust and freedom.

The democratic anti-occupation currents are converging slowly, but inexorably. Since 2007 four Fronts have been created around which the majority of the militant groups are coalescing. The coordination among them has moved forward, without materializing into full military unification. More importantly, after the end of the first phase of military confrontation with the occupiers, the political and civilian representatives of the resistance continue their dialogue on a program and common strategy, and on the need to offer a united dialogue inside Iraq as much as outside. It is an essential objective for Iraq's future, in order to achieve a democratic and integrated solution to the crisis the occupation has created.

This is the spirit of the meeting at Gijón, a date to which the highest representatives of the main anti-occupation Iraqi political groups have already committed: the Nationalist and Islamic Patriotic Front (political organization of the Jihad and Liberation Front), the Association of Muslim Scholars (whose Secretary General, Sheikh Harez Al-Dari, has been designated as political representative by the military factions of the Jihad and Change Front) and the Iraqi National Foundation Congress – made up of more than 20 civic associations and community representatives, men as well as women who will remember the essential role of this collective in Iraq's contemporary history: **Judeir Al-Murshidi**, Secretary General of the Nationalist and Islamic Patriotic Front of Iraq; sheikh **Bashar Mohamed Al-Faidi**, spokesperson and executive committee member of the Association of Muslim Scholars; ayatollah **Yawad Al-Jalesi**, Secretary General of the Iraqi National Foundation Congress; **Haifa Zangana**, writer, resident in the UK; sheij **Ahmed Al-Ganim**, President of the Southern Tribal Council of Iraq; **Arshad Zibari**, Secretary General of the Kurdish Justice Party; **Yusef Hamdan**, leader from the communist People's Union party; **Asma Al-Haidari**, Human Rights activist; and **Isam Al-Chalabi**, former Iraqi Oil Minister (1987-1990) and oil expert.

The meeting will be organized with the collaboration of the Damascus based Independence Study Center, whose president, **Khalid Al-Maani**, will attend this meeting. The meeting will also be attended by personalities and representatives from the U.S., Europe and Arab world organizations, such as **Hans von Sponeck** and **Ramsey Clark**, a singular opportunity to restore or build ties with Iraqi organizations. In the context of Spain's EU presidency, the visit of these distinguished political and social Iraqi leaders will be taken advantage of, to propose a direct dialogue with the Spanish authorities and Spanish and European political groups, among others.

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