



# **Baghdad Women Association**

## **Organizational Profile**

## Baghdad Women Association

### Organizational Profile

#### BWA Information:

**Organization's Age:** Baghdad Women Association was officially registered with the **Ministry of Planning and Development Cooperation in Baghdad** on August 10, 2004, and has continued its work to the present day.

**Registration Status:** BWA was officially registered with the Non-Governmental Organizations Directorate of the General Secretariat of the Iraqi Council of Ministers on February 22, 2012, registration number **1017090**

BWA was also officially registered with the Non-Governmental Organizations Directorate of the Kurdistan Region Government of Iraq on May 21, 2018, registration number **2705-I**

**Headquarters:** Iraq/ Baghdad  
Postal Code: 10069

**Sub-headquarters:** Kurdistan Region/Duhok  
Postal Code: 42001

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## **Vision**

BWA's vision is to combat all forms of violence against women and girls, while ensuring their legal protection, equality, respect and all human rights.

## **Mission**

To limit and mitigate violence against women and girls by providing all required services for women survivors of violence; by calling to implement the appropriate laws, policies, and government programmes to support women, while aiming to increase the political involvement of women through the development of leadership skills through knowledge, growth, and capacity building.

## **Strategic Direction and Objectives**

To develop appropriate strategies for achieving our vision and mission, we identified a set of clear objectives. There are three main objectives.

1- Support services refers to the assistance provided to individual women who come to the association and report cases of abuse or a violation of their civil rights. These women will receive counselling, legal advice and be assisted in filing cases with the police or through the courts.

*Programme Objective: To help women to heal from abuse and to provide them with the necessary support.*

2- Women's Leadership Development is the knowledge, skills and capacity building programme that builds on the work already done by BWA. This programme will continue to focus on educating women on the constitution, the laws of Iraq as well as providing knowledge about international human rights instruments such as CEDAW.

*Programme Objective: To facilitate women's access to decision-making positions and to develop their leadership capacity.*

3- Advocacy is a programme aimed at changing laws, policies and government programmes which discriminate against women and girls. An important part of advocacy is the documenting of violations as well as reporting on such violations. BWA will document the experiences of women and use opportunities such as Shadow Reporting to bring national and world attention to the plight of Iraqi women.

*Programme Objective: To change the thinking and behaviour of decision makers to prevent the violation of women's rights, and to protect and promote the rights of women.*

## **History**

After 2003, many NGOs — especially women-lead organizations — were established in Iraq. The 2003 change of government removed strict state control over civil society, before 2003, independent NGOs were heavily restricted., afterward, Iraq adopted laws allowing civil society organizations to register and operate more freely, which opened the door for women's groups to form.

In 2004, eleven women from various ethnic and religious backgrounds, who reside in Baghdad, came together to establish the Baghdad Women Association, taking it upon themselves to provide services for women in need as well as providing support for them as citizens.

Due to the devastation and deplorable standard of living that Iraqi women were experiencing resulting from these conditions, BWA was established. BWA's objective is to combat the inequalities and hardship faced by women and provide support to these women to improve their circumstances, quality of life and position in society. Baghdad Women Association's first step to meet its objectives was with the initiative to establish the Children and Women's Committee, which was affiliated with the Municipal Council for 9 Nissan District in Baghdad. The committee was responsible for providing support and aid for affected women who live in the areas affiliated to the sector.

In 2004, it was a novel concept for women to come together, form a committee and to work together as an association providing services. This first initiative was a catalyst that was proceeded by a series of meetings to write the bylaws of the association to register it as a civil society organization. The members of the Association were invited to hold meetings by the local authorities of the district, and they were tasked to provide the necessary assistance to meet the needs of the local women. In the initial months, the members of the Association worked as volunteers until the Association received its first grant.

The first donor supported programs by the Association, funded the recruitment of key staff members and purchasing of required equipment and devices. The first objectives of these programmes were highly controversial and perilous at the time, which included introducing women to the concept of democracy, involving women in the democratic development of Iraq and eradicating illiteracy.

Since 2004, BWA has trained and developed the capacity of thousands of women, educating them on the concept and providing them with the tools to contribute to the political evolution in Iraq.

The training courses encompassed topics such as civil and political rights and included the subjects of voting and policy making, as well as training on the principles and mechanisms of advocacy. Also included were skill development through literacy, computer and English language programmes. The knowledge and skills garnered, provided job opportunities for them and aided in the enhancement of their role in conflict resolution and peacebuilding. In 2009, the Association opened the first Listening and Guidance Centre which provides psychosocial support and legal counsel for women, girls and female survivors of violence.

The Association has put together extensive programmes to oppose violence against women within the Association's administrative framework of the Listening, Psychosocial and Legal Guidance Centers for women. These centers provide support services for women and girls, raise awareness of stakeholders from community groups, and empower women to elevate their own levels of protection.

### **Why We Do**

Since its inception, BWA has been increasingly concerned about the violence in Iraq. The chaos following the fall of the former regime has opened the door for many old and new forms of discrimination against women and many of these crimes go by without punishment for their perpetrators. The impact of tribal customs and traditions, which are male dominant, have increased and they for the most part justify using all forms of violence against women.

Accordingly, women have seen a diminishing standing in society as they were moved away from participating in normal life to an increased stay in their domiciles, thusly their integration rates in society have declined. There has been decrease in girls attending schools and decline of women in the workforce. Following the destabilization of the security situation in 2003 there is a direct correlation of an increase in violence against women. However, to this day, it is not possible to measure the proliferation of violence against women in Iraq since the related data was not systematically aggregated.

Violence against women is one of the taboos that must be dealt with and talked about within the family from the society's perspective. Talking about family and private matters is considered shameful and we also find that abused women isolate themselves from any other person they can talk to about their personal matters. Consequently, women lack the opportunity to talk about their suffering and lessen their burdens; resulting in the incapacity to seek the necessary support to free themselves of the cycle of violence which constrains them. Women are often influenced by the concept of male dominance regarding their role and objectives, and most of the time Iraqi women do not have the knowledge, capacity, or strength to face such ideas, so they are unable to make decisions by themselves, leading them to endure being abused and victimized. Moreover, the local security authorities and health centers are completely unqualified to deal with violence against women because they have a lack of awareness about the matter and how to deal with its cases. Therefore, women receive limited support and inadequate services at the time when they need support and help from the whole community the most.

### **Activities and Programmes**

#### **What We Do**

- Listening, Psychosocial, and Legal Counselling Centers

BWA provides through the listening, psychosocial support, and legal guidance centers it manages, free legal counseling and psychosocial support and guidance for female victims of violence. Social workers and case management employees provide support for the beneficiaries, while female lawyers provide legal counsel as well as follow-up on their cases to settle them in the courts.

In 2009-2010, Baghdad Women Association was one of six women's organizations who were able to obtain support for opening and managing centers where psychosocial support and legal counselling was to be provided for female survivors of violence in Baghdad/ Karrada. The funding sponsored the development and capacity building of the BWA staff where they gained the knowledge and skills on dealing with female survivors of violence.

The success of BWA's experience in managing its first Listening, Psychosocial Support, and Legal Counseling Centre for women and girls in Baghdad, augmented its ability to open a second Centre in Hay Al Nasr in the beginning of 2012. In 2013, BWA opened two more Centers, one in Sadr City, and the other in Hay Al Ameen to provide services of psychosocial support and legal guidance for women and girls. In 2014, BWA provided technical support for Hawa' Organization in a step that contributed to opening a Centre for Listening, Psychosocial, and Legal Guidance for women and girls in Diyala Governorate. Due to a change of donors' focus and according to the changing needs and priorities of work in Iraq, BWA decided to expand to the rest of the governorates in response to the challenges faced by women and girls because of Da'esh attacks. BWA extended its reach, opening psychosocial and legal support centers for female refugees and returnees in Saladin Governorate/ Tikrit in 2016 and in 2017 in Nineveh Plain/ Hamdaniya District. BWA opened a Centre for Psychosocial Support and Legal Guidance for female survivors of domestic violence and female in Anbar/ Ramadi in 2020.

- Raising Awareness and Building Capacity of Women and Girls.

Workshops are organized to raise awareness, ensuring that female survivors of violence receive knowledge of their rights regarding the violence directed towards them and are made aware of the indicators of violence. As for legal awareness, it ensures women have knowledge of their rights and demand them, especially regarding marriage and divorce. BWA held special training courses for capacity building for women, encouraging them to be active members in society by way of teaching them skills and self-confidence. Vocational trainings enabled women to go for opportunities to make a living and to develop income generating projects through which women can provide for their families; this is considered a tool for women to make their way out of the cycle of violence.

- Raising Awareness for Men, Religious Clerics, and Tribal leaders.

It's necessary to gain male support; including that of religious clerics and tribal leaders as they are influential male role models. Their support is vital on women's issues to confront violence against women and strengthen the protection of women and girls. BWA conducts societal dialogue sessions with all men, especially religious clerics and tribal leaders, to raise their awareness on the consequences of violence against women and the direct negative impact on the family and society. BWA seeks to partner with these groups in society to guarantee their contribution in raising societal awareness and to change their convictions towards violence against women.

- Building Capacity for Local Authorities and Stakeholders

It is critical to provide knowledge and necessary skills for the following actors or bodies, local councils, municipality, police department, health centers, educational centers, prominent figures in society and other agencies to precisely identify abused women and support them, coinciding with the contribution of providing protection for these women and girls. BWA works through referrals which guarantees that women receive necessary support inside the community ensuring their protection. BWA grew the confidence levels in Societal Police and developed their skills to contribute to providing required services for women.

- Social and Political Empowerment of Women

The Iraqi women can improve their quality of living and increase their standing in society given the opportunity to be involved in the decision-making process and from assuming political positions. Chances of education are limited for women in this patriarchal society, subsequently women have less opportunities compared to men regarding their contribution in decision making positions and women do not have sufficient representation, be it social or political.

- Empowering Women in Society

BWA implemented the Empowering Women in Society Project, which aims to empower women and increase their self-confidence so that they can take effective steps forward in contributing to the decision-making process within the family and society. It was a successful Programme which was implemented in different areas of Baghdad, enabling vulnerable women to make basic decisions to enhance their quality of life and social status.

- Promoting Political Engagement of Women

To ensure political involvement of women, the women's quota was introduced in Parliament, establishing that women will have 25% participation percentage of the parliamentary seats, according to the Iraqi Constitution of 2005. The women who were elected to participate in the federal and local government have very limited capacity and therefore are prevented from effective participation in the decision-making process. BWA implemented many training workshops for women to develop their skills and ameliorate their knowledge to participate in the political process, hold campaigns and occupy political positions. BWA has also contributed to exalting the capacity of specific women government actors. BWA has developed and built capacity of the Women Care Department, (a part of Ministry of Labor and Social Affairs), supporting its development of sound strategic plans to improve women's performance and work.

- Supporting Women's Rights

BWA worked on ensuring the ideal implementation of laws and charters concerning women's rights by the Iraqi government. The Association focused on the enactment of United Nations



Security Council Resolution (UNSCR) 1325 in Iraq concerning the situation of women and girls pre, during, and post conflict. The Resolution also calls for increasing women's participation generally in security, peacebuilding, and the decision-making process. Raising formed a unique and innovative role in making national plans for the roll out of the Resolution; it also contributed to activating the ideal enactment of these plans through its enormous efforts in raising awareness among the workforce in the following government sectors: security, health and education. The BWA also focused on increasing their ability to respond to women's issues by training them on UNSCR 1325, later resolutions, national plan, and emergency plan. The Association trained them in monitoring documentation mechanisms and report writing. It then taught workers about the indicators of measuring advancement, measuring performance, follow-up and evaluation tools, accountability and justice mechanisms to determine points of strength and weaknesses and analyzing the lessons gained, therefore ensuring the implementation of UNSCR 1325 in Iraq.

- Empowering BWA Staff

BWA employs mostly women, preferably young so that they can make the greatest advancements and impact with their future careers. BWA devotes its efforts to building the capacity of its staff and to ensure that the Association meets the highest level of standards, it holds regular training workshops in its HQ. These trainings raise awareness of its staff and provide them with the foundation to grow so that they can become strong female leaders, not just within the Association, but in society.

- Monitoring and Documentation of Women's Circumstances and Documenting Data on Violence against women and girls.

BWA has developed specific expertise pertaining to women; the Association has compiled information regarding the needs and daily life of the Iraqi women. BWA created a database of information related to abused women and girls, the data is collected through listening, psychosocial, and legal guidance centers affiliated with the Association. The data is then analyzed according to regular measures, resulting in available data that contributes to painting a clearer picture for the Association regarding cases of violence against women in Iraq. The Association documented cases of and the practices that led to the severe abuse of women's rights. The Association also published studies on the state of Iraqi widows, early and forced marriages in Baghdad, and out-of-court marriages. These studies have contributed to shedding light on specific cases in Iraq and educating civil society on the occurrences of these phenomena in Iraq and their effects on Iraqi women.

BWA contributed to writing specific documents produced by civil society organizations in Iraq, which are addressing the International Community on the state of Women in Iraq. The Association also participated in writing comprehensive periodic reports focusing on women's rights.

Finally, the Association contributed to writing shadow reports on the Convention of the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW).



- Enhancing Policies and Legal Frameworks Pertaining to Women Rights

BWA has committed itself to reinforcing and developing government policies regarding women and adopting possible reforms for specific legal text to limit discrimination against women within the legal framework. The Association works on increasing the participation of women in political parties, government and all decision-making positions.

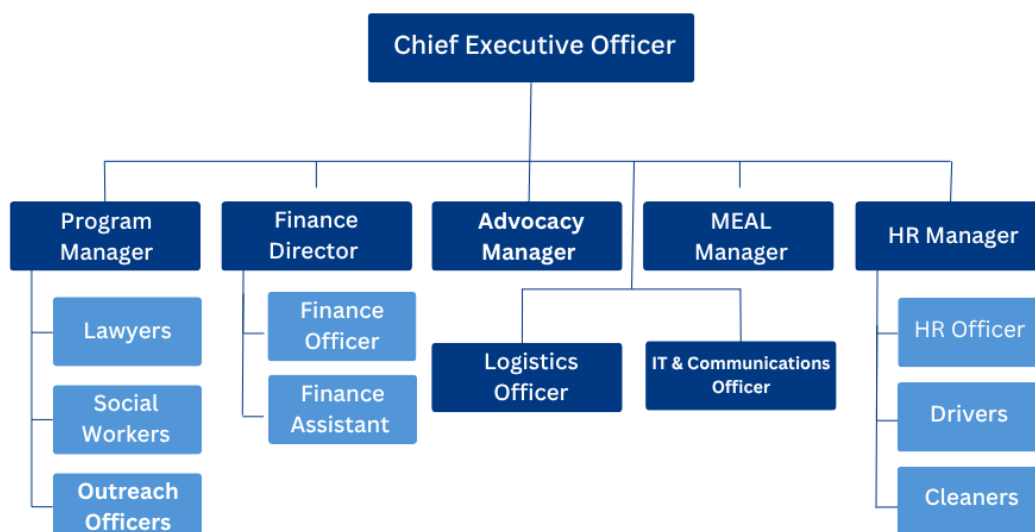
BWA focuses on abolishing and amending discriminatory text in the Personal Status Law, Criminal Code, and Combatting Human Trafficking Law. BWA has also specialized in leveraging decision-makers in the Iraqi Parliament to pass the Anti-Domestic Violence Law and support the opening of a shelter in Baghdad that will provide protection for female survivors of violence. The Association utilized the expertise and knowledge exchange approach with representatives of the Iraqi Government and Kurdistan Regional Government who benefited from their experience in managing safe centres for female survivors of violence. BWA along with other civil society organizations contributed to pressuring decision-makers to open a safe centre for female survivors of violence. We are still waiting for the approval of the Anti-Domestic Violence Law to be put into effect.

### **Major achievements since establishment**

- Total number of beneficiaries of the association's projects since its inception (males and females, excluding women and girls' survivors of violence) 2,000,995 males and females.
- Number of women and girls' survivors of violence who have benefited from the psychological and social support services of Baghdad Women Association: 214,629.
- Achievements of the Studies and Research Unit at Baghdad Women Association: Preparation and publication of 30 policy papers and research papers on essential and fundamental topics related to women's rights in various fields and levels, and their launch coincided with international occasions.
- Achievements of the Training Unit at Baghdad Women Association: Implementation of 319 capacity-building activities, including training workshops and courses since its inception to 2025.
- Completed 54 comprehensive training manuals covering topics like violence against women, financial management, and women's rights in national legislation.
- Launch of high-level national conferences annually, hosted 24 high-level national conferences, each with at least 100 participants, including government decision-makers, aimed at promoting women's empowerment and rights.



## BWA ORGANIZATIONAL STRUCTURE



### Administrative Structure of the Association

#### Leadership and Key Personnel

President of BWA: Liza Nissan Hido/ bachelor's in electrical and Electronic Engineering/ Women Activist, and the founder of BWA.

#### Board Members:

Board Members of Baghdad Women Association started their work on July 1, 2024.

- Eng. Liza Nissan Hido
- Dr. Mohammed Raad AL mukhtar
- Mrs. Entesar Jabar Ajeel
- Mrs. Rajaa Hameed Rashid
- Dr. Bushra Hussein Saleh

#### Staff and Volunteers

Baghdad Women Association is dedicated to fostering youth participation in civil society, with a strong emphasis on employing young women. Our team consists of a diverse group of individuals committed to our mission.

We also actively promote volunteerism, encouraging women, girls, and young people to get involved. Through comprehensive training programs, we equip our volunteers with the skills needed for effective participation and provide opportunities for personal and professional development.

### Regional and National Networks and Alliances

To exchange experiences and expand the circle of coordination and influence, Baghdad Women Association works within national and regional networks and alliances, according to the following:

- Iraqi Women Network: This network includes a group of Iraqi organizations working in the field of women's rights, with a total of 106 organizations. It leads campaigns to defend Iraqi women at the local and international levels.
- Women for Peace Network WPN: It brings together women's organizations that have dedicated their efforts to implementing UN Security Council Resolution 1325 in Iraq. The alliance has developed a national action plan to implement UN Security Council Resolution 1325, in addition to its impact on the Iraqi government to ensure its support for its implementation.
- Arab Feminist Network (Rowaa): It is a regional Arab Feminist Network that works to bring together Arab women's organizations to exchange knowledge and work on common issues.
- INEVAWG: the International Network to End Violence Against Women and Girls
- Regional Reconciliation and Forgiveness Network.
- NEAR Network: is a movement of local and national civil society organizations

### Donors

#### 2005

- Department for International Development (DFID)
- Canadian Catholic Organization for Development and Peace
- Women for Women International (WFWI)
- National Endowment for Democracy (NED)
- United Nations Development Fund for Women (UNIFEM)

#### 2006

- United Nations Development Fund for Women (UNIFEM)
- National Endowment for Democracy (NED)

#### 2007

- Kvinna till Kvinna Foundation
- Global Fund for Women (GFW)
- United Nations Office for Project Services (UNOPS)
- National Endowment for Democracy (NED)

#### 2008

- United Nations Office for Project Services (UNOPS)
- Kvinna till Kvinna Foundation
- Non-Governmental Organizations Coordination Committee for Iraq (NCCI)
- United Nations Development Fund for Women (UNIFEM)

- National Endowment for Democracy (NED)

## **2009**

- United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA)
- Kvinna till Kvinna Foundation
- United States Institute of Peace (USIP)
- HIVOS Organization
- Global Fund for Women (GFW)
- Norwegian Church Aid (NCA)

## **2010**

- Open Doors Organization
- Kvinna till Kvinna Foundation

## **2011**

- Canadian Catholic Organization for Development and Peace
- International Rescue Committee (IRC)
- Oxfam International
- Women for Women International (WFWI)
- Global Fund for Women (GFW)

## **2012**

- Global Fund for Women (GFW)
- Women for Women International (WFWI)
- Open Doors Organization (OSFI)
- Kvinna till Kvinna Foundation
- Norwegian People's Aid (NPA)
- Justice for All Program

## **2013**

- United States Institute of Peace (USIP)
- Kvinna till Kvinna Foundation
- United Nations Development Programme (UNDP)
- Norwegian Embassy
- Mercy Corps
- International Rescue Committee (IRC)

## **2014**

- Norwegian Embassy
- Open Doors Organization (OSFI)
- Mercy Corps
- International Rescue Committee (IRC)
- UN Women Iraq
- Justice for All Program (INL)

## **2015**

- Global Fund for Women (GFW)
- Kvinna till Kvinna Foundation
- Canadian Embassy

## 2016

- UN Women Iraq
- Norwegian People's Aid (NPA)
- Global Fund for Women (GFW)
- Kvinna till Kvinna Foundation
- Lutheran World Federation (LWF)
- International Rescue Committee (IRC)

## 2017

- Norwegian People's Aid (NPA)
- Global Fund for Women (GFW)
- Salt Foundation
- Equality Now

## 2018

- Tearfund
- Norwegian People's Aid (NPA)
- Lutheran World Federation (LWF)
- Kvinna till Kvinna Foundation
- UN Women Iraq
- Euro Med Feminist Initiative

## 2019

- Management Systems International (MSI)
- UN Women
- International Organization for Migration (IOM)
- Lutheran World Federation (LWF)
- Global Fund for Women (GFW)
- Norwegian People's Aid (NPA)

## 2020

- Tearfund
- Norwegian People's Aid (NPA)
- Lutheran World Federation (LWF)
- International Republican Institute (IRI)
- German Institute for Foreign Relations (IFA)
- UN Women in Iraq
- Women's Fund for Peace and Humanity
- Global Fund for Women (GFW)
- Euro-Mediterranean Feminist Initiative
- International Management Systems (MSI)

## 2021

- Lutheran World Federation (LWF)
- UN Women Iraq
- United Nations Development Programme (UNDP)
- OXFAM Organization
- African Women Development Fund
- Norwegian People's Aid (NPA)
- United Nations Trust Fund to End Violence Against Women
- BLUMONT

- Global Fund for Women
- Canadian Embassy
- INTERNEWS
- Tearfund
- Norwegian Church Aid

## 2022

- African Women Development Fund
- United Nations Trust Fund to End Violence Against Women
- OXFAM Organization
- Norwegian Church Aid
- Tearfund
- Norwegian People's Aid (NPA)
- Canadian Embassy
- UN Women Iraq
- Lutheran World Federation (LWF)
- Cordaid Organization Iraq
- RNW Media
- Care International

## 2023

- German International Cooperation for Development (GIZ)
- Lutheran World Federation (LWF)
- OXFAM Organization
- International Rescue Committee (IRC)
- UN Women Iraq
- Cordaid Organization Iraq
- United Nations Trust Fund (UNTF)
- Tearfund
- Norwegian People's Aid (NPA)
- African Women Development Fund (AWDF)
- German Federal Foreign Office (GFFO)
- CARE International
- Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office (FCDO)

## 2024

- Lutheran World Federation (LWF)
- OXFAM Organization
- International Rescue Committee (IRC)
- UN Women Iraq
- United Nations Trust Fund (UNTF)
- Tearfund
- German Federal Foreign Office (GFFO)
- CARE International
- Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office (FCDO)
- Heartland
- The SecDev Foundation
- Democracy Human Rights Labor (DRL)

**2025**

- Lutheran World Federation (LWF)
- German International Cooperation for Development (GIZ)
- OXFAM Organization
- International Rescue Committee (IRC)
- German Federal Foreign Office (GFFO)
- CARE International
- Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office (FCDO)
- The SecDev Foundation
- Democracy Human Rights Labor (DRL)
- Agence Française de Développement (AFD)
- Tearfund

**This Organizational Profile document was formally reviewed and approved by the President of Baghdad Women Association in November 2025.**

**Signature:**



**Name: Liza Nissan Hido**

**Position: President of Baghdad Women Association**