

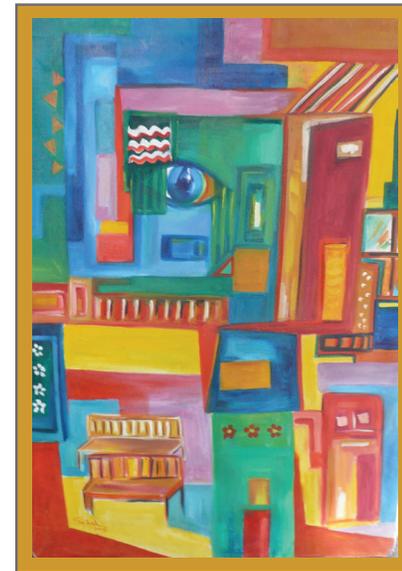


**Special thanks to:**

Aaron Snipe, Foreign Service Officer, Bureau of Near Eastern Affairs  
Embassy of the Republic of Iraq  
Bureau of Near Eastern Affairs, U.S. Department of State  
Bureau of Public Affairs, U.S. Department of State

THE U.S. DIPLOMACY CENTER  
AND THE OFFICE OF GLOBAL WOMEN'S ISSUES  
*Presents*

## THE ROLE OF IRAQI WOMEN IN THE ART OF DIPLOMACY



By Saeed Abed Ghani

March 23, 2010 • 3:00 to 5:00 pm  
George C. Marshall Conference Center • U.S. Department of State  
Washington, DC

## PROGRAM

**Welcome:** Stephen H. Estrada, Director, U.S. Diplomacy Center

**Opening Remarks:** Melanne Vermeer, U.S. Ambassador-at-Large for Global Women's Issues

**Keynote Speaker:** Samir Sumaidaie, Iraqi Ambassador to the United States

**Visiting Panelists:** Iraqi women recently elected to their provincial councils

**Moderator:** Aaron Snipe, Foreign Service Officer, Bureau of Near Eastern Affairs

## BIOGRAPHIES

**Aaron D. Snipe** is a career member of the U.S. Department of State Foreign Service and recently completed a one-year assignment as the Public Diplomacy Officer (PDO) and Spokesperson for the Provincial Reconstruction Team (PRT) in Muthanna Province, Iraq. Aaron joined PRT Muthanna after eight months of Arabic-language training at the Foreign Service Institute (FSI), and after completing his assignment as the first PDO in the Department's newly-formed Office of Iranian Affairs, where he worked daily with the Department's Press Office, as well as other media organizations, to ensure Department policy messaging on Iran was clear and concise. Prior to working in the Iran Office, Aaron was Watch Officer in the Department's Executive Secretariat Operations Center where he routinely briefed the Secretary of State and other senior department officials. Aaron returned to Washington in 2005 after completing a two-year assignment as a Consular/Political-Economic Officer at the United States Embassy in Ethiopia. Before joining the State Department, Aaron worked in the financial services industry in New York City.

Aaron graduated from Emerson College and Suffolk University Law School. He is currently continuing his study of Arabic at the Foreign Service Institute and will return to Iraq in July 2010 to serve as the Embassy's Deputy Spokesperson in Baghdad.

## THE COLORS OF WARKA: Paintings by Iraqi Women of Muthanna Province

The U.S. Diplomacy Center is honored to present heartfelt paintings by the Iraqi women of Muthanna province. What began as a public diplomacy project captured the voices and aspirations of many of the participating artists for the first time in their lives. To quote Aaron Snipe, the U.S. Public Diplomacy Officer who headed up the project: *"Very few of the women had formal art training. Painting was a hobby for all, a creative outlet for some, and an escape for others."* In organizing the original exhibit, he engaged a demographic within the province that had traditionally been overlooked. In the process a story of courage, respect and empowerment emerged.

*See the exhibit online at <http://diplomacy.state.gov>.*

### United States Diplomacy Center

Dedicated to increasing public awareness of diplomacy and the work of the U.S. Department of State, the U.S. Diplomacy Center produces exhibitions and organizes conferences and educational programs. Currently a visitors center and museum is under development, to be housed at the headquarters of the Department of State in Washington, DC, with interactive exhibits designed to stimulate learning about American diplomacy and help prepare youth for the global challenges of tomorrow.

<http://diplomacy.state.gov>

planning; accountability, anti-corruption and transparency; local government role and authority; NGO and grass-roots outreach; public speaking; campaigning best practices and constituency outreach post-election.

There is a distinct need for training in capacity building for Iraqi women who are either involved in the political process of their nation or are active political leaders at the local and national levels. The conference seeks to address this need at the provincial level, and to provide the participants with tools to strengthen their efforts and leverage their roles as political leaders at the decision making tables when they return to Iraq.

**Samir Sumaidaie** was appointed Iraq's Ambassador to the United States in April 2006. Prior to this appointment, Ambassador Sumaidaie served the government of Iraq in a variety of other capacities. In July 2003 he became a member of the Governing Council (GC). As a member of the GC, he was chairman of the Media Committee where he played an integral role in the founding of the Iraqi Telecoms and Media Commission and the Public Broadcasting Institution. He also held positions on the Security, Finance, and Foreign Relations Committees. In April 2004 he became Minister of the Interior. As Minister of the Interior, Ambassador Sumaidaie was responsible for the management of a domestic security force of over 120,000, and he made considerable progress in reorganizing and modernizing the way the Ministry operated. Most recently, Ambassador Sumaidaie was First Permanent Representative of the New Iraq to the United Nations from July 2004 to April 2006.

Prior to government services Ambassador Sumaidaie was a successful business man. He pioneered the use of computers in Islamic art, completing important works in Saudi Arabia, Pakistan, and the United Kingdom. He worked in the Iraqi Public and Private sector for six years, holding positions at the Baghdad Electricity Board and the Iraqi Petroleum Company. During this time he became one of the first computer professionals in Iraq. In 1973 he went to Europe, where he worked as a consultant before establishing his own business. From 1978 to 2003 Ambassador Sumaidaie succeeded as an entrepreneur, working as a consultant and designer in London and Beijing.

Ambassador Sumaidaie was also active in the resistance to the Baathist regime. He attended many high level opposition conferences throughout the world, and he founded numerous political organizations such as the Association of Iraqi Democrats and the Democratic Party of Iraq. He is widely regarded as an expert on the political climate in Iraq.

Ambassador Sumaidaie holds a degree in Electrical Engineering from Durham University, UK.

**Melanne Vermeer** was appointed by on April 6, 2009 by President Barack Obama as Ambassador-at-Large for Global Women's Issues. The President's decision to create a position of Ambassador-at-Large for Global Women's Issues is unprecedented, and reflects the elevated importance of these issues to the President and his entire

Administration. In her capacity as director of the Department of State's new office on Global Women's Issues, Ambassador Verveer coordinates foreign policy issues and activities relating to the political, economic and social advancement of women around the world. She mobilizes concrete support for women's rights and political and economic empowerment through initiatives and programs designed to increase women's and girls' access to education and health care, to combat violence against women and girls in all its forms, and to ensure that women's rights are fully integrated with human rights in the development of U.S. foreign policy.

Ambassador Verveer most recently served as Chair and Co-CEO of Vital Voices Global Partnership, an international nonprofit she co-founded. Vital Voices invests in emerging women leaders and works to expand women's roles in generating economic opportunity, promoting political participation, and safeguarding human rights. Prior to her work with Vital Voices, Ambassador Verveer served as Assistant to the President and Chief of Staff to the First Lady in the Clinton Administration and was chief assistant to then-First Lady Hillary Clinton in all her wide-ranging international activities to advance women's rights and further social development, democracy and peace-building initiatives. She also led the effort to establish the President's Interagency Council on Women. Prior to her time in the White House, Ambassador Verveer served in a number of leadership roles in public policy organizations and as legislative staff.

Ambassador Verveer has a B.A. and M.A. from Georgetown University. She is a member of the Council on Foreign Relations, Women's Foreign Policy Group, and numerous other organizations.

*Please check <http://www.state.gov/s/gwi/> for more information about the Office of Global Women's Issues.*

#### IRAQI PROVISIONAL COUNCIL MEMBER PARTICIPANTS

##### **Dhiqar Province**

Hamida Ali Jaber

##### **Diyala Province**

Iman Abdulwahhab Mahmood

Nisrin Bahjat Mohammad

##### **Najaf Province**

Jenan Ghani Saeed al-Baghdadi

##### **Maysan Province**

Fatin Akram Khuthair

##### **Salah Ad Din Province**

Ali Fatin Abed al Quader Lateef Abed

##### **Kirkuk Province**

Hala Nooradin

Zhala Nafitchi

Layla Hassan (*\*note: she campaigned for a seat in the recent elections held on March 7th*)

##### **Baghdad Province**

Nawal Sadiq Taqi Al A'araji

Suhair Ghazi Naji Al Jobouri

Mahdiya AbdHassan Shati Al Lami

Dr. Wihda Mahmood Fahad Al Gumaili

##### **Basra Province**

Bushra Zebak

Natiqa Thamir

*Please check <http://diplomacy.state.gov> for biographies of the council members.*

#### IRAQI WOMEN PROVINCIAL COUNCIL LEADERS CONFERENCE

The State Department's Office of Global Women's Issues (S/GWI) is sponsoring a provincial delegation of 15 Iraqi female Provincial Council members representing eight provinces, including Baghdad, Basrah, Diyala, Maysan, Najaf, Salah al-Din, Tameem, and Thi-Qar, on March 13-27, 2010 in Washington, D.C.

All have an influential role in their communities, are strong and active leaders on women's issues, and are active members of provincial committees and/or leaders of non-governmental organizations. Some committee issues include the following: Human Rights, Health and Environment, Public Relations, Women and Children, Public Services, Handicapped, Economic and Essential Services, and Transportation and Communications.

The conference will focus on numerous topics of importance in the political process, such as government management; coalition building; media and advocacy; strategic policy