



**Vision Foundation**  
for Strategic Studies

# **A Roadmap for the Directorates of Correction Facilities in the Kurdistan Region Sulaimaniyah Correction Facility as a Model**

**Sulaimaniyah Correction Facility as a Case Study**

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A bright and prosperous future for the Kurdistan Region and Iraq through researching and studying all problems and crises and finding appropriate solutions. We contribute to the preservation and promotion of our country. As the main mission of our institution, through the presentation of policies, we offer explanations and solutions to planners and decision-making centers in both the Iraqi Federal Government and the Kurdistan Regional Government, as well as to Parliament, public opinion, and the international community.

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The conclusions and recommendations presented in the paper are the opinions of the researchers and do not necessarily represent the views and opinions of the institute.

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# **A Roadmap for the Directorates of Correction Facilities in the Kurdistan Region Sulaimaniyah Correction Facility as a Model**

## **1.Executive Summary**

The challenges facing the directorates of (Gawran ) the major correction facility in Sulaimaniyah are multifaceted and deeply rooted, encompassing infrastructure, security, human resources, healthcare, training, and administration. These challenges directly affect the rights of inmates and the working conditions of correction staff, while also weakening the institution's capacity to carry out its fundamental rehabilitative duties.

The proposed solutions outlined in this plan constitute a comprehensive program for overcoming these crises. Their implementation requires serious coordination and support from all relevant authorities for the Sulaimaniyah Correction Facility to become a model institution capable of playing an effective role in reforming inmate behavior and preparing them for reintegration into society.

This policy presents a comprehensive and phased roadmap for reforming the management system of correction facilities in the Kurdistan Region, in which the “Sulaimaniyah Major Correction Facility” has been designated as a pilot initiative intended to become a successful model that can later be implemented in other institutions across the Region.

Based on evaluations, field visits, statistics from the Kurdistan Regional Government, and comparisons with international standards — particularly the Mandela Rules — it becomes evident that the current system faces major challenges and is in urgent need of balance and reform.

### **Strategic Objectives**

- 1.Preserving security, improving infrastructure, and reducing risks.
- 2.Developing the healthcare system, emergency response, rehabilitation, and both mental and physical health services.
- 3.Addressing labor shortages and strengthening the human capacities of correctional institutions.

The implementation of this roadmap should proceed according to defined phases. It begins with measures capable of producing rapid and visible results, while simultaneously laying the foundation for deep-rooted and long-term reform.

## 2. Introduction

Over recent years, the number of inmates has increased without the necessary expansion of the infrastructure of these facilities. This has created significant pressure, leading to a decline in the provision of essential services and weakening the institutions' ability to comply with international standards and rehabilitate inmates.

Field assessments reveal that the problems are not limited to technical aspects alone but are also linked to decision-making mechanisms and the manner in which institutions are managed. The concentration of authority at the central level, delays in approvals, and the limited authorization for local authority have weakened the effectiveness of this system.

Therefore, this document presents a practical plan that can be implemented within these limited opportunities and constraints, in a manner that identifies priorities and organizes the necessary steps.

## 3. Analysis of the Problems

### 3.1 Security and Infrastructure

The security and infrastructure problems within correction facilities represent an accumulation of systemic risks. This situation has created an environment in which, at any moment, there is the potential for a sudden crisis to emerge.

In reality, the weakness of the infrastructure is not only related to the aging and deterioration of equipment, but also to the absence of a continuous “renovation and maintenance” process. The lack of technical supervision and the absence of a long-term infrastructure management plan have allowed these issues to expand and evolve from mere weaknesses into serious risks.

**The main problems of the Gawran Correction Facility in Sulaimaniyah are:**

- 1. Failure of the firefighting system:** This could lead to a major disaster, particularly given the high inmate population density and the highly sensitive environment.
- 2. Fuel storage:** The method of storing fuel (gas) is improper and unlawful, contrary to safety procedures, and increases the risk of fire outbreaks.
- 3. Collapse of water and sewage networks:** The deterioration of parts of the sewage system has a direct impact on health conditions and environmental sanitation within the prison facility.
- 4. Aging transportation equipment and machinery:** The deterioration and breakdown of vehicles and equipment have caused delays in services and weakened the efficiency of transportation operations.

In general, these problems are linked to “infrastructure safety” and require comprehensive and gradual solutions rather than temporary and superficial measures.

### **3.2 Healthcare and Mental Health Conditions**

Healthcare standards within the Sulaimaniyah (Gawran) Major Correction Facility should be equivalent to international standards and comparable to healthcare centers within society, in order to ensure the provision of essential services to inmates. However, at the present time, these standards are extremely weak and the available capacities are highly limited.

The deficiencies are not limited to shortages of medical equipment and medical staff but also include the absence of organization and clear procedures for responding to emergency situations. This has resulted in delays in carrying out medical duties and increased risks to the lives of inmates.

#### **Main Problems:**

**1.Lack of modern emergency vehicles and a rapid patient transportation network:**

This has resulted in patients not being transferred to medical centers in a timely manner.

**2.Shortage of medicines and medical supplies within the correction facility:** This has had a major negative impact on the level of treatment and healthcare services provided.

**3.Insufficient number of psychiatrists and highly limited visits by mental health specialists:** Psychiatric specialists visit only once a week, whereas mental health disorders inside prisons are significantly more prevalent compared to outside prison environments. This situation may create conditions for the emergence of several internal problems, including:

- 1.Increased violence.
- 2.Psychological instability among inmates.
- 3.Increased risk of suicide.

In summary, the current healthcare system is unable to meet even the basic needs of inmates and therefore requires fundamental and comprehensive reform.

### 3.3 Workforce (Human Resources)

The workforce is one of the principal pillars of correction facility administration. A shortage in the required number of staff leads to the creation of a heavy workload, placing employees under severe pressure and preventing them from carrying out their duties effectively.

At present, there is a significant imbalance between the number of inmates and the number of staff members, particularly among guards and rehabilitation and social specialists. This has resulted in:

1. Weakening of internal supervision.
2. Employees are being subjected to severe psychological and physical pressure.
3. Decline in the quality of services provided.

#### Main Problems:

Due to retirement, resignations, and migration, departing staff are not being replaced:

1. There is a shortage of guards, which has a direct impact on prison security.
2. There is a shortage of specialists in various fields (medical, psychological, legal, social research, and technical fields).
3. There is an absence of continuous training programs for developing skills and professional competence.
4. There is no electronic system or database for inmates.

In general, addressing workforce shortages amid growing demands requires the adoption of an appropriate policy, rather than relying solely on permanent recruitment.

## 4. Solutions

### 4.1 Protection and Infrastructure

#### Main Measures:

1. **Fundamental Modernization of the Firefighting System** in accordance with approved standards, through the installation of modern equipment and continuous testing of the network.
2. **Relocation of Gas Storage Facilities** in accordance with engineering guidelines and standards, while ensuring safe distances away from potential hazards.
3. **Comprehensive Rehabilitation of the Water and Sewage Networks**, rather than relying on temporary fixes and patchwork repairs.

**4. Development of a Solid Rehabilitation Plan** for all categories of inmates, including both drug addicts and other prisoners.

**5. Increasing the Number of Researchers/Social Workers:** Expanding the number of social researchers to achieve balance with the inmate population. Currently, there is only one researcher for every 300 inmates, whereas international standards recommend one researcher for every 20 inmates. Part of this shortage could be addressed through the transfer of staff from other social care departments or through contract-based recruitment, provided their competence and qualifications are approved.

**6. Alternative Sentencing Law:** Efforts should be made toward enacting laws on “alternative sentencing” and “general amnesty” with the aim of reducing prison overcrowding and granting inmates a second chance. These measures should be legally regulated, and those whose cases involve only public rights violations should have their penalties converted into financial penalties and be conditionally released in coordination with correctional institutions.

**7. Legislation for Social Rehabilitation:** In the Kurdistan Region, there is currently no specific law governing the social rehabilitation process other than Correctional System Law No. (1) of 2008. At present, a draft law has been prepared in cooperation with the General Directorate of Corrections and the Ministry of Labor and Social Affairs, which may be submitted by the Council of Ministers to Parliament.

**8. Mandela Standards:** Reactivating the central inspection committee in accordance with international standards (the Mandela Rules) to ensure the protection of human rights.

**9. Special pardons:** Continuing the procedures for granting special pardons to inmates suffering from chronic illnesses or disabilities, in coordination with the relevant departments of the correctional institutions.

**10. Classification of inmates according to standards:** Inmates should be separated in such a way that drug traffickers are not housed together with drug users, and classification should also be based on behavior and risk level.

**11. Categorization of inmates within correction facilities** is legally based on the type of offense and age group. However, this classification system has not been properly implemented because the correctional facilities in Erbil, Sulaymaniyah, and Duhok were originally designed to accommodate only 900 inmates, while the current numbers far exceed this capacity. For example: Erbil: 2,072 inmates , Sulaimaniyah: more than 1,500 inmates , Duhok: similarly overcrowded according to standards, each hall should contain 8–9 inmates, but currently more than 30 inmates are being housed in each hall.

12. **Similarly, women's and juvenile correction facilities:** Although plans had been approved for constructing dedicated buildings for them, the projects were suspended due to the financial crisis. Fundamentally, the current buildings are unsuitable for correctional purposes and cannot effectively support rehabilitation programs.

### **Implementation Framework:**

To ensure that this strategy does not remain merely theoretical, we propose the following mechanisms:

- **Establishment of a Correction Reform Board** composed jointly of prison administration officials, engineers, judges, healthcare specialists, sociologists, police, security agencies, and non-governmental organizations to supervise implementation.
- **Inter-agency cooperation:** A formal memorandum of understanding should be established between the Health Directorate, the police, security agencies, and the Directorate of Social Affairs for the sharing of resources (including staff transfers and medical support).
- As proposed, immediate workshops should be conducted with judges, engineers, and social researchers in order to implement the plans effectively.
- **Partnership with NGOs and the private sector:** Utilizing non-governmental organizations to address gaps in training and budgetary limitations, particularly in the areas of rehabilitation and social services.

## **5. Reform Approaches**

### **5.1 Decentralization of Authority**

- **Decentralization in decision-making:** Proposing a framework for granting greater authority, including financial and administrative powers, to the Governorate/Directorate of Sulaimaniyah in order to handle emergency maintenance and procurement matters without waiting for approval from the central ministry.
- This step would enable rapid responses to urgent needs and reduce administrative routine and bureaucracy. For this purpose, it is proposed that an internal supervisory committee be established with financial and administrative authority to implement strategic initiatives.
- **Review of regulations and instructions:** Unifying all currently applied directives and drafting new regulations for dealing with matters such as (family visits, violent inmates, hunger strikes, and emergency plans).

## 5.2 Transparency and Accountability

- **Financial management and transparency:** Adopting a robust financial system to ensure transparency and accountability in the expenditure of budgets and allocated financial resources.
- **Auditing and evaluation:** Conducting periodic audits and continuous performance reviews to monitor the stages of plan implementation and ensure the proper use of resources.
- **International coordination and partnerships:** Strengthening relations and partnerships with non-governmental organizations (NGOs), international agencies, and the private sector for the purpose of securing supportive funding, technical assistance, and expertise exchange, particularly in the fields of rehabilitation and staff training.
- **Service portal and surveys:** Reviewing services within the framework of the government's "Service Portal" and conducting periodic surveys among inmates (beneficiaries) in order to assess their level of satisfaction.

## 6. Recommendations

- **Conducting Focus Group meetings:** Organizing a specialized meeting with the participation of judges, social researchers, engineers (technical, electrical, and civil), representatives of the police and security agencies, professional organizations, and experts in healthcare and combating narcotic substances.
- **Formation of a Strategic Committee:** Establishing a joint committee with the participation of representatives from the correctional institutions for the purpose of thoroughly reviewing deficiencies and formulating a comprehensive strategy to identify appropriate solutions within a defined timeline.
- **Reorganization of administrative staffing:** Reviewing the staffing structure of the social affairs administration and transferring a necessary number of researchers and employees to the correctional administration in order to fill existing needs.

## 7. Implementation Framework

To ensure that this strategy does not remain merely theoretical, we propose the following mechanisms:

- **Formation of a Correctional Reform Board** composed jointly of prison administrators, engineers, judges, healthcare specialists, sociologists, police, and security agencies to supervise implementation.
- **Inter-agency cooperation:** A formal memorandum of understanding should be established between the Health Directorate, the police and security agencies, and the Directorate of Social Affairs for the sharing of resources (including staff transfers and medical support).
- **As previously proposed, immediate workshops** should be conducted with judges, engineers, and social researchers in order to address and finalize technical requirements.
- **Partnership with NGOs and the private sector:** Utilizing non-governmental organizations to fill gaps in training and budgeting, particularly in the sectors of rehabilitation and social work.

### Inter-Agency Cooperation

- **Institutional coordination:** Establishing a formal mechanism for cooperation with organizations and social care institutions in order to benefit from their expertise and resources. This would be achieved through joint training programs, collaborative case management, and unified efforts to achieve the best outcomes.
- **Training and Development Center:** Establishing a dedicated center for correctional staff to prepare specialized and qualified professional personnel.
- **Scientific and academic partnerships:** Signing memoranda of understanding with universities to provide educational courses for inmates and to publish the scientific research of correctional researchers in accredited academic journals.
- **Conferences and research:** Organizing annual conferences and conducting field research on the causes of rising crime rates in the Kurdistan Region, and presenting the findings to decision-makers.
- **Identifying markets for products manufactured by inmates.**

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