

التيار الديمقراطي العراقي في المملكة المتحدة

IRAQI DEMOCRATIC MOVEMENT

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An Update on Iraq

These are dangerous and critical times for Iraq and the Iraqi people. The very existence of our country and the fate of its people are at risk. This is not an overstatement or radical rhetoric; our people and country are being torn apart by a multitude of threats and menaces. There is a severe political, social and economic crisis as well as the security threat of terrorism in the shape of Daesh (ISIS) and other armed groups. These are really desperate times for Iraq.

Thirteen years ago, the tyrannical regime of Saddam was removed by a military campaign led by the US and UK. Ordinary Iraqis did not have a say in that war but they definitely suffered the consequences and had to live with the outcomes.

Iraqis were watching those calamitous events in 2003 with a mixture of feelings of hope and fear – hope for a better life in a free and peaceful new Iraq were mixed with fear of armed and social conflicts, fear of the unknown and a deep mistrust of international and regional powers who were each claiming a stake in this devastated country.

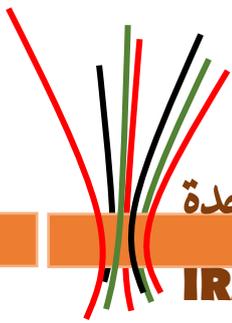
We are sorry to say our fears proved to be real and justified, whilst our hopes drifted away under the heavy shadows of new realities.

The new reality created by the victors, was, and still is, a political system and government based on sectarian and ethnic power-sharing. This scandalous power-sharing system is the root cause of the current crisis in Iraq; it has been a fertile breeding ground of corruption, and a tool for the extensive abuse of power.

April 2003 was a lost opportunity to build a democratic government in Iraq for the benefit of its people. The lost opportunity cost Iraq hundreds of thousands of lives, many hundreds of billions of dollars and untold anguish and suffering along the way.

In today's Iraq, the dominant political, sectarian and ethnic blocks and parties are continuously fighting and vying for a bigger share of the cake. International and regional powers are conducting their wars by proxy, exploiting and manoeuvring along ethnic, religious and sectarian fault lines. These fault lines were also exploited by terrorist groups and factions, of which Daesh is the most dangerous as they have managed to gain control of large areas and several cities and towns across the west and northwest regions.

In Kurdistan, the self-governing region in Northern Iraq, there is a similar crisis. The combined effects of a political stand-off between power-sharing partners, a serious tension with the central government in Baghdad and the fall of oil revenues as well as the



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threats of Daesh have had severe effects on ordinary people in the region and their standards of living.

Suffering and grief are shared across the whole of the country; it seems that these are the only fairly distributed commodities in Iraq.

Over the past 13 years, the Iraqi government has been weak, ineffective and divided. There have been no efforts to establish a real separation of powers, which has resulted in all branches of the government being flawed and overwhelmed by corruption and the abuse of power.

The United Nations Assistance Mission for Iraq (UNAMI) counts thousands of casualties every month; the latest figures for March were 1119 killed and 1561 wounded. The majority of these casualties are civilians. The figures for this month are likely to be much higher particularly given the events in the last few days with a number of terrorist attacks causing hundreds more casualties.

This is truly a gloomy picture of Iraq today but Iraqis are proud and strong-spirited people; they are not giving up their dreams and aspirations in the face of murky politics and corrupt politicians – they are fighting back and they are demanding change!

For the past 9 months, weekly demonstrations have continued to demand an end to corruption and the establishment of a non-sectarian government.

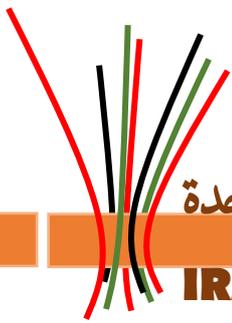
Students in most universities are demanding changes to the higher education administration and policies. Workers are demanding fairer wages and the improvement of living and working conditions. Trade unions and professional bodies support and actively participate in the mass protests.

The Iraqi Democratic Movement (IDM) and its supporters are at the forefront of these civil protests and demonstrations throughout Iraq, and will continue to do so until their demands are met.

Since its establishment in 2011, the IDM sought to bring together all who aspire to build a new democratic modern Iraq and has been fighting for an alternative to the sinister and incompetent government of sectarian and ethnic power-sharing.

The IDM alternative is a democratic civil and secular state, which upholds the law, respects human rights, protects ethnic and religious diversity and works towards social justice.

During recent months, the rolling parties and the three heads of Parliament, Republic & Government wasted many opportunities to introduce an alternative to the quota system,



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on the basis of equality, social justice and citizenship. An alternative built on competence and integrity in selecting ministers and key public appointments, away from the sectarian-ethnic quota system, in order to initiate the changes demanded by the people and comprehensive reforms in all parts of the state.

The events of 30th April, when mass protests breached the Green zone gates in Baghdad and entered the parliament chamber were a sign of the growing popular anger and despair at the delays and manoeuvring tactics of the ruling parties. These events were a reflection of the failure of the ruling political class and its attempts to hold on to the privileges they had won through the sectarian-ethnic quotas.

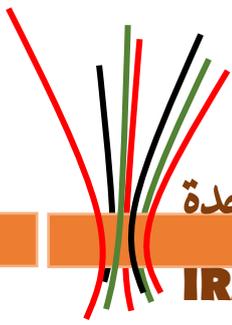
The Iraqi Democratic Movement has disapproved of the attacks on some members of parliament and the parliament chamber but we are in full support of the just demands of the popular protests against corruption and for an end to the sectarian-ethnic power-sharing system.

The storming of the parliament building on 30th April 2016 has been used as a pretext to paralyse the parliament and renege on the promises to install a new government with competent ministers, which is free of corruption and not based on the quota system. This should be a first step in a comprehensive programme of reforms. The IDM has therefore called for intensifying popular pressure to reconvene the parliament in order to endorse the political reforms as demanded by the popular protests.

IDM rejects and condemns the unconstitutional acts of the security forces in detaining and intimidating peaceful protesters and activists and we demand the release of all detainees and an end to such acts.

During recent days there has been a terrible escalation of terrorist attacks in many Iraqi cities and hundreds of people have been killed or injured.

IDM condemns these terrorist acts and points to the fact that these murderous and cowardly acts are also a sign of the government's failure in its duties to protect and defend the Iraqi people.



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Call for action

We need your help to;

- Maintain pressure on the Iraqi government, and the European and international community, to achieve democratic change in Iraq.
- Support the fight of the Iraqi people for a truly democratic non-sectarian state and publicise their struggle in the media.
- Defend human and civil rights and protect the diversity in Iraqi society and culture.
- Publicise the plight and needs of the millions of displaced people and communities.
- Maintain strong ties with the Iraqi Democratic Movement to further its aims and objectives.