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Provincial Council Election and Its Meanings



By | *Dr. Salar Othman*

Democracy, as both a system and form of governance, has become an imperative driven by people's insistence. It has demonstrated compatibility with human nature and society, standing out as the most suitable solution globally to blend disparate elements and reconcile differences, creating the beautiful tapestry essential for humanity's diverse civilizations.

This rings particularly true for multicultural societies with no viable alternative but to embrace democracy and its principles. Any alternative path would inevitably impede the evolutionary progress of a community.

The cornerstone for implementing a democratic system lies in free and fair elections. These elections empower people and political parties to engage in politics freely, fostering an environment of equal opportunity. The subsequent acceptance of results reflects a commitment to democratic ideals.

From the outset, the Kurdish region committed to establishing its first government cabinet in a challenging local and regional context, emphasizing a profound belief in democracy's spirit. This commitment manifests in the democratic system and the ballot box as tools to resolve political conflicts with a civic spirit, rooted in a deep-seated appreciation for diversity, tolerance, peaceful power transitions, citizenship,

and the importance of citizens' voices.

As the campaign for provincial council elections gains momentum, each participating party articulates its vision, contributing to the vibrant tapestry of Iraq and Kurdistan. It is a tapestry we collectively need, one that belongs to everyone and requires our concerted efforts to enhance its richness.

The Kurdistan Democratic Party (KDP) enters this election with the number 197 list and the slogan "Coexistence, Mutual Acceptance." Examining these concepts within the KDP's slogan reveals a commitment to peaceful coexistence and politics, extending to the electoral process. The party remains steadfast in prioritizing peaceful existence, eschewing thoughts of war and tension. When it comes to defending Kurdistan, it stands as a dedicated and genuine protector, with its martyrs serving as a poignant testament to this dedication.

Our aspiration is for the provincial council elections to unfold peacefully, civilly, and democratically, particularly at the media level. We encourage voters to consider the 197 list, a testament to coexistence and mutual acceptance. This list has demonstrated stability, peace, coexistence, and a commitment to building values it will persist in upholding.

May these elections be marked by success, contributing to a brighter future for all.

Escalating Tensions: Multiple Attacks Near Erbil Border Target U.S. Bases



U.S. State Department Addresses Attacks on Kurdistan Bases, Engages with Iraqi Government for Accountability

Recent assaults on United States military bases in the Kurdistan Region have caused the State Department of the United States to express alarm. Vident Patel, the deputy spokesperson for the State Department, claimed that these assaults are now being discussed with the government of Iraq in order to secure responsibility for those accountable.

Anthony Blinken, the Secretary of State for the United States, traveled to Baghdad on November 5, 2023, and while there, he held productive conversations with Iraqi Prime Minister Mohammed Shia Al-Sudani discussing the current state of affairs.

In the most recent two weeks, there have been many assaults recorded close to the U.S. military bases in Erbil Governorate, according to a senior official with the Kurdistan Regional Government who spoke on the condition of anonymity. To our great relief, there have been no reports of any fatalities.

On November 6, 2023, the Pentagon announced that the outlawed armed groups in Syria and Iraq have targeted American military bases in

Iraq and Syria approximately 40 times since the initial conflict between the Israeli and Palestinian groups on October 7, 2023.

Regarding the efforts being made to handle the situation in Gaza, the Deputy Spokesman for the Department of State emphasized the need to increase the number of humanitarian supplies being provided, making it easier for Hamas to release captives they are holding, and preventing Hamas from regrouping and carrying out more assaults.

A senior official from the KRG has indicated that there is no foundation for the story that there was an assault on Harir's base and that there was no such incident that took place. This official also added that the allegation of an attack on Harir has been disputed. In addition to this, an Iraqi armed organization known as "Islamic Resistance in Iraq" had previously said that they were responsible for the purported assault.

According to the Kurdistan Counter-Terrorism Page, there were reportedly three explosions that occurred near the military base of

the international coalition against ISIS in Erbil at separate intervals. These explosions took place at different periods. In the meanwhile, a high-ranking official from the Kurdistan Regional Government (KRG) said that there had been many instances of a similar kind over the course of the previous two weeks, with the targets most likely being American military installations.

It is important to highlight the fact that U.S. troops continue to operate inside the Kurdistan Region as part of the international coalition against ISIS, having been invited to do so by the Iraqi government.

On October 7, 2023, when fighting between the Israeli army and armed groups in the Gaza Strip began, tensions in the area began to rise. These tensions have continued to rise ever since. The United States Department of Defence (DoD) revealed on November 6, 2023, that since October 17, they had been the target of 38 separate attacks in Iraq and Syria, which resulted in at least 45 injured troops and workers.

Kurdish Leadership and Iraqi Premier Unite in Diplomatic Endeavor, Navigating Regional Complexities

Diplomatic Unity: Kurdish and Iraqi Leaders Forge Collaborative Solutions, Tackling Regional Challenges for Sustainable Stability and Peaceful Coexistence

In a pivotal diplomatic rendezvous, Kurdish leadership including President Masoud Barzani, Kurdistan Regional President Nechirvan Barzani and Kurdistan Regional Government Prime Minister Masrour Barzani, and Iraqi Prime Minister Mohammed Shia Sudani tackled the complexities of regional geopolitics, forging a path toward stability. The discussions, which spanned critical political landscapes and fortified ties between the Federal Government of Iraq and the Kurdistan Regional Government, transcended local concerns to address broader regional dynamics.

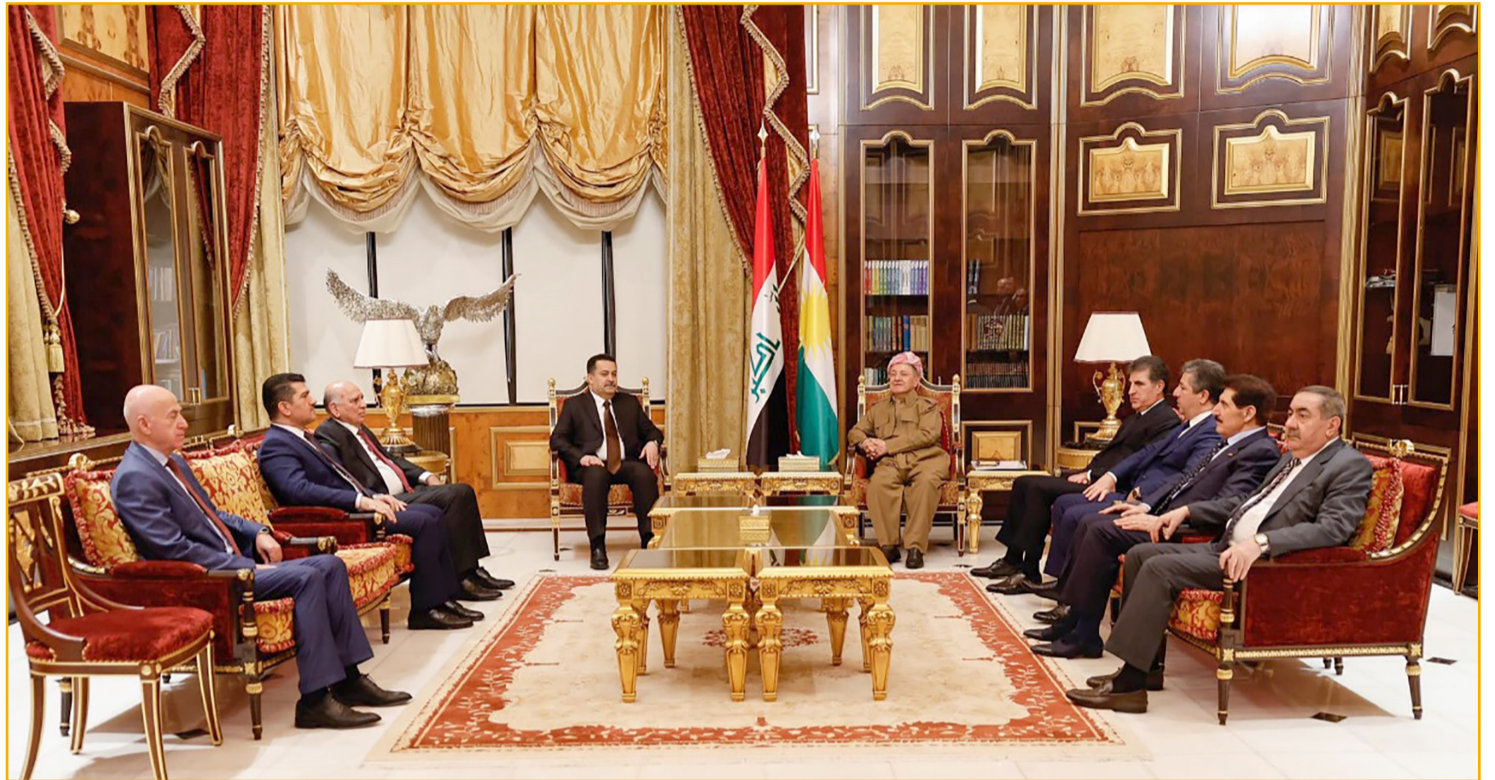
The leaders confronted escalating violence, strategized on delivering humanitarian aid to Gaza, and delved into the multifaceted challenges threatening the stability of Iraq and the broader Middle East. This diplomatic foray, marked by unity and cooperation, underscores the commitment to navigate regional complexities and work towards a sustainable and harmonious future for Iraq and its neighbors.

President Masoud Barzani and Prime Minister Mohammed Shia emerged from their meeting with valuable insights. Barzani's headquarters issued a statement on Thursday, November 9, 2023, asserting that the discussions delved into the prevailing tensions and events in the region, the ongoing challenges faced by the Palestinian people, and strategies for delivering humanitarian aid to Gaza.

The meeting, attended by Kurdistan Regional President Nechirvan Barzani, Prime Minister Masrour Barzani, and members of the Political Bureau of the Kurdistan Democratic Party (KDP), focused on "exchanging ideas about the political situation in Iraq and the relations between the Federal Government of Iraq and the Kurdistan Regional Government."

The statement highlighted the need to address the challenges and risks threatening the stability of Iraq and the broader region. It underscored the significance of navigating the complexities of the Iraq-Kurdistan relationship.

On the same day, an unannounced delegation headed by PM Sudani arrived in Erbil. Prime Minister Masrour Barzani welcomed the delegation, and discussions ensued at both the national and regional levels. The talks encompassed the implementation of the government's agenda, the latest security and



political developments, and the dire situation in Gaza, where the Palestinian people face adversity.

Notably, this visit follows Prime Minister Mohammed Shia's recent trip to Tehran on Monday, November 6, 2023, where discussions centered on bilateral ties and the escalating tensions in the Middle East, particularly the conflict between Israel and the Armed Forces of Gaza. Iraqi state media reported that the Sudani delegation's visit was part of Iraq's broader efforts to halt the Israeli assault on Palestine, coinciding with the recent visit of United States Secretary of State Anthony Blinken to Baghdad.

It's worth mentioning that PM Sudani has made three visits to Erbil since assuming office, with this latest trip marking his third visit to the capital of the Kurdistan Region.

A Diplomatic Endeavor: Kurdistan Regional President and Iraqi Prime Minister Delve into Regional Affairs

In a strategic move, Kurdistan Regional President Nechirvan Barzani took the lead in engaging with Iraqi Prime Minister Mohammed Shia Sudani, as the two leaders navigated through critical political landscapes and fortified ties between the Federal Government of Iraq and the Kurdistan Regional Government.

The agenda transcended local concerns, delving into the broader spectrum of regional

dynamics. Notably, the leaders addressed the pressing issues of escalating violence, as reported by various media outlets. The discourse extended to the poignant plight of the Palestinian people, contemplating effective strategies for delivering humanitarian aid to Gaza. Furthermore, the discussions underscored the multifaceted challenges and imminent threats that pose a risk to the stability of both Iraq and the region at large.

Against the backdrop of this diplomatic rendezvous, attention was drawn to the ongoing protests and demonstrations unfolding in several cities, showcasing the pulse of the people. Simultaneously, international solidarity in support of the Palestinian cause took center stage in the talks, highlighting the global concern for justice and peace in the region.

This diplomatic foray comes at a critical juncture, echoing the commitment of leaders to navigate the complexities of regional geopolitics and work towards a sustainable and harmonious future for Iraq and its neighboring nations.

In an interview with Kurdish media on Tuesday, November 10, 2023, Dilshad Shahab, the spokesperson for the Kurdistan Regional Presidency, shed light on the recent meeting between top Kurdish leaders and Iraqi PM Sudani. The discussions centered on crucial issues, including the socio-economic progress of the region and the implementation of the Kurdistan Region's election.

He highlighted the significance of the meeting, emphasizing the unity and further cooperation between the Federal government and the KRG. The convergence of views between the leadership of the Kurdistan Region and the Iraqi government is seen as vital to overcoming challenges in the region and fostering cooperation.

Shahab also touched upon the broader aspects of the Kurdistan Region's socio-economic development, the execution of strategic elections, and the collaborative efforts to ensure the security and stability of the Kurdistan Region and Iraq. The meeting marked a significant step toward addressing the ongoing regional concerns and building a common ground for mutual understanding.

Additionally, Sudani's trip to Tehran on November 6, 2023, marked a significant diplomatic move. The Iraqi Prime Minister engaged in formal discussions with Iranian officials, focusing on bilateral relations and addressing regional issues.

This diplomatic outreach underscores the commitment of the Kurdistan Regional Government and the Iraqi central government to address shared challenges and promote stability in the broader Middle East region.

PM Sudani's media office released a statement on the meetings with the top Kurdish leaders saying: "Today, Thursday evening, we met with the President of the Kurdistan Democratic Party, Masoud Barzani, at the Salah al-Din resort in the Erbil

province of the Kurdistan region of Iraq.

It added: "We exchanged views and discussed general national issues, closely followed the implementation of the government program, and delved into the latest security and political developments in the region. Additionally, we addressed the tragic events in the Gaza Strip and the Zionist aggression against the Palestinian people."

Sudani's office also added: "During our meeting, we had the opportunity to engage with the President of the Kurdistan Region of Iraq, Nechirvan Barzani, in Erbil. We deliberated on a range of financial and political issues at the national level, emphasizing the need for coordinated efforts to support the government in implementing its program. The program aims to enhance services and improve the economic and living conditions throughout Iraq."

It went on to say: "Our discussions also touched upon the upcoming parliamentary elections in the Kurdistan Region of Iraq, scheduled for next February. We underscored the importance of supporting the efforts of the Independent High Electoral Commission to ensure fair and responsive elections that meet the aspirations of the region's citizens."

It concluded by saying: "Throughout the meeting, we explored various security and economic aspects, addressing the challenges associated with strengthening stability and sustainability."

Kurdistan Regional President Extends Invitation to President Macron for Kurdistan Region Visit

Regional Stability at the Forefront: Kurdistan Regional President Barzani's Diplomatic Endeavors in Paris Echo Commitment to Peace

KRP Nechirvan Barzani expressed his deep satisfaction with the fruitful meeting held with President Emmanuel Macron in Paris. The Kurdistan Regional President highlighted the commitment of President Macron to visit Iraq, which encompasses a visit to the Kurdistan Region as well. Their discussions encompassed a wide range of critical topics including matters of mutual interest in Erbil and Baghdad, regional geopolitical dynamics, and various other pertinent issues.

Furthermore, KRP Nechirvan Barzani reiterated the collective dedication to uphold the democratic process, underlining that there is no intent to deviate from the established election schedule. He firmly emphasized the obligation of all political entities to adhere strictly to the electoral timeline, reassuring that any speculation of postponement is unfounded. The Kurdistan Regional President also disclosed that forthcoming deliberations are planned with the PUK to ensure electoral procedures proceed smoothly.

With regard to the critical matter of oil exports, KRP Nechirvan Barzani elucidated that while Turkey has demonstrated its willingness to facilitate exportation, the ultimate resolution lies within the corridors of power in Baghdad. He underlined the need for a series of essential measures and mutual understanding to be reached. It was further clarified that the issue at hand does not reside within the purview of France, though President Macron's involvement could prove instrumental in jumpstarting the process of oil exports.

Turning attention to the pressing issue of salaries for Kurdistan Region employees, KRP Nechirvan Barzani underscored that the Kurdistan Regional Government has meticulously fulfilled its financial obligations. He urged Baghdad to ensure the timely disbursement of salaries, stressing that there exists no justifiable rationale for any delay in this regard.

Regarding the security situation, KRP Nechirvan Barzani said: "The Kurdistan Region's entity is not under threat. However, the current situation in Iraq is concerning. Some forces sending drones towards Erbil and Al-Assad, in our view, does not benefit Iraq in any way. We firmly believe that every effort should be made to ensure that Iraq remains uninvolved in these challenges. The situation in Iraq is highly sensitive. It is imperative for Iraq to maintain neutrality and seek a peaceful resolution to this issue."

KRP Nechirvan Barzani also extended his gratitude for France's unwavering support to both Iraq and the Kurdistan Region. He spotlighted France's pivotal role in the protracted fight against ISIS, demonstrating steadfast political support throughout various crucial junctures.

Question and Answer Session:

Q: Could you elaborate on any agreements reached during your discussions with President Macron concerning Erbil-Baghdad relations and broader regional issues?

A: KRP Nechirvan Barzani emphasized that the scope of their deliberations transcended the confines of Iraq, encapsulating broader regional dynamics that have an indelible impact on both Iraq and the Kurdistan Region. The central theme of their discussion was the imperative for Erbil and Baghdad to bridge their differences through constructive dialogue and a shared understanding.

Q: What is the current status of oil exports from Kurdistan? Is there an imminent breakthrough, or is Baghdad likely to impede progress?

A: The primary bottleneck lies within the realm of Baghdad, notwithstanding Turkey's expressed readiness to facilitate exports. KRP Nechirvan Barzani meticulously outlined the technical considerations, including contractual distinctions and budgetary allocations, that necessitate resolution. He underlined that the matter is not rooted

in political intricacies but rather demands a pragmatic solution to be jointly forged between the Kurdistan Region and Baghdad.

KRP Nechirvan Barzani stressed that the delays in oil exports have cast a shadow on Iraq as a whole, with potential losses amounting to a staggering sum exceeding \$5 billion.

Q: Given the escalating tensions in the Middle East, what is the Kurdistan Region's stance on regional conflicts and its role in potential resolutions?

A: KRP Nechirvan Barzani reiterated the paramount importance of safeguarding Iraq from being drawn into the vortex of regional conflicts. He issued a call to the Iraqi Prime Minister, urging him to exert his authority as commander-in-chief of the armed forces. The President called for an immediate ceasefire, advocating for the expeditious delivery of humanitarian aid to Gaza. He emphasized that a sustainable, long-term solution must be crafted to alleviate the prevailing crisis.

In a recent interview with Channel 8, KRP Nechirvan Barzani discussed the pressing concerns surrounding the Nujaba forces of the Hashd al-Shaabi popular mobilization forces and their potential threats towards Israel. The President also shed light on the security agreement between Iraq and Iran, specifically focusing on its implications for the opposition forces of Iranian Kurdistan. Additionally, KRP Barzani addressed the Kurdistan Region's role in this agreement. Our position, the President said, remains unaltered. There is a strong determination to prevent Iraq from becoming entangled in these issues. Despite the absence of any official statements from the Nujaba movement, it is anticipated that the prime minister, in his capacity as the commander-in-chief of the armed forces, will carry out his duties. The primary goal is to aid the Iraqi prime minister in preventing any potential issues for the nation. As previously stated, it is imperative to find a comprehensive solution that



addresses the issue at hand in the short, medium, and long term. Calls for Immediate Ceasefire and Urgent Humanitarian Aid to Gaza. The ongoing situation in Gaza has raised concerns, as many believe that the current state of affairs is unjust. It is widely believed that, in light of the aid that has been extended, it is imperative to work towards a peaceful resolution in the foreseeable future.

In the realm of international relations, it is crucial to highlight the existence of a security agreement between Iraq and Iran, encompassing the Kurdistan Region as well. The parties involved express their unwavering dedication to the agreement, emphasizing the importance of ensuring that Iraq and the Kurdistan Region do not contribute to regional instability or pose challenges for neighboring nations. The Kurdistan Region firmly declares its commitment to not providing sanctuary for any armed group that aims to disrupt neighboring nations and subsequently seeks refuge within our borders. The Kurdish opposition forces in Iran have demonstrated a profound understanding of the complex dynamics in the Kurdistan Region and have provided significant support in response. The party expresses unwavering determination to uphold the agreement, emphasizing the necessity of its faithful im-

plementation in accordance with the original terms.

In conclusion, the meeting between KRP Nechirvan Barzani and President Emmanuel Macron at the Elysee Palace was marked by substantive discussions, encompassing critical issues pertaining to Iraq and the Kurdistan Region. Both leaders reiterated their unwavering commitment to preserving stability in Iraq, a particularly challenging endeavor given the intricate regional landscape. They pledged to continue the constructive dialogue aimed at resolving the pressing Erbil-Baghdad crisis.

KRP Nechirvan Barzani expressed heartfelt gratitude for France's longstanding support, underscoring the profound historical ties and shared dedication to peace, stability, and progress. The President's visit to the Elysee Palace holds symbolic significance, signifying the ongoing efforts to recalibrate historical narratives in light of France's influential role on the global stage.

As observers scrutinize the complex political situation in the Middle East, it is evident that any escalation between Israel and Hamas carries the potential to profoundly reshape the political and security agenda in the region. The United States has articulated its determination to avert the transformation of this conflict into a wider regional

conflagration.

"The importance of the visit of the President of the Kurdistan Region to the Elysee Palace is that now history will be reconstructed and rewritten, and France is an influential force in the world and wants the Kurds to participate in the process," Adil Bakhavan, director of the French Centre for Iraqi Research, said.

"The preparations for this meeting have been underway for two months. It's noteworthy that this is the only visit on the French president's agenda for this month that hasn't been canceled. This underscores Macron's significant engagement with current developments. It clearly indicates France's keen interest and concern for the Kurdish cause," he emphasized.

The establishment of relations between the Kurdistan Region and France traces back to 1991, amidst the Kurdish uprising. Notably, Daniel Mitran, the spouse of François Mitran, the president of France, played a pivotal role on both personal and diplomatic fronts in securing a safe haven and a no-fly zone in the Kurdistan Region.

In 2017, following the events of October 16, France took a prominent stance in dismantling the barriers that hindered progress in the Kurdistan Region.

PM Masrour Barzani Advocates for Educational Excellence

PM Barzani envisioned a resilient and innovative future for Kurdistan, with an unwavering commitment to progress and strength.

Empowering Minds: Duhok University's 28th Commencement Celebrates Intellectual Growth and Academic Excellence

In a landmark address at the 28th graduation ceremony of Duhok University, The Kurdistan Regional Government (KRG) Prime Minister Masrour Barzani underscored the profound impact of educational institutions on the intellectual and patriotic fabric of Kurdistan. The event marked a testament to the collective achievements of graduates, their families, and the dedicated educators who guided them.

Duhok University, Prime Minister Barzani noted, had emerged resiliently under arduous circumstances. Through the unwavering dedication of its faculty, it has evolved into a vanguard of higher education in Kurdistan. Notably, many of its alumni have assumed pivotal roles across diverse sectors, contributing significantly to the region's progress.

Universities, PM Barzani asserted, bear an ardent responsibility in steering the nation's course. Beyond imparting knowledge, they serve as crucibles for innovative research and ideas, thus forming the intellectual bedrock of a dynamic and modern society.

The Prime Minister also contended that by fostering mutual understanding, equality, and justice, the region possesses a wealth of human potential. Effectively harnessed, this human capital could position the Middle East as a global epicenter of progress and prosperity.

Turning to the critical matter of relations between Erbil and Baghdad, Prime Minister Barzani reiterated the steadfast

commitment of the Kurdistan Regional Government to upholding the constitutional rights of its populace. He expressed optimism for reciprocal efforts from the federal government to honor these rights and ensure equitable treatment.

While acknowledging the financial hardships faced by many in Kurdistan, particularly the delay in salary disbursements, Prime Minister Barzani praised the indomitable spirit of the region's inhabitants. He affirmed that these challenges only serve to galvanize their resolve in asserting constitutional entitlements, with a fervent call for fairness and harmonious coexistence.

Prime Minister Barzani also issued a prescient warning against succumbing to external pressures or falling prey to misinformation campaigns. He urged citizens, particularly educators and students, to remain vigilant in their pursuit of national consciousness and unity, safeguarding against divisive influences.

In a determined declaration, Prime Minister Barzani affirmed, "No matter how formidable the obstacles, we will forge new pathways forward." He envisaged a future for Kurdistan marked by resilience and ingenuity, where the collective commitment to building a stronger and more advanced Kurdistan remains unwavering.

Peering into the horizon, Prime Minister Barzani emphasized the imperative of cultivating expertise in pivotal sectors such as banking, artificial intelligence, agriculture, and technology. He underscored that a thriving Kurdistan demands a diversified skill set and an intensified focus on economic development.

In an ever-changing global landscape, Prime



Minister Barzani urged universities to recalibrate their role as crucibles of progress. He called for a heightened emphasis on research and development, aligning curricula with the demands of a rapidly evolving job market. By nurturing a culture of innovation, these institutions can foster a new generation of leaders equipped to meet the challenges of a dynamic world.

Moreover, Prime Minister Barzani highlighted the importance of international collaborations and partnerships in bolstering Kurdistan's educational ecosystem. By fostering institutions worldwide, Kurdish universities can tap into a global pool of knowledge and expertise, enhancing the quality and relevance of education offered to students.

As the address drew to a close, Prime Minister Barzani left the audience with a resonant message of hope and determination. He reiterated his confidence in the potential of Kurdistan, firmly asserting that the region's future rests in the capable hands of its citizens, educators, and students alike. The pursuit of excellence in education, he affirmed, is the cornerstone of a prosperous and resilient Kurdistan.

The auspicious occasion of the 28th commencement ceremony at Duhok University witnessed the

presence of distinguished figures, including PM Masrour Barzani. Against this backdrop, the President of Duhok University emphasized the institution's pivotal role in nurturing students' growth and fostering an environment conducive to intellectual and academic maturation.

With conviction, he asserted, "Duhok University stands as a crucible for developing students, sculpting not only their academic acumen but also their intellectual identities."

He further expounded on the transformative journey that awaits the graduates upon their departure from the university's hallowed halls. Acknowledging the formidable challenges that lie ahead, he remained resolute in his belief that these scholars possess the mettle to surmount any obstacle and emerge triumphant.

In a visionary address, Dawoud Sulaiman Atrushi underscored the inexorable march of progress that characterizes our global landscape. He expressed optimism that the graduates would adeptly navigate this dynamic terrain, leveraging newfound knowledge to shape a future replete with opportunities.

The President of Duhok University expounded upon the institution's unflagging commitment to continuous enhancement and innovation. It is a bastion of learning cease-

lessly striving to cultivate an educational milieu that empowers students and instills unwavering trust in the curriculum.

Moreover, he commended the indefatigable efforts of the President of the Kurdistan Regional Government in advancing the educational enterprise, consistently affording paramount attention to educational centers.

Governor Ali Tatar Commends Duhok University's Educational Renaissance and Expanding Academic Landscape

Governor Ali Tatar of Duhok delivered a poignant address at the 28th commencement ceremony of Duhok University, highlighting the pivotal role of the institution as a testament to the achievements borne from the 1991 Uprising of the People of Kurdistan. He underscored the profound progress witnessed over the years, now boasting seven universities across the province, significantly augmenting the educational landscape and opportunities for students.

Moreover, Governor Tatar lauded the establishment of Akre University, a milestone achieved with the resolute approval of Prime Minister Masrour Barzani. This, he emphasized, stands as a testament to the Kurdistan Regional Government's steadfast commitment to advancing education, particularly under the auspices of the ninth cab-

inet. Duhok, in this light, proudly claims its seventh university, an emblem of educational prowess within its borders.

Governor Ali Tatar fervently extolled the Kurdistan Regional Government's unwavering dedication to the realm of education, with a pronounced emphasis on higher learning. This vision extends beyond mere university establishments, encompassing a formidable network of 24 institutes across Duhok. These institutes stand as bastions of knowledge, collectively nurturing the intellects of thousands of students, thereby contributing significantly to the realm of academic inquiry and enlightenment.

The annals of Duhok University bear testament to a legacy that commenced on November 31st, 1992. Over the course of 31 illustrious years, the institution has burgeoned to encompass 20 colleges and a staggering 69 scientific departments. Notably, the halls of Duhok University have witnessed the triumphant graduation of 54,445 students. The academic year 2022-2023, in particular, heralded the addition of 4,507 accomplished graduates to this esteemed roster of scholars.

KDP and PUK Unify Forces in Historic Meeting, Paving the Way for Regional Stability

Kurdistan Regional President Nechirvan Barzani Calls for Security Measures and Timely Elections in Kurdistan

In a significant development, the Kurdistan Democratic Party (KDP) and the Patriotic Union of Kurdistan (PUK) convened at a high-level meeting in Pirmam, marking a crucial stride towards addressing pressing issues.

The joint meeting of the KDP and the PUK held on Tuesday, November 7, 2023, at the political headquarters of the KDP in Pirmam, marked a significant milestone in the ongoing efforts to address the intricate challenges facing the Kurdistan Region and Iraq at large. The atmosphere was charged with a palpable sense of purpose and determination, as both parties embarked on a comprehensive discussion encompassing a range of critical issues.

The meeting commenced with a thorough assessment of the prevailing situation in the Kurdistan Region, Iraq, and the broader Middle East, acknowledging the sensitive geopolitical climate and the need for a unified response. The KDP and PUK underscored the vital importance of coordination and collaboration among all political forces to fortify the Kurdistan Region and devise a cohesive strategy capable of adapting to the evolving regional landscape and overcoming emerging challenges.

One of the central focal points of the deliberations was the resolute commitment of both parties to support the Kurdistan Regional Government (KRG) in its efforts to ensure fair and timely remuneration for the employees of the Kurdistan Region. This commitment, rooted in the framework of Iraq's enduring Constitution, reflects the shared dedication of the KDP and PUK to the well-being and prosperity of the region's citizens.

The Gaza conflict

emerged as a critical area of concern, with both parties recognizing the potential ramifications of this ongoing crisis for the broader Middle East. There was a unanimous determination to exert concerted efforts to shield the Kurdish population from the destabilizing effects of this conflict and to prevent a recurrence of the tragic events that havemarred the region's history.

KDP Deputy President Nechirvan Barzani, in response to the recent meeting between the KDP and the PUK, conveyed a positive outlook. He noted that discussions between the two parties are ongoing, with the goal of establishing a mutual understanding.

KRP Nechirvan Barzani, speaking in his capacity as President of the Kurdistan Region, announced the scheduled date for the upcoming Kurdistan parliament elections, expressing hope that they will proceed as planned.

Commenting on the concerning incidents involving attacks on coalition forces in the Kurdistan Region, KRP Nechirvan Barzani underscored the gravity of the situation for both Iraq and the Kurdistan Region. He emphasized that it is imperative for the Prime Minister of Iraq to prevent unlawful actions by some groups, as allowing them to persist could lead to detrimental consequences for both Iraq and the Kurdistan Region. Such actions are counterproductive and not in the best interest of any party involved.

KRP Nechirvan Barzani's statements reflect a commitment to the democratic process and regional stability while highlighting the urgency of addressing security concerns in the Kurdistan Region.

Saadi Ahmed Pira, spokesman for the PUK,



expressed confidence in the positive outcomes of this meeting and its potential to yield constructive results in the future.

During an interview with Kurdish media, Saadi Ahmed Pira highlighted the importance of this meeting and similar engagements, particularly given the high-level representation from both parties. He emphasized the agreed-upon measures to safeguard the political stability of the Kurdistan Region in collaboration with other political entities.

The spokesperson underscored the mutual commitment of the KDP and PUK to support the Kurdistan Regional Government, alongside other parties, in ensuring fair compensation for salaried individuals and employees, thereby enhancing the overall quality of life for citizens.

A pivotal focus of the discussion was the Gaza conflict, seen as a potentially destabilizing factor in the region. Pira emphasized the joint efforts of the KDP and PUK to protect the Kurdish populace and avert the recurrence of past disasters.

Pira stated, "These three key issues hold immense significance."

In addition to the core concerns, the meeting

addressed various other aspects of the relationship between the PUK and KDP, setting the stage for future discussions and potential resolutions.

Pira reiterated the imperative nature of finding a resolution, emphasizing that there is no alternative but to address these pressing matters. He announced the formation of a committee to identify and address these issues in subsequent meetings.

"This meeting today marks the inaugural stride towards the right solution," Pira affirmed, foreseeing positive outcomes for the citizens of the Kurdistan Region in subsequent gatherings.

He underscored that the KDP and PUK, while not without their differences, stand as two dynamic political forces on Kurdistan's political spectrum, united in their aim to serve the Kurdish populace with maximum efficacy and impact.

Pira clarified that future meetings will be structured with designated teams, following a thorough examination of notes, concerns, and recommendations, culminating in the next meeting in Sulaymaniyah.

Addressing potential efforts to weaken the internal fabric of the Kurdistan

Region, Pira emphasized the necessity for a unified agenda from both KDP and PUK to counter such endeavors.

The meeting also placed a special emphasis on supporting educational initiatives and upholding the rights of teachers and employees, striving to secure their entitlements and prevent future complications.

The joint statement issued after the meeting emphasized the need for coordinated efforts and collaboration among all political forces to safeguard the Kurdistan Region and formulate a strategy aligned with evolving regional dynamics.

Both parties affirmed their commitment to supporting the financial well-being and salaries of earners in the Kurdistan Region within the framework of Iraq's permanent Constitution.

As the meeting concluded, plans were set in motion for continued discussions and a strategic alliance. The gathering transpired in a positive and constructive atmosphere.

Fazil Basharati, a former member of the Kurdistan Parliament, expressed optimism about the meeting's outcomes, anticipating positive impacts for

the people of Kurdistan.

Latif Nerwayi, the head of the PUK's media board, emphasized the critical juncture in the region, underscoring the need for effective preparation and cooperation between the KDP and PUK to navigate potential repercussions from the ongoing Israeli-Hamas conflict.

In closing, Nerwayi asserted that a united front between the KDP and PUK is essential in shouldering the responsibility for this pivotal stage, preventing any adverse spillover effects from the conflict. He also predicted a strong showing for the PUK in the upcoming provincial council elections.

In conclusion, the joint meeting of the KDP and the PUK represents a watershed moment in the ongoing efforts to address the complex challenges facing the Kurdistan Region and Iraq. The palpable sense of purpose, the commitment to collaboration, and the shared vision for a prosperous future underscore the historic significance of this meeting. As the parties forge ahead, they do so with a unified determination to chart a course toward a brighter, more secure future for the citizens of the Kurdistan Region.

KRG Minister of Interior Addresses Key Challenges in Erbil-Baghdad Relations

Minister Ahmed calls for a paradigm shift in decision-making and a renewed commitment to federalism to pave the way for a more inclusive and stable Iraq

Against the backdrop of escalating tensions between Erbil and Baghdad, the Kurdistan Regional Government's Minister of Interior, Rebar Ahmed, delivered a compelling analysis at the 'Iraq Initiative Conference' in London. Ahmed's insights shed light on the intricate dynamics influencing relations, emphasizing the need for a transformative shift in mindset and a steadfast commitment to federalism for lasting stability and cooperation in Iraq.

Minister Ahmed delivered a comprehensive analysis of the challenges impeding the development of a constructive relationship between Erbil and Baghdad during the Conference held at the prestigious Chatham House Research Centre in London on November 8, 2023.

Ahmed stressed that despite earnest attempts to forge a positive rapport with the Baghdad government and seek resolution for outstanding issues, external interference from various quarters continues to thwart progress. This interference has created a significant stumbling block in the efforts to establish a harmonious and cooperative partnership between Erbil and Baghdad.

Identifying the decision-making process as a primary bottleneck in Iraq's political machinery, Ahmed emphasized that until this fundamental issue is addressed, the nation will grapple with persistent challenges. He underscored the urgency of altering the prevailing mindset, urging stakeholders to view each other as collaborators rather than adversaries. Ahmed emphasized that this shift in perspective is critical not only for resolving immediate issues but

also for cultivating a sustainable and cohesive governance framework that serves the interests of all Iraqis.

Ahmed astutely observed that Iraq's current governance structure lacks the stability necessary to act as a stabilizing force in the region. He highlighted the broader regional implications of this instability, underscoring the urgent need for a more inclusive and effective decision-making process.

Turning his attention to the relations between the KRG and Baghdad, Ahmed acknowledged the genuine intentions of Prime Minister Mohammed Shia Sudani to address outstanding problems. However, he lamented the presence of external influences that hinder the progress of these efforts. Ahmed articulated the importance of a resolute and empowered prime minister capable of implementing policies effectively, a crucial element in overcoming the myriad challenges facing Iraq.

Ahmed further illustrates how external interference has not only impacted bilateral relations but has also had far-reaching effects on crucial political agreements. He cited an example with the budget agreement, expressing frustration that even when agreements are reached, external forces have the potential to disrupt the implementation process, exacerbating an already complex situation.

Addressing the Sinjar Agreement, which aimed to normalize the situation in Sinjar and facilitate the return of displaced individuals while establishing robust administrative and security frameworks, Ahmed expressed his disappointment that despite painstaking efforts, foreign in-

terference has prevented the agreement from realizing its full potential. This stands as a poignant example of how external forces can impede the progress of crucial initiatives.

The Minister also raised poignant concerns about the commitment to federalism within Iraq, noting a concerning decrease in the budget allocation to the Kurdistan Region. He criticized the central government for not upholding the principles of federalism, leading to significant financial challenges for the Kurdistan Region. This financial strain has hindered the ability of the region to effectively address critical issues and fulfill its obligations.

In addition, Ahmed's remarks paint a vivid picture of the intricate challenges facing the Kurdistan Region in its quest to build a productive and mutually beneficial relationship with Baghdad. He emphasizes that a profound shift in thinking and an unwavering commitment to federalism are imperative for achieving lasting stability, cooperation, and prosperity for all Iraqis. Ahmed's astute analysis serves as a clarion call for all stakeholders to work together in fostering a more inclusive, stable, and prosperous Iraq.

In response to probing questions about the situation in western Kurdistan, Ahmed provided an insightful overview of the complex dynamics involving various Kurdish groups and their relationships with external actors. He underscored the pivotal role played by certain groups in the fight against ISIS and their invaluable contributions to the overall stability of the region.

Rebar Ahmed emphasized that



in western Kurdistan, the group referred to as PYD identifies itself as such, but it is widely recognized as an extension of the PKK. He stated that there is no substantive distinction between the two. Despite this, both local and international entities, including the Kurdistan Regional

Government, offer support to combat ISIS, as this effort contributes to stability and security in northeast Syria. Additionally, Ahmed noted that the Kurdistan Region has facilitated the passage of humanitarian and military aid across its borders to aid in the fight against ISIS.

Vision Education Project Successfully Addresses Educational Needs Across Soran Administration

In a landmark achievement, the Vision Education Project, initiated by Idris Nechirvan Barzani, has successfully met the requirements of all 512 schools operating under the Soran Independent Administration. The comprehensive endeavor, aimed at enhancing the educational landscape, was officially proclaimed on Saturday,

October 28, 2023, within the limits of the Soran Independent Administration.

Implemented over a five-day span, the project addressed the fundamental needs of 512 government schools and kindergartens, benefiting over 70,000 students and administrative staff across all districts and sub-districts within the

Administration. The ambitious initiative, driven by the local corporation Vision Education, sought to cultivate an environment conducive to learning and education for all students in Kurdistan.

To fulfill the diverse requirements, a significant array of educational resources was dispatched, including 1220 whiteboards, 1,450 heaters,

575 closets, 306 computers, 235 datasets, 170 packs of sports equipment, and 38 packs of children's toys.

The distribution of resources was strategically organized, with Mergasor receiving provisions for 176 educational centers, Soran for 110, Choman for 66, Sidakan for 53, and Rwandez for 44 educational centers.

Hassan Mohammed, the director of education for Soran, emphasized the importance of the Vision Education Project, stating, "The provision of these equipment was of its own importance and provided a large gap in the shortcomings of the schools within our administration." He further extended a call to Vision Education and

other organizations to collaborate in addressing deficiencies and enhancing the education system within their boundaries.

The successful completion of the Vision Education Project marks a significant step towards fostering positive change and promoting education throughout the region.

Kurdistan Gears Up to Export Thousands of Tons of Honey and Pomegranates to EU and Gulf

Thousands of tons of pomegranates are being transported to France. Shipments will originate from Halabja and Zakho, with an initial phase involving the transport of 100 tons through the Ibrahim Khalil border crossing.

On Wednesday, November 8, 2023, Idris Anwar, the proprietor of a pomegranate export company, started a cooperative agreement with the French government, facilitated by the office of Prime Minister Masrour Barzani for the export of thousands of tons of pomegranate from Halabja and Zakho to France.

Anwar also noted that the first stage involves shipping 100 tons of pomegranates through the Ibrahim Khalil border, with the remaining products scheduled for shipment in the upcoming days. Last year, approximately 2,000 tons of pomegranates from the Kurdistan Region, primarily from Halabja, were exported to the UAE and the Gulf. This year, there are plans to export additional products like apples and honey to the UAE and other Gulf countries.

The Kurdistan Region's pomegranate harvest typically commences in early September and continues until December 15. The branding and exportation



of local products form a pivotal component of the Ministry of Agriculture and Water Resources' plan under the auspices of the Kurdistan Regional Government. The objective is to expand market access beyond the Kurdistan Region and Iraq, while also enhancing product quality.

Deputy Governor of Hawler District Announces, "The Honey Festival" to be Held in Shanadar Park

Nawand Abdulhamid, Deputy Governor of Hawler District, said on November 8, 2023, that "The Honey Festival" will

take place at Shanadar Park in Erbil.

The Deputy Governor stated, "Various activities related to honey production and its derivatives will be showcased during the festival. The festival will run for three consecutive days, commencing on the 10th of November."

Azad Mohammed, a notable beekeeper from Halabja, stated, "Close to 150 beehives have been prepared for participation in the festival. I will be participating in the festival with my honey products, but others will also present various honey-based products, along with their

production techniques." Deputy Governor Abdulhamid further added that a dedicated plan and program have been arranged for the Honey Festival, which aims to provide a special experience for attendees.



Kurdistan Region Aims to Cultivate Three Million Acres with Wheat and Barley

In a strategic move, the Ministry of Agriculture in the Kurdistan Region has unveiled plans to sow three million acres of land with wheat and barley this year, out of a total land holding of five million acres.

Over 50,000 farmers are set to participate in the annual cultivation of wheat and barley, with the Ministry of Agriculture emphasizing efforts to implement a comprehensive strategy for efficient harvesting once the crops reach maturity.

Rizgar Hamad Khder, an adviser to the Ministry of Agriculture in the Kurdistan Region, disclosed

that the ambitious plan involves the yearly planting of three million acres of wheat and barley, projecting an expected yield of three million grains of wheat for the current season.

Farmers across the region have already initiated cultivation activities, preparing the ground for the anticipated large-scale planting of wheat and barley.

During the previous harvest season, farmers in the Kurdistan Region managed to gather only 500,000 tons of wheat. However, the government now aims to purchase the entire wheat yield from

farmers this year, ensuring a comprehensive buyback scheme.

Sulaymaniyah province, a key agricultural hub, witnessed extensive cultivation in the previous year, with nearly 1.1 million acres of land planted with wheat across Sulaymaniyah province, including Halabja province, Garmian, and Raparin administrations. Duhok province and Zakho independent administration contributed with 775,000 acres, while Erbil province and Soran saw 665,000 acres dedicated to wheat cultivation.

The Kurdistan Region, boasting between 50,000 and 53,000 active farmers

annually, plays a crucial role in the national agriculture landscape.

This year, the Iraqi government has set a standard purchasing rate of 850,000 dinars per ton of wheat, irrespective of the wheat type. However, despite the incentive, the Kurdistan Region delivered only 500,000 tons of wheat to the government. Notably, Sulaymaniyah and Halabja provinces accounted for 230,000 tons, Erbil province contributed 145,000 tons, and Duhok province added 125,000 tons. The remaining wheat was sold by farmers at lower market prices.

DNA Tests Conducted on Bodies of 171 Anfal Victims

The Ministry of Martyrs and Anfal Victims in Chamchamal and Kalar, records the names of those who consider themselves relatives of the 171 bodies found in a mass grave in Samawa and are now in the forensic medicine in Baghdad, to identify the bodies through DNA testing.

On Monday, November 6, 2023, Habil Ahmad, Director of the Anfal Monument in Chamchamal, said: "The Ministry of Martyrs and Anfal Victims, with several organizations and relevant parties in the Kurdistan Region and Baghdad, discussed the 171 bodies found in a mass grave in Samawa. It was decided to register the names of those who consider themselves relatives of the bodies for DNA testing within 15 days, so that they can be returned to the Kurdistan Region after identification."

In August 2019, a mass grave containing 171 bodies, including 97 women and 74 children, was excavated in Samawa.

The director of the Anfal monument said that some of the bodies were accompanied by documents, according to the documents, some of them are from Chamchamal and those who were killed in the fourth phase of Anfal.

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Duhok City Set for 13 Billion Dinar Overpass and Underpass Upgrade



The decision to green-light the construction of a flyover and underpass in Duhok province, at an estimated cost of 13 billion dinars, marks a significant step forward for the Barzan Street Overpass and Underpass project in Duhok city. This infrastructural venture, nestled within the U-turn corridors, commands a total investment of 13 billion and 150 million dinars.

Providing insights into the project, Nawroz Ahmed, an engineer integral to the initiative, stated: "The project encompasses two U-turns, strategically positioned - one near the Gavarki restaurant and the other near Shendokh." The comprehensive execution plan spans 450 days, with the present completion

rate standing at an impressive 66%. The remaining 34% is earmarked for finalization by February, underscoring the project's adherence to a defined and efficient timeline.

Highlighting the financial aspect, Nawroz Ahmad clarified, "The overall budget allocated for the project amounts to 13.15 billion dinars, and the on-ground execution will be overseen by the Ministry of Municipalities and Tourism of the Kurdistan Regional Government." This initiative not only signifies a substantial investment in the region's infrastructure but also reflects a commitment to enhancing urban connectivity and addressing transportation needs in the evolving landscape of Duhok city.

Erbil's Baghi Shar: A Haven for Retirees

In the Kurdish capital city of Erbil, is a park where retired people spend their time. Known as Baghi Shar, meaning 'The City Park', has become a place for many retired individuals who get together daily, sharing their memories and experiences.

People generally prefer as much time as possible outdoors with their friends, preferably in picturesque public parks with fresh air where they can relax.

"I strongly believe that this park is a refuge from the avalanche of responsibilities and worries of daily life; this feeling I have is unique and hard to describe," said Kamal Haji, 71, retired from the military since 1989.

Haji said retired people can go to the other parks, but gathering here in one place is interesting and they are served very respectfully by the working staff.

Muhammed Saeed, 61, a retiree who was waiting for his friend to play a game of domino, said "After a lot of years of being separated, this park has brought us back together not for working, but for spending some nice time."

Saeed paid tribute to



former governor for rewarding the retirees who served Kurdistan for many years, although he thinks they deserve more.

"I feel sorry for youths and teenagers who are prohibited from coming here, but they have to realize that we have worked hard all our lives and made sacrifices to raise our children; now is the time to repay us by letting us live as we desire," said Saeed.

The existing struggle between youths and

the elderly is becoming more and more obvious in the Kurdish community. As the demands of the growing ratio of the young continue to rise, the burden on the elderly will grow. Having their own park gives them a brief respite from the problems of the young.

"We are ordered not to let anyone except retired persons come into this park, and we continuously face problems by youths who don't like this decision," said a policeman guarding the

park's front gate.

Any trying to enter the park must show their ID proving that they are retired individuals.

"Youths should respect the elderly because the privileges, such as the park, do not come at youths' expense, said the guard. Someday, he said, they will be the same age as those who now enjoy Baghi Shar.

Baghi Shar has been a public park since a very long time ago. However, in 2008, Erbil's former governor Nawzad Hadi,

decided to make it exclusively for retirees who have long served the community.

Muhsin Machko, the park manager, said the idea of renovating this park and to make it only for retirees was a request from retirees themselves, and the governor of Erbil city, Nawzad Hady, responded by paying for the entire two-year renovation. Now, there are trees, pretty fountains, and a big hall with tables and chairs for sitting in case of raining," said

Machko

At first only male retirees would gather in the park, but recently females are getting together and spend their afternoon time there. There is an annual subscription fee for entering the park. Everyone should register and pay 12,000 Iraqi dinars a year which is about \$8, and the money is to be spent for fixing anything that gets broken in the park.

Kurdistan to see Significant Growth in Farming

The Kurdistan region is currently experiencing significant growth in the agriculture and animal husbandry sector, which is a promising development. This success can be attributed to the diligent efforts of the regional government, which has actively engaged in establishing various projects and facilitating the growth of livestock and poultry farming.

There are now more than 2,000 projects exclusively dedicated to animal husbandry and poultry, representing a substantial financial investment in the billions of dollars. This has resulted in the creation of approximately 60,000 new job opportunities in the region.

Prior to the formation of the ninth government, there were only 11 egg production projects. However, this number has now increased to 39 projects, marking a remarkable 266% increase. Daily egg production, which was previously limited to 3,000 to 4,000 crates, has now soared to over 14,000 crates per day. This achievement ensures self-sufficiency, as the Kurdistan region consumes only 7,000 crates daily, with the surplus being supplied to the southern and central provinces of Iraq.

Similarly, before the formation of the

ninth government, there were 73 projects focused on dairy cattle farming. Today, this number has increased to 88 projects, resulting in a 78% increase in production capacity. The previous stock of dairy cattle stood at 8,000 heads, but it has now expanded to an impressive 14,000 heads.

Furthermore, cattle breeding projects have also seen a substantial rise. While there were initially 65 such projects, their number has now surged to 103, representing an extraordinary 355% increase.

This growth has been mirrored in production capacity, which has risen from 21,000 to an astonishing 98,000 heads. In the realm of feed factories within the Kurdistan region, the number has risen from 35 to 42 factories. Additionally, production capacity has expanded from 542 tons per hour to an impressive 932 tons, marking a substantial 78% increase.

These remarkable projects in the agriculture and animal husbandry sector showcase the dedication and commitment of the regional government in promoting growth and development in the Kurdistan region.

Cancer Rates in Kurdistan Region Below Global Average

The Kurdistan Region boasts a lower cancer death rate compared to the global standard, as revealed by data from the Ministry of Health. The encouraging trend is attributed to heightened public awareness, proactive prevention measures, and advancements in the region's healthcare sector, enabling prompt diagnosis and treatment.

In 2022, the Kurdistan Region reported a total of 9,611 cancer cases, averaging around 32 new cases daily. Disparities exist among provinces, with Erbil documenting 4,304 cases, Sulaymaniyah recording 3,323, and Duhok province noting 1,434 cases. Prominent cancer types in the region include breast, colon, lung, skin, kidney, prostate, leukemia, and childbirth-related cancers.

Dr. Chenar Sinjawi, Head of Cancer Control at the Kurdistan Regional Government's Ministry of Health, highlighted breast cancer as the most prevalent, mirroring global trends, constituting 23% of reported cases. Colon and lung cancers followed in incidence.

Dr. Sinjawi emphasized the accessibility of chemotherapy and radiation treatments in government hospitals, with the Awat Center and Sulaymaniyah offering radiation facilities. Surgical interventions are available in both public and private healthcare settings.

Notably, the fund for cancer patients often covers operational costs.

The Kurdistan Region has consistently maintained an infection rate below the global standard, recording only 71,074 cases over the past decade. Moreover, approximately 25-30% of reported cases come from individuals residing in other Iraqi cities who sought treatment in the Kurdistan Region. Impressively, the region's infection rate stands at 151 per 100,000 individuals, showcasing a notable reduction compared to the global average of 190 cases per 100,000 people.

From January 1 to June 30, 2023, the region recorded 30 to 35 new daily cases, surpassing 4,000 registered cancer patients in six months. Erbil reported approximately 1,800 cases, Sulaymaniyah 1,500, and Duhok around 700. Breast, colon, and lung cancers predominantly contribute to these figures, with a prevalence rate of 46% in males and 54% in females in Erbil province. The collaborative initiatives in raising awareness, implementing preventive measures, and enhancing healthcare accessibility in the Kurdistan Region are undeniably shaping a cancer landscape that is more favorable than the global standard.

The attacks on US Bases in Kurdistan region aim to undermine stability in all regions of Iraq



By *Saadula Aqrabi*

I believe when politics is the main driver in the field it becomes difficult to predict the course of events or the real goals to be achieved. Perhaps this applies to the attacks launched by factions affiliated with Iran on American bases in Iraq and Syria.

The Iraqi militias's attacks on American bases came as a response to the war launched by Israel on the Gaza Strip and supported by Washington, they made it clear that these Iraqi militias groups are trying to achieve many goals that go beyond the issue of action and reaction, and what confirms this fact is that targeting American interests and bases It was an occasional occurrence before the Gaza war.

The Security is at the top of the most important problems witnessed in Iraq, where people have taken to the streets in recent years to protest the lack of public services, unemployment and corruption.

There are several American bases in Iraq have been targeted by missiles and drones dozens of times since mid-October, but no major losses have been announced yet among the American forces there... continuous attacks despite Washington's warnings, which are received but below expectations, which indicates American hesitation that carries many implications.

Meantime there are thousands of Marines and sailors arrived in the Middle East in a deployment meant to deter the Iraqi military militias from seizing and harassing merchant ships near the Strait of Hormuz. They came aboard the dock landing ship USS Carter Hall and amphibious assault ship USS Bataan.

There are repeated attacks on American bases in Iraq, especially in the Kurdistan region by armed factions targeting American forces. The Iraqi military groups announced its responsibility for the attacks, on the Harir base in Erbil Governorate.

There are about 2,500 American soldiers in Iraq and about 900 in Syria as part of the war against ISIS.

The Kurdistan Region

calls on the Iraqi government not to allow "outlaw forces" to create problems for Iraq and the region, considering the attacks on Erbil a "dangerous development." The Kurds stressed that outlaw forces must not be allowed to create problems for Iraq and the Iraqi Kurdistan region.

The Kurds believe that this type of actions will not help Iraq, and there is no interest in entering Iraq with these problems."

I believe that the Pentagon failed to provide enough troops to properly secure Iraq. And now the U.S. military may be experimenting with new policy and a new tactics to increase contact with local Iraqi groups and embed American troops within Iraqi security units to secure, and build the Iraqi cities prone to insurgent violence. The US government need to have a new plan, as security spreads and an Iraqi government gets up and running, military officials say some form of drawdown of more U.S. forces in Iraq will then be possible.

I believe that the United States must make greater efforts for correcting many years of mistakes in Iraq requires adopting a constructive approach that will not include costly and possibly destructive military solutions, nor long term economic pressures that are often ineffective, and not, of course, leaving Iraq completely.

This reflects the growing concern over the consequences of the continuation and expansion of the scope of these attacks, which are increasingly targeting American forces and bases in the region, especially in Erbil Governorate, most notably the Harir base and the coalition base at Erbil International Airport.

The focus of the attacks on Erbil reveals that these factions aim to stir up chaos and sectarian and nationalist sensitivities in the country, and to undermine stability in all regions of Iraq.

The US Department of Defense vowed to respond to the attackers of its bases in Iraq, following a drone attack targeting a base for its forces in Erbil in the

Kurdistan region.

The US forces thwarted an attack on an air base in Erbil Governorate, without specifying the location of the target, amid speculation that the targeted location was the Al-Harir Air Base. In this context, the "Iraqi military groups", claimed responsibility for the attack on Erbil, stating that it had attacked an American base near Erbil Airport.

The United States of America will deploy one of the American air defense systems in the Kurdistan Region, after Washington recently announced the redeployment of huge air, land, and naval forces in the Middle East, in addition to two attack groups of aircraft carriers, fighter and attack aircraft, in addition to the "THAAD" missile defense systems and the "Patriot" systems. -104".

After referring to the war that broke out between Israel and Hamas, the American report, translated by Shafaq News Agency, said: The United States is strengthening its military presence in the region to deter Iran and defend its forces against attacks by Iranian-backed militias, in light of fears of the outbreak of a broader regional war, especially with regard to the response of Tehran's proxy militias to an Israeli ground war in Gaza by attacking American military personnel and civilians throughout the Middle East.

Washington called on its citizens not to travel to Iraq and ordered the evacuation of all non-essential employees from its embassy in Baghdad and its consulate in Erbil, as American bases and forces in Iraq and Syria have already been subjected to attacks by missiles and drones. The US military did not specify the locations where it would deploy the THAAD and Patriot systems, but it spoke of deploying them throughout the theater of operations" in the US Central Command area of operations, and thus the broader Middle East. And also inside air bases in the Gulf countries that host American forces and aircraft.

The American leadership stressed that deploying at



least one missile defense system in Erbil would strengthen the position of the American force in this region, which enjoys strategic importance, and give its local partner some much-needed reassurance.

The White House believes that Iran is "actively facilitating" missile and drone attacks against US forces in Iraq and Syria, adding that if Washington decides not to deploy air defense systems in the Kurdistan Region, Iran and its proxies will be able to view it as a weak point and carry out further strikes. in the region, which could lead to harm to American personnel and local civilians. This threat by the military militias is not hypothetical, as Iraqi militia groups have already targeted the Harir Air Base outside Erbil. These attacks did not cause casualties or serious damage, perhaps because they were warning shots to express the ability of these militias to target the base, adding that despite It occurred in a relatively rural area, but previous attacks on the Harir base exposed civilians in the vicinity of the base to danger.

The American command will redeploy the smaller "Patriot" and "C-RAM" systems, which are anti-missiles, artillery and mortar systems, and are also capable of intercepting small drones, at Erbil airport, indicating that it is also possible that they will be able to cover the defen-

sive field of the neighboring Harir base.

I believe that a step like this would represent the completion of a long way in deterring Iraqi militias threats and securing a decisive foothold for the American army in the region, as the Kurdistan Region and the American bases in Iraq in general are considered important to support the American forces, which number 900 American soldiers in Syria and in operations against the remnants of the organization. ISIS, recalling that it is not a coincidence that some of the helicopters used in the October 2019 operation that assassinated ISIS leader Abu Bakr al-Baghdadi in Idlib, Syria, took off from Erbil. It is noteworthy that these factions claimed responsibility for most of the recent drone and missile attacks on American forces in Iraq and Syria, as a response to American support for the Israeli operation against the Gaza Strip. In the midst of current events, a Pentagon stated that (900 soldiers are in the process of being deployed to the Middle East)

These attacks come after Iraqi factions threatened to target US interests in Iraq against the backdrop of US support for Israel in its war on the Gaza Strip.

The United States presidential election campaign will officially begin the first Republican debate is basically maintaining deterrence against Iran with-

out being dragged into a military escalation.

I think this is mainly due to several factors, including the fact that oil prices are now high, and any confrontation with Iran will exacerbate the rise in prices. On the other hand, Iran is moving towards reaching the nuclear threshold meaning the ability to produce a bomb within a relatively short period may be weeks, but American intelligence says that the Iranian regime has not decided on that yet.

That is correct the International politics is a most competitive and conflicting fields.

I believe that the rules the politics system have changed radically after the rapid collapse of the former Soviet Union. And we are trying drawing possible frameworks for the Iraqi foreign policy towards the United States of America we call on the Arab political Parties in Iraq to improve their understanding, behavior, and awareness of the rules that govern current international relations. It causes harm and harm to systems and peoples.

If there any competition and conflict in the international Politics, there are specific rules governing the existing relations between allies and opponents, according to the place and time, and that ignoring and disrespecting these rules or ignorance and lack of knowledge about them will lead to failure.

Religious coexistence Yazidi, the ancient religious components in Kurdistan Region

By **Naz Can**

The Yazidi component is one of the ancient religious components that exist in Kurdistan. Like other religious components that are similar to them in many religious characteristics, most notably the Kakaites, they were subjected to campaigns of extermination, deportation, displacement, and the imposition of identities, within plans that targeted their existence for many centuries, represented by decrees, campaigns, and attacks against them. To the extent that they disappeared in many historical areas in which they constituted the majority, up to the major attack carried out by ISIS against them in Sinjar, southern Kurdistan, to the west of Mosul (120) km in the summer of 2014.

The Yazidi religion maintains well-established religious worships and traditions whose roots extend back thousands of years. These worships are represented by their roots extending to the Mithraic religion, or their similarity to the Zoroastrian religion, or their compatibility with the Kakai-Yarsan religion, which together with Yazidis are considered the oldest Kurdish religions that still continue to exist.

The Yazidi religion has gone through important historical stages since its formation as an independent religion, and some of those worships and traditions changed with the coming of Sheikh Adi bin Musafer al-Hikari to Lalish in the eleventh century, whom the Yazidis consider to be the renewer of the Yazidi religion.

As a result of its possession of this legacy in customs and traditions, and after it became confronted with missionary religions, it possessed many factors that helped in its survival and in preserving its privacy, whether through its religious texts in which spiritual issues are at the forefront. The Yazidi is proud of his religion and religious affiliation, and performs his duties with all dignity. This matter is derived from the roots of this religion and the connections with spiritual dimensions, which were renewed with the arrival of Sheikh Adi-Adi to the Lalish Temple, and his laying of religious foundations

that were compatible with the changes of the stage.

If Sufi schools are widespread in Kurdistan, and the Yazidis find acceptance and embrace of their ideas as they are close to the foundations of Yazidis, then in the Yazidi belief, man does not need an intermediary in order to know God.

Rather, the phenomenon exists in the individual's psyche, in that he possesses a divine position in himself, and considers man to be himself. The fulcrum and the only one responsible for his actions, so he must balance his emotions, his mind, and his soul. And because it is not easy to follow and verify the origins of the Yazidi religion and how it developed over the centuries, it is also difficult to verify what the foundations were based on which these worships were developed.

However, Its basic framework in its relationship and similarity with Sufism reveals many facts, although there are differences between Yazidi and Sufi methods of the Yazidi belief in the transmigration of souls is a Hindu belief inherited by the Yazidis, and it is part of their faith and belief that souls are transmitted, the Yazidis believe in the transmigration of souls, and they fast for three days in mid-December (December First) It is a sanctification and sacrifice to the sun, and the Yazidis believe that God alone gives souls and has the right to take them.

The Yazidi religious literature, provides confirmation that the factors that helped Yazidis to survive and continue are the spiritual heritage and ethnic mythological foundations, which are represented in religious holidays and occasions such as New Year's Day, which falls on the second Wednesday of April according to the Eastern calendar.

The feast of (Jimma), which falls on the sixth of October (October), in addition to the class system represented by the Sheikh (Pir) the disciple, which are the classes that the Yazidis consider to have been introduced by Sheikh Uday Musafer, who the Yazidis consider to be the renewer of the Yazidi religion.

Many sources consider the Yazidi religion to be one of the oldest religions that



still maintains its uniqueness and ancient heritage in Kurdistan, and which shares rituals, traditions, customs, and myths with many religions.

They were found in central Kurdistan in ancient times and still are, where there are their temples and shrines that indicate the historical depth and are linked to the Indo-Germanic beliefs of the ancient Kurdish religion, which came from India to present-day Kurdistan, but there is another opinion about the roots of this religion that indicates that it is an extension of the Mithraic religion. And the Manichaeans, they took shelter and preserved their being by giving them an Islamic character in order to avoid the persecutions they faced from the Muslims, and that character remained present among them until now to become part of the reality of their situation. while Khalil Jundi (who is one of the most prominent researchers specializing in historical and religious affairs) points out (For Yazidi) he pointed out that Yazidi is one of the ancient religions and is considered one of the ancient Kurdish religions, and another researcher considers it one of the oldest ancient Kurdish religions.

The Yazidi religious text (Aafrindna Dunyayi - The Creation of the Universe) refutes what some say about the origins of Yazidi as a science or religion, and tries to link it to Mithraism or other things. Whoever believes in the sacred texts and understands them... He will fully understand that the first center of civilizational radiation on the

face of the earth was Lalish Al-Nurani, and thus these people contradict themselves by saying: Yazidiism is a remnant of other religions!

This historical richness and the pluralism of opinions regarding the origins of this religion clearly indicate that it has ancient historical roots, and its ability to survive despite the great and continuous changes that have occurred in the region in which it lives, which gave it a different character for each of the stages that faced the challenges that targeted it. Its status and foundations, and this is clearly represented in the many campaigns launched by the Ottoman Empire against them over the course of four centuries, which changed the map of their geographical distribution.

Therefore, it can be said, according to the above opinions: It is an ancient Kurdish religion, like the Yarisani-Kakai religion, and it is an extension of the Shamanic-Yazdanic religion that existed during the period of the Sasanian state. It preserved its specificity and changed according to the historical events it went through and the challenges it faced in order to preserve its specificity.

According to Yazidi mythology, the Yazidis developed with the development of time and their contact with heavenly religions, although the name of their religion was mentioned in the period of the Sasanian state as (Yazdan and Yazdaniya), as was mentioned in Yazdan, from which the word Yazd or Yazd (Yazd) was later de-

rived, meaning God, and its plural is Yazdan, meaning worthy. Worship in the book of Zoroaster's Evesta, according to what Mammo Farhan points out, who clarifies the issue of linking Yazidis by saying: "Yazidis, like Christianity and Islam, do not believe that Ta'us Melek or (Devil Stam) is the master of evil, but rather believes that he is the archangel, and he is the one who takes souls." With King Gabriel, as for evil, it lies in the human heart and not its source, and in its light the story of creation differs among the Yazidis. Because the Yazidis did not have methods of evangelism, advocacy, or written books, they did not accept other names and descriptions being given to them by others, such as attributing them to sects of the Kharijites or the Adawiyya, or a missionary sect, or the deification of Yazid bin Muawiyah or the worshipers of Satan, due to the difference in the Yazidi vision of the story of creation and the role of the Yazidis. A peacock was a king in the creation of humanity, not the expulsion of Adam from Paradise as told in the stories of creation in the Abrahamic religions. These allegations were answered by Zuhair Kazem Abboud and Kazem Habib in their reference to the fact that Yazidiism extends its roots to the Iranian Yazd as the place of its spread, and is part of the heritage.

The Yazidi rooted in the name they use is the saying that the Yazidi is from Izdayim - that is, the one who created me - or Khudayai - Khuda, meaning God, and the meaning clarifies that this is the correct designa-

tion for God according to a religious text for the Yazidis that the writer reviewed in the Kurdish language, which says (Awi Az Dayim - Who created me, Khu Dayi - He created Himself, Aiu Bakhu Khudayi - He is God), but no specific study has yet reached a specific date for the emergence of Yazidis.

Because it developed with the development of religions and the worship practices of its followers, who are considered to be the first peoples to believe in oneness according to the religious text above, which was also confirmed by Fawaz Farhan, who stated that the Yazidi religion specializes in the spiritual field in determining the relationship with the Creator, His divisions, and the secrets of existence, rather than a matter of dialectical relationship, because Yazidiism in Its religious texts, which according to Yazidi religious customs are called the Sacred Sabbaqat, reveal this relationship and the role of man in exploring the depths of the universe and his relationship with the Creator.

Therefore, it can be said: Monotheism and the relationship with the Creator in the Yazidi religion have a specificity that exists in its own right, and is not similar to what is in the Abrahamic religions, nor in those that deal with the relationship with God according to the natural development of creation, because Yazidiism focuses in its specificity on the spiritual relationship with the philosophical dimension of the matter.

Law system in Kurdistan Region and oblige all state authorities

By *Dlan Ramadan* Last Part

For the purpose of clarifying the nature of the legal and judicial system since the emergence of the modern Iraqi state after the British occupation of Iraq, I will now divide it into the following stages:

The first stage: the stage of the British occupation and the royal era (1917-1958)

After the fall of the Ottoman Empire as a result of World War I in 1914 and the British occupation of Iraq in 1917, the Commander-in-Chief of the British occupation forces issued a set of laws, regulations and orders (a legal system for the occupier) to manage the affairs of the country, including the Baghdadi Penal Code and the Baghdadi Procedure Code of 1919, to replace the penal laws. The Ottoman Empire, and their implementation continued until the issuance of the Penal Code No. 111 of 1969 and the Code of Criminal Procedure No. 23 of 1971. As for civil affairs, the provisions of the Ottoman Code continued to be implemented until the issuance of the Civil Code of 1951, to which a committee of senior legal jurists contributed.

The sources of this law were the Ottoman Code of Judicial Judgments and the Egyptian and French Civil Code. It was also taken from various Islamic schools of thought, and this law is still in effect to this day despite the passage of more than half a century since its issuance, due to its art in drafting and comprehensive treatment of obligations and rights. And other civil transactions are based on solid foundations of openness.

The elected Constituent Representative Council approved the Basic Law (Constitution) of 1925, which defined the features of the legal system in Iraq. This law gave all legislation issued by the British leader the force of law, until they were changed or repealed by the legislative authority (Parliament).

Article 28 of the Basic Law indicated that "the legislative authority" It is entrusted to the National Assembly with the King.



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Article 28 of the Basic Law indicated that "the legislative authority" It is entrusted to the National Assembly with the King. The National Assembly consists of the Senate and the House of Representatives, and the legislative authority has the right to legislate, amend and repeal laws. Members of the House of Representatives are elected directly by the people, while the Senate is appointed by the King from those who have gained the trust of the public and who have a glorious past in service. The state and the nation, as stipulated in Articles 31-38 of the Basic Law. The Basic Law also stipulated some democratic aspects of the system of government, such as the independence of the judiciary from the legislative and executive authorities, and that the courts are protected from interference in

their affairs, and the courts have the right to sue all individuals in the state regardless of their job and social status, they have the right to sue the Iraqi government.

The Basic Law stipulates the establishment of a Supreme Constitutional Court to decide on the interpretation of laws and the extent of their conformity with the provisions of the Basic Law, in addition to prosecuting ministers and members of the National Assembly for crimes related to their jobs (Article 81). Accordingly, ordinary courts are responsible for prosecuting them for actions that are not related to their jobs. Although there were some drawbacks in the method of elections, as they were falsified by organizing lists of representatives by the Prime Minister, the Interior Ministry, and the Royal Court, it was the first constitutional experiment in the history of modern Iraq, and it was largely far from sectarian and ethnic quotas, as it was the basis. Nomination, election, and holding positions and jobs in the state depend primarily on citizenship. As for the Iraqi judiciary, there was a "Supreme Judicial Council." It is headed by the President of the Iraq Court of Cassation to manage the professional affairs of judges, such as promotion, transfer, discipline, and to protect them from interference by the exec-

utive authority (Ministry of Justice). Although the Iraqi judiciary was linked to the Ministry of Justice, the judges enjoyed a great deal of autonomy, and as a result, the Iraqi judiciary achieved, in that era of time, a qualitative leap in the development of the legal system through oversight of the constitutionality of laws and their interpretation, in a way that serves the application of justice. The history of the Iraqi judiciary during the period of monarchy was full of judicial precedents, and was characterized by courage in making decisions that indicated the extent of the judge's independence and his contribution to the development of the legal system. Here, we must point out the courage and independence of one of the judges, Judge Ahmed Al-Taha, who was supervising the investigation into the events of the oil workers' strike in Kirkuk (Kaurbaghi) in July 1946, which claimed the lives of 16 martyrs and about 30 wounded. His decision stated that the demonstrators had used their legal right to demand their rights, that they were unarmed, that the police had overtaken them in an unacceptable manner, that most of the dead and wounded were hit from behind, and that the administration had exceeded its powers in detaining some of the demonstrators. As a result of the investigation,

the aforementioned judge decided to release all the detained demonstrators, and to take legal action against "the Kirkuk District Superintendent, the District Police Director, and a number of police officers and commissioners for breaching their duties and causing the killing and wounding of demonstrators." The monarchy and the legal and judicial system that resulted from it were distinguished by their resilience. For development and reform because the political process was built on sound foundations (the criterion of citizenship), and if the monarchy was destined to continue, we would have seen Iraq and its people enjoying stability, progress and a comfortable life after the reform processes, because of its enormous economic resources represented by a sea of oil, the Tigris and Euphrates rivers, the holy shrines and giant monuments. Which no city is without. The second stage: the stage of military coups (1958-1968)

The intensification of the conflict and the cold war between the socialist and capitalist camps was at its peak in the middle of the last century, which caused the revolutionary spirit to be ignited among the youth, especially since the capitalist systems and the countries under their orbit were exploiting the working classes with long working hours, low wages,

and without providing any social security. For classes deprived of work, which encouraged the occurrence of revolutions and military coups in various countries of the world, including Iraq. The military coup took place in Iraq on July 14, 1958, which abolished the Basic Law of 1925 with the aim of organizing society in a new way and under the cover of a legal system consistent with the goals of the coup. The coup leaders issued the interim constitution of 1958, which was prepared in a hurry and in a very brief manner, and declared that the political system in Iraq was a republican system. Members of the royal family were killed in a vengeful, brutal and unjustified manner, and the bodies of some of them, including Prime Minister Nouri al-Said and Prince Abdul-Ilah, were also killed and mutilated. Like any revolution or coup, constitutional legitimacy comes from the names given by the coup leaders, "such as the Revolutionary Command Council or the National Council for the Revolution." ..and other names; Because they carried out this coup or revolution in response to the popular will for change, and granted themselves the right to issue the temporary constitution and legislation as a cover for a new legal system.

A series of assessments on climate change in the Kurdistan Region and Iraq; High temperature and its consequences

By *Dr. Mathew Jose* *

Kurdistan addresses the drought crisis and the United Nations warns Baghdad of climate change

Part: 1

(Climate war) has become an established scientific fact and is a new generation of war, in addition to cyber war. Countries have begun to use it, albeit in a very hidden way. This war is an extension of other generations of war, which are regular military war, guerrilla war, psychological war, and economic war.

While it is recognized that the natural factor (natural climate change, drought, desertification, reduced vegetation cover, etc.) has an impact on the increase in sand storms, it is not objective to leave the role of the intentional human factor (climate war) aside, and this assumption remains valid until to be refuted.

The countries around the mighty Tigris and Euphrates rivers now stand on the front line of the global climate crisis as the fifth most vulnerable country in the world."

Iraq ranks fifth globally among the countries most affected by the effects of climate change, including water and food insecurity. But this threat intersects with a host of other challenges, creating a potential multiplier effect that could exacerbate socio-economic challenges, lead to the proliferation of armed groups, and spark geopolitical fluctuations that could create new waves of conflicts in a country that is still struggling to maintain its defeat of terrorist groups. Similar to ISIS and the armed militias supported by Iran. Addressing climate challenges will require redoubled efforts to implement pressing and urgent public sector reforms, as well as reaching a settlement with Iran and Turkey on long-standing disputes over water that have broader geopolitical implications for peace and security.

Iraqis and Iraq's ruling elite are not blind to the suffering that climate change will cause, but it also forms part of a long list of daily crises and challenges that engulf the ruling class and administrative structures in and around it, including the threat from armed and terrorist groups, economic and humanitarian challenges, and the global pandemic. This has weakened the political will to address climate-related challenges, which are currently only on the sidelines of policy discussions relat-



ed to economic diversification and the country's dependence on hydrocarbons.

However, limiting climate change to the need to diversify the economy rather than as a challenge in itself is far from a poor socio-economic situation and attests to factors causing climate-induced instability amid a growing youth population, a bloated public sector, and dysfunctional governance.

Climate change could have widespread repercussions if it is not addressed as part of a comprehensive policy agenda designed to address deficiencies in good governance. Failure to do so could make climate change and its impacts a contributing factor to the spread of armed groups by intensifying conflicts over increasingly scarce natural resources, water, and arable land, and could expand the recruitment pool for terrorist groups due to climate-induced increases in poverty. The increase in conflicts within the country should not be ruled out, as various armed groups fight for control of arable land and water resources. Although the possibility of a conflict erupting between Iraq and Turkey or between Iraq and Iran over access to water is remote, the geopolitical fluctuations that have arisen so far as a result of Turkey and Iran limiting the flow of water towards Iraq could cause increased attacks on their forces,

exacerbating the ongoing violent conflicts between rival armed groups and different factions.

It is difficult to hide the reality, we have not lost everything. There is hope to change the course of things, and the Iraqis must take the initiative.

Campaigning for the environment, encouraging widespread recycling and other sound environmental practices, and engaging young people, who represent more than half of Iraq's population, in climate-related issues from the beginning of their lives ensures the success of any efforts to save our planet.

There is still time to turn things around, and with Iraq's leaders and people supporting climate action, we have a real opportunity to leave a better Iraq for the next generation. It is encouraging that Iraq, in addition to joining the Paris Agreement, is playing a pioneering role in its green paper to enshrine climate adaptation in public policy.

The United Nations is ready to help the new government of Iraq fulfill its climate commitments through concrete steps, implementation, coordinated solutions, and communication at all levels.

In 2021, Iraq experienced its second driest season in 40 years due to record low rainfall. Over the past 40 years, water flows from the Euphrates and Tigris rivers, which provide up to 98% of Iraq's surface water, have de-

creased by 30-40%. The historic marshes in the south also dry up and temperatures rise in Iraq, where the highest temperature was recorded at about 54 degrees Celsius in Basra.

The Iraqi government has launched many initiatives to reduce the danger of climate change, the most recent of which was the "Revitalization of Mesopotamia" initiative, which was launched by the Presidency of the Republic and approved by the Council of Ministers, but the government has not activated it yet. This initiative aims to build a green economy that supports oil resources.

The rate of desertification in Iraq reached about 70%, and the percentage is likely to increase unless the Iraqi government begins massive afforestation campaigns in all governorates.

It is noteworthy that Iraq has lost approximately 100,000 dunums of arable land in recent years, due to climate change that has occurred globally, in addition to the overuse of soil due to repeated cultivation and the irrigation system, which has caused salinization of the soil, not to mention the absence of vegetation cover.

The effects of climate change in the Kurdistan Region and Iraq are becoming more apparent year after year. Increasing temperatures, disappearing marshes and burning forests, decreasing rainfall and increasing dust days

are all factors that have significant economic, political, social and security consequences, above all demographic decline, increasing mass migration, reducing employment opportunities and increasing instability.

Climate change is man-made and natural, that is, man-made and a product of nature as well, and we are constantly increasing, but a large part of it is man-made and can be addressed and affected by reducing the natural part or natural climate events.

Another very important point to note here is that the Kurdistan region, including Iraq, are not major contributors to climate change, but on the contrary, the consequences are increasing day by day and appear in the form of disappearance of marshes and forests, decreased days of rainfall and increased days of rain. Warm to above 50 degrees Celsius.

What is striking is that the temperature in the Kurdistan Region shows a rise in temperature by two degrees Celsius, while the lowest temperature in winter in some governorates was higher by half to one degree, which indicates a complete change in temperature in the Kurdistan Region, which confirms the outcome of the scenarios, and future expectations.

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Erbil Hosts Crucial AFC Match

Fans excited to see famous soccer stars like and Benzima and Kante

In his inaugural visit to the capital of the Kurdistan Region, French football superstar Karim Benzema, who currently leads the Saudi League champions al-Ittihad, suffered a defeat at the hands of Iraq's al-Quwawa al-Jawiya.

The match took place at Erbil's Franso Hariri Stadium as part of the Asian Champions League's fourth fixture on November 6. It is worth noting that al-Ittihad emerged victorious in their previous encounter in Jeddah last month.

Despite fielding a star-studded lineup that included the renowned former Real Madrid striker and 2018 world champion N'golo Kante, al-Ittihad was unable to secure a win. Jawiya's Ali Jassem scored the first goal towards the end of the first half, followed by Mohanad Abdulrahim's second goal in the second half, ultimately leading to the Eagles' triumph.

The match drew an impressive crowd of 18,850 spectators. This victory further solidified Jawiya's position in the group standings, currently placing them second with seven points from four matches.

Prior to the match, Benzema and his team were warmly received by Iraqi and Kurdish officials upon their arrival in Erbil on Saturday. On Sunday, they had the opportunity to meet



with the Prime Minister of the Kurdistan Region, Masrour Barzani.

Born to Algerian parents in France, the striker has often feuded with the French Football Federation (FFF) and coach Didier Deschamps. Notably, Benzema had been left off both the 2018 and 2022 World Cup squads, although the

latter has been attributed to his injuries by some.

Benzema, who is affectionately known as al-Hukuma (the government) among football enthusiasts in the Middle East, enjoyed a remarkable career with Real Madrid, spanning 14 seasons and resulting in five European Champions League titles. He also

achieved an impressive goal tally of 353 for the Madrid-based club. In October 2022, he was honored with the prestigious Balon d'Or award from France Football, recognizing him as the best footballer in the world, following his instrumental role in securing Spanish and European gold for his team.

The practice, criticized as 'Sportswashing', has thus far been successful in luring other soccer brand names, such as Cristiano Ronaldo and Neymar.

Benzema transferred from Real Madrid to Al-Ittihad in the summer of 2023, and he became the latest prize of Crown Prince Mohamed bin Salman's sport

investment initiative, with a sovereign wealth fund worth over \$700 billion.

Al-Ittihad was founded in 1927 in Jeddah. It has played its entire history in the Saudi Pro League, the top soccer division in the country.

Erbil To Host 2025 Arab Gulf Championship

The Arab Golf Association decided to host the 2025 Arab Gulf Championship in Erbil. The decision was made in a meeting held in Casablanca, Morocco.

Kurdistan Regional Sports Director Sardar Ismail attended the meeting on behalf of the governor of Erbil Omed Khoshnaw. In the meeting, Ismail expressed Erbil's willingness to host the 2025 championship in Erbil and further emphasized that with the financial support of the Kurdistan Regional Government, Erbil could potentially be the owner of the largest golf arena in Iraq and the region.

The President of the Golf Association and its members unanimously voted for Erbil to host the 2025 Arab Golf Championship. The General Director of



Sport of the Kurdistan Region presented two proposals for the organization of the tournament to Yasir al-Rumayyan, the president of the Arab Golf

Association, and Majed al-Sorour, the general secretary of the association. The association currently presents several different upcoming tournaments on

its website, for example in Morocco, Lebanon, and Saudi Arabia. The Arab Golf Federation was founded in 1974 during Al Nile and Arz

Golf Championships. The organization represents the collective interests of 19 member nations, whose mission, which is recognized by the R&A

and Arab Olympic Committee, is to streamline governance of the game in the Arab world and enhance the overall development of golf by creating more and better playing opportunities for its members.

The love for the golf game is on the rise now after Erbil Hills Golf Club was built last year. The club features a world class 18-hole championship course designed by internationally recognized golf course architects, Dye Designs. Located just 10 minutes from Erbil International airport, the private gated development will include 300 exclusive residences, a spa and wellness center and other excellent amenities, offering a new style of luxury living in this part of the Middle East.



Iraq and Kurdistan Region's continued significance for great-power politics



By **Jawad Qadir** *

The strategic importance of Iraq, particularly its Kurdistan Region, and the wider Middle East cannot be overstated for both the United States and the European Union. A complete withdrawal from this region would undoubtedly result in a political and military vacuum that could be swiftly filled by regional powers, as well as other semi-global players. Given the emergence of these international forces, neither the US nor the EU is prepared to abandon this crucial region.

Simultaneously, the United States' strategic focus is increasingly shifting towards containing China, with a heightened emphasis on the Asia Pacific region. Nevertheless, it is important to note that this strategic realignment should not be misconstrued as a complete withdrawal from the Middle East by the United States. The US, particularly under the Obama administration, sought to establish stability and peace in the Middle East by creating a manageable equilibrium between the Shiite and Sunni factions. This objective prompted the Obama administration to engage in negotiations with Iran regarding its nuclear activities. The intention behind incorporating Iran into the international order was to mitigate its influence in the region through its proxies, thereby fostering a more stable environment. Regrettably, this policy did not yield the desired outcomes as the Middle East experienced significant upheavals following the Arab Spring, compounded by the destabilizing actions of regional powers, as well as other international actors.

Currently, it seems that the United States has relinquished its belief in the effectiveness of the policy of equilibrium in the region. Instead, there is a gradual inclination towards reorganizing the region through enhanced cooperation with the European Union and the United Kingdom. While the United States concentrates on constraining China, the European Union may progressively assume a larger role in the Middle East. In a more traditional sense, it is probable that the Middle East will transform into an area of influence for the European Union, with ongoing support from the United States.

In the foreseeable future, significant political transformations in the region may transpire at this juncture. Following the dissolution of the Soviet Union, consistent policy discrepancies have arisen between the United States and the European Union. Since the fall of the Berlin Wall in 1989, the United States has placed particular emphasis on im-

plementing "nation-building" strategies in nations such as Iraq and Afghanistan, with the aim of establishing stability, security, and integration into the global order. However, this nation-building approach has proven to be largely unsuccessful and is currently not a policy objective within the US political and intellectual establishment, at least temporarily.

In the post-Soviet era, the EU adopted a strategy of creating "nation-states" by dismantling the existing multi-ethnic political entities in the Balkan region. This approach aimed to facilitate the formation of new nation-states and their subsequent integration into the EU. It is anticipated that the EU will likely adopt a similar Balkanization model in the Middle East in the foreseeable future. Consequently, the coming decades may witness a significant restructuring of the Middle East, potentially resulting in a more violent process compared to the Balkans. This increased violence can be attributed to the potential involvement of various regional and global powers, each driven by their own conflicting interests.

The enduring and protracted global power struggles, along with their repercussions on the Middle East, are bound to yield outcomes for the Kurdish national question in the broader region and specifically in the Kurdistan Region of Iraq (KRI). Amidst the context of the aforementioned global power struggles, the political leaders of the Kurdistan Region confront a multitude of intricate matters that necessitate astute policy formulation and execution.

Upon analyzing the KRI, there are several fundamental and challenging issues that pose a threat to the survival and further development of the Kurdistan Region in this tumultuous part of the world. These issues include the current position of the KRI inside Iraq, its relationship with the neighboring countries, and the challenges posed by corruption and administrative fragility.

The aforementioned concerns are intricately connected, and their effects on one another are significant. It is recommended that the KRI adopt comprehensive and unified approaches and remedies to address these intricate and demanding predicaments.

* *This article is a concise rendition originating from a broader essay co-authored by Dr. Azad Aslan and Jawad Qadir.*

Cuneiform Inscriptions Found in Erbil Citadel



Archeologists engaged in investigating ancient remnants inside the historic Erbil citadel successfully interpreted an old inscription discovered on an unearthed tablet dating back a millennium.

The head of the artifacts department at Erbil citadel, Hezha Zahir, communicated said that the archaeologists at the work site have interpreted the cuneiform inscriptions found on the tablet during the dig as a missive intended for Ishtar, the ancient Mesopotamian deity of love, war, and fertility.

Zahir stated that one of the inscriptions translated to 'great queen,' a descriptive for Ishtar, leading to the belief that her temple was located within the Erbil citadel. He further elaborated, while other lines of text were also translated, the term 'great queen' was the most definitive and

could be substantiated.

The cooperation between the Citadel's artifacts department and the French Institute led to this discovery. Erbil Citadel was designated a World Heritage Site by UNESCO in 2014. The citadel is located in the downtown of Erbil and dates back to 4,000 years BC. Renovation efforts began around 2009 and they are still ongoing. The citadel overlooks Shar Square and the central bazaar and is a popular destination for tourists and locals with a souvenir shop, textile, and geology museum.

Millions of tourists, mostly from Iraqi central and southern provinces, visit the Kurdistan Region annually, with the majority choosing Erbil province as their destination.