

We pictorize Kurdistan Region for you!

THE KURDISH GLOBE

No: 579' Monday, January 22, 2024

Missile Attack on Erbil Raises Global Concerns



P 6,7

Editorial

Kurdistan Region pays the price for its progress!



By | *Dr. Salar Othman*

The Kurdistan Region, as a democratic constitutional entity and a beacon of hope for the Kurds, has been realizing its aspirations. This region has a history; indeed, its roots trace back to the 1991 uprising, but beyond that, its historical foundations extend to the enduring Kurdish struggle. Therefore, the Kurdistan Region epitomizes the protracted endeavor of the Kurdish people. If it has had the opportunity, for instance, since the 1991 uprising, it has achieved progress and translated its dreams into reality.

The will of the Kurdistan Region, often referred to as the Kurdish will of progress, sets it apart from the central state it coexists with, namely Iraq, as well as from its neighbors. This dynamic has engendered a governance paradox in the region, one that opponents of the Kurdistan Region find difficult to accept, leading them to persistently create problems for it.

Undoubtedly, any diligent historical researcher and journalist can delve into history to understand how the Kurds possess a strong will to progress in their lives, distinct from others.

We will not tire of addressing this question. Yes, the Kurds aspire to change and progress, aiming to present

a distinctive example. The will of the Kurdish people has prompted others to make barriers and create problems for the Kurdistan Region.

Numerous narratives exist regarding the challenges faced by the Kurdistan Region, each time accompanied by different excuses, all of which deviate from the truth.

The truth is that the Kurds seek to set a positive example, countering the negative examples surrounding them. Their neighbors, being sovereign states with influence, possess the ability to withhold employees' salaries and the budget of the Kurdistan Region with the stroke of a pen, and with a decision to unleash missiles upon us.

Hence, the Kurds find themselves caught between good and evil, entangled in a debate with a lengthy history. The crucial question is: What should the Kurds do? Should they abandon their virtuous values and replicate evil, or should they persevere in their goodwill?

The answer to this question is that the Kurds cannot succumb to wrongdoing because they are victims of evil. Therefore, they must first unite within themselves and garner support from benevolent forces, whether internally within Iraq or from neighbors, both near and far.

US-led coalition reduces financial aid to Peshmerga forces



The Secretary General of the Peshmerga Ministry announced that based on the agreement between the Kurdistan Regional Government's (KRG) Peshmerga Ministry and the US Department of Defense-Pentagon, coalition financial assistance to the Peshmerga forces has been reduced by 25%.

Lieutenant Colonel Bakhtiar Mohammed, Secretary General of the Peshmerga Ministry stated that it is part of the agreement that every year 25 percent of the aid will be reduced until it will over by 2026 when the Peshmerga forces are reunited, adding that there is also a chance for the agreement to be renewed then.

As per an agreement between the Ministry of Peshmerga and Pentagon, \$20 million in cash would be paid monthly to the unified brigades of Peshmerga. However, "the coalition's aid to the KRG has decreased to \$15 million a month since October last year," Lieutenant Colonel Bakhtiar Mohammed stated.

In October 2022, the Kurdistan Regional Government (KRG) signed an agreement between the Pentagon and the Peshmerga Ministry, according to which the Peshmerga Ministry would receive \$20 million in cash monthly. In October last year, the aid was reduced by 25 percent and in October 2026, the aid will be cut off completely as the agreement is expires.

The Secretary General of the Peshmerga Ministry said that in addition to cash, the coalition continues to provide weapons and ammunition, advice and training to the Peshmerga forces.

The Peshmerga official mentioned that the agreement can be renewed again and the cooperation can continue after 2026, but it is up to the KRG to what extent they will abide by the agreement," he said

One of the important conditions for the renewal of the agreement with the Peshmerga forces is having good coordination with the Iraqi forces and the coalition; as well as the reunification of the Pesh-

merga forces, the Lieutenant Colonel explained.

The US-led coalition forces have been present in the Kurdistan Region since 2014 and have provided assistance to the Peshmerga forces in various ways.

The KRG, in collaboration with the International Coalition Forces, has made significant strides in the past few years towards reforming, unifying, and institutionalising the Peshmerga forces. This initiative aims to bring these forces under the centralised command of the Ministry of Peshmerga Affairs.

In mid 2023, KRG Prime Minister Masrour Barzani approved the formation of three new unified brigades. These brigades, namely Brigades 26, 28, and 30, which comprise an estimated 5,400 officers and Peshmerga from Units 70, are now operational as the Second Division of the Peshmerga Command's Chief of Staff.

Bridging Divides: Kurdistan Region President and Baghdad Forge Unity on Salaries, Security, Challenges

Kurdistan Region President Nechirvan Barzani emphasized, "The salary problem of the KRG employees is a duty and must be resolved. Targeting the Peshmerga forces poses a direct threat to Iraq's overall peace and stability."

The Kurdistan Region President, Nechirvan Barzani, recently engaged in discussions with the Iraqi Prime Minister and other senior officials in Baghdad, covering crucial topics such as security and salary concerns.

Commemoration of Mohammed Baqir Hakim's Assassination

Kurdistan Region President Nechirvan Barzani attended a ceremony in Baghdad commemorating the assassination of Mohammed Baqir Hakim, known as the "Martyr of the Mihrab," alongside Iraqi President Latif Rashid and Iraqi Prime Minister Mohammed Shia Sudani. Barzani delivered a speech during the event and later met with key figures, including the head of the Iraqi Supreme Judicial Council, the leader of the Taqadूम Party, the leader of Ahl al-Haq, and the leader of the Rule of Law Coalition.

Challenges in the Kurdistan Region

Kurdistan President Barzani highlighted the challenging situation faced by employees and residents of the Kurdistan Region, emphasizing the urgent need for resolution. The Kurdistan Regional Government (KRG) has called on all political parties and Iraqi parliament members to support a resolution addressing the budget and salaries of KRG employees.

Barzani stated, "Now, due to the lack of budget and salaries in the Kurdistan Region, employees and people are living in a very difficult situation, negatively impacting all sectors in the Kurdistan Region." He urged political leaders, factions, and Iraqi parliament members to support the resolution promptly.

Drone Attacks' Impact on Kurdistan Region

Kurdistan Region President Barzani addressed

the detrimental effects of drone attacks by Iraqi militias on coalition bases in the Kurdistan Region and Peshmerga forces. He condemned these attacks as a violation of the commander-in-chief's authority, attributing them to disruption in government operations and increased chaos. Barzani warned that such attacks not only cause anxiety throughout Iraq but also provide ISIS terrorists with opportunities to escalate their activities.

US-Led Coalition Forces and Iraq's Stability

The issue of the remaining US-led coalition forces in Iraq is currently a focal point in Iraqi politics. Kurdistan Region President Barzani emphasized that these forces were deployed at Iraq's request to combat ISIS. He urged the federal government and Prime Minister Sudani to engage in peaceful negotiations for a joint plan, ensuring cooperation between the coalition and Iraq's future.

Barzani stressed, "Iraq's national institutions must fulfill their responsibilities, or the Iraqi people will face new problems and complications. Iraq's stability is of utmost importance and maintaining it should be a top priority."

Kurdistan Region President Engages with Iraqi Parties for Resolution

Continuing his diplomatic efforts, Kurdistan Region President Nechirvan Barzani held meetings with key Iraqi figures, including Prime Minister Mohammed Shia al-Sudani, Taqadूम Party leader Mohammed al-Halbousi, Supreme Judicial Council Chairman Fayeq Zeidan, Ahl al-Haq leader Qais al-Khazali, and Rule of Law Coalition leader Nuri al-Maliki. Following these discussions, Kurdistan Region President Barzani also met with US Ambassador to Iraq Alina Romanowski.



Discussion on Budget, Salaries, and Oil Exports

The leaders delved into the measures taken by both the Kurdistan Regional Government (KRG) and the Iraqi Federal Government to address pressing issues related to budget, salaries, and oil exports. A statement from the Kurdistan Regional Presidency emphasized the importance of resolving these matters in accordance with the constitution, with a specific focus on safeguarding the well-being of the citizens of the Kurdistan Region. It stressed that the salary concerns of Kurdistan Region employees should be kept distinct from other unrelated issues.

Focus on Election Results in Disputed Areas

Kurdistan Region President Barzani and Iraqi leaders engaged in comprehensive talks covering the political and security landscape in Iraq, the state of relations between Erbil and Baghdad, the resolution of bilateral issues, and the ongoing threats posed by terrorism in the region. Recognizing the challenges, they underscored the necessity of collaboration between political parties to navigate the current difficulties, uphold political stability, and mitigate the repercussions of the tense regional situation. Additionally, discussions centered around the outcomes of the Iraqi provincial council elections and matters pertaining to areas under Article 140 of the constitution.

Security Concerns: Targeting Peshmerga Impacts Iraq's Stability

During a meeting with Iraqi Supreme Judicial Council Chairman Fayeq Zeidan, Kurdistan Region President Barzani and Zeidan emphasized the pivotal role of the judiciary in resolving national issues. They also condemned attacks on diplomatic envoys, coalition forces, and the targeting of the Peshmerga. The statement from the Kurdistan Region Presidency stressed the need to protect the peace and security of the country, warning that the targeting of Peshmerga forces poses a direct threat to Iraq's overall peace and stability.

Global Relations and Regional Stability

In discussions with the leader of the Ahl al-Haq group, Qais al-Khazali, Kurdistan Region President Barzani highlighted the significance of maintaining peace and stability in Iraq, distancing the nation from regional conflicts. Both leaders stressed support for dialogue and understanding to address issues between Erbil and Baghdad. The meeting also touched upon the Iraqi provincial council elections and underscored the importance of Iraq's relations with regional and global partners based on common interests.

Addressing Salary Concerns and Political Stability

Kurdistan Region President Barzani continued

his diplomatic engagements by meeting with the leader of the Rule of Law Coalition in Baghdad to underscore the urgency of resolving the salary issue faced by KRG employees. Barzani emphasized, "The salary problem of the KRG employees is a duty and must be resolved."

Subsequently, Barzani held discussions with former Iraqi Prime Minister Nuri al-Maliki to delve into the political and security situation in Iraq, as well as the ongoing challenges between Erbil and Baghdad. A statement highlighted the imperative for Iraqi political parties and communities to collaborate in confronting the current challenges and complex regional threats. Both leaders stressed the need for Iraq to remain free from terrorism and not be entangled in regional tensions. The statement emphasized the protection of the supreme interests of the country and the resolution of issues through understanding, based on the constitution, while safeguarding the rights of all communities.

The leaders also addressed various pressing issues, including drone attacks on the Kurdistan Region, Iraq's relations with neighboring countries, the persistent threat of ISIS, and the repercussions of the Gaza war on the region.

Post-meeting, the leader of the Rule of Law Coalition expressed an ongoing commitment to discussions with Kurdistan Region President Barzani,

emphasizing the shared destiny between Baghdad and the Kurdistan Region. Nuri al-Maliki reiterated the importance of improving the situation in the Kurdistan Region for the benefit of both regions.

Regarding KRG employees' salaries, al-Maliki affirmed, "Our brothers also discussed the salaries of the Kurdistan Regional Government employees, and we will talk to the government about paying their salaries. This is a duty and must be resolved. How can the problems between the Kurdistan Region and the central government continue?"

Engagement with US Ambassador to Iraq

Kurdistan Region President Barzani further met with US Ambassador to Iraq, Alina Romanowski, engaging in discussions about the political and security landscape in Iraq, Erbil-Baghdad relations, and the ongoing talks between the KRG and the Iraqi Federal Government. They shared perspectives on the latest regional developments, exploring possibilities and consequences.

Both sides emphasized the paramount importance of maintaining peace and stability in the region and preventing the escalation of tensions. The discussions also touched upon the broader context of US relations with Iraq and the Kurdistan Region, addressing various issues of mutual interest.

Kurdistan Regional President Nechirvan Barzani at press conference:

In Baghdad we discussed at length the livelihoods and wellbeing of the people of Kurdistan Region

President Nechirvan Barzani held a press conference in Baghdad on Sunday evening, where he answered questions from journalists about his meetings in the Iraqi capital.

Listed below are his speeches to journalists.

"Our purpose in coming to Baghdad was mainly to participate in the celebration of Iraq's Martyrs' Day. We attended the ceremony and since yesterday we have been involved in many meetings and discussions with many Iraqi politicians, including the prime minister and Iraqi political parties. These meetings are essential. It is natural that we, as part of this country, visit Baghdad to address the problems that need to be addressed and find solutions to them.

"In the meetings held today and yesterday, we focused on two main issues. First, we discussed the livelihood of the people of Kurdistan. From our perspective, the Kurdistan Regional Government has fulfilled all its obligations to Baghdad, and now it is important that Baghdad respond and ensure equal treatment of wages for all Iraqi provinces, including the Kurdistan Region. Wages should not be politicized or used to pressure the Kurdistan Region. We believe that the Prime Minister understands the issue well and will do everything to resolve it. In today's session of the Council of Ministers he made an unexpected decision, which was not originally on the agenda. However, he expressed great enthusiasm to put this matter on the agenda of the meeting. From our perspective, this decision is a positive start to solving these problems.

"Another concern that we have addressed with all parties is the issue of security. We firmly believe that these drone attacks against the Kurdistan Region will harm the security of the Kurdistan Region as well as the whole of Iraq, because [our security] is interconnected and cannot be separated. Although further discussions are



needed, we remain hopeful that this matter will be successfully resolved.

"I also want to express my gratitude to the people of the Kurdistan Region and to the hardworking workers of the public sector for their persistence. Throughout the Kurdistan region, they were very patient and dedicated. I sincerely hope that this year the topic of salaries will not enter the newspapers again. Employees of the Kurdistan Regional Government (KRG) should be paid fairly and on time, just like the salaries of all other employees in Iraq.

When asked about the deadline to resolve the salary issue between the Kurdistan Regional Government and the Federal Government, President Nechirvan Barzani said: "Fortunately, the delegation of the Kurdistan Regional Government took the issue very seriously. It's not just me, but the whole delegations from the Kurdistan Regional Government and Erbil have worked diligently on this issue. Our goal of cooperation is to address the root cause. Paying workers their rightful wages should not be in the headlines."

Regarding the amendment of the budget law

and the arrangement of the subsidies of the Kurdistan Region, he said that

"It is really important to state that more than 875 billion dinars are needed to cover the salaries of the Kurdistan Region. It is important to emphasize that the sum applies only to salaries. The Kurdistan Regional Government is dealing with this issue has shown extreme transparency and diligently provided all the necessary information to Baghdad. Now Baghdad must react and guarantee the salaries of public officials in the Kurdistan Region

In response to a question about the decision of the Iraqi Council of Ministers to give 615 billion dinars to the Kurdistan Region and the visit of President Nechirvan Barzani to Baghdad, President Barzani said,

"I appreciate that the prime minister mentioned yesterday that the question will be presented at the meeting of the Council of Ministers. However, it is important to note that this is not just my effort. The Kurdistan Regional Government had already sent a delegation to Baghdad before my visit, they have been continuously engaged in extensive discussions and efforts with

Baghdad. We all worked hard to solve this Baghdad problem.

The president said to what extent the prevention of drone attacks against the region of Kurdistan was discussed and possible guarantees were given,

"The deployment of drones against the Kurdistan region directly violates the sovereignty of Iraq and undermines the authority of the country. Prime Minister of Iraq as the commander-in-chief of the armed forces. Our position on this issue is unwavering - it the problem must be resolved. Regarding the guarantees, I did not receive them. However, I expressed the position of the Kurdistan region very clearly in my speech in the commemoration of [Martyrs]. We reiterate our position and emphasize that those who carry out these illegal attacks are first and foremost violating the sovereignty of Iraq. There is no difference between Erbil and Baghdad in terms of Iraqi sovereignty, both cities are part of Iraq. These attacks on Erbil by some armed forces are not only an offense to the Kurdistan Region, but also an offense to the sovereignty of Iraq. These operations must be stopped immediately and must not continue. There is a mutual understanding of the importance of this matter and we remain hopeful that a solution will be found."

President Nechirvan Barzani discussed the budget, set the deadline, the process of amending the law and the upcoming meeting of the Iraqi Independent Electoral Commission and the Kurdistan Presidency: "The main focus of the Kurdistan Regional Government is on the budget law, which guarantees the rights of the workers of the Kurdistan Region. As for the [Kurdish Parliament] elections, it is very unfortunate that they have been significantly delayed and, even more so badly, the delay undermines the legitimacy of the institutions of the Kurdistan Region. We have requested a delegation from the Electoral Commission to visit Erbil. In addition, I will be meeting with my colleagues in the Presidency over the next two days to discuss the appropriate timing of the elections. It is very unfortunate that when we set the election date during the presidency of the Kurdistan Region, it cannot be implemented for several reasons. I sincerely hope that this will

be the last time we encounter such a situation."

Asked about the possibility that the expected end of the current electoral commission will further delay the elections, the president replied:

"We must strive for elections before [end of the current commission]."

Asked about the unresolved issue of salaries and financial benefits between the Kurdistan Region and Baghdad, President Nechirvan Barzani said:

"We are hopeful and based on the observations of the Prime Minister of Baghdad, all parties want to resolve this. We are doing everything possible to find a legal solution to this matter."

President Nechirvan Barzani commented on the Iraqi government's decision to allocate funds to the Kurdistan Region and the possibility of continuing oil exports from the Kurdistan Region,

"We are discussing with the Prime Minister and the Minister of Oil the resumption of oil exports from the Kurdistan Region. We hope that this problem will be resolved in the near future. Although I cannot give an exact timetable, I believe that progress has been made to find a solution. As I said before, the public workers of the Kurdistan Region have each right to demand his salary. We are optimistic that today's decision by the Council of Ministers will mark the beginning of the end of this matter.

When asked about the election process for the next governor of Kirkuk, President Nechirvan Barzani said:

"Once the results are announced and all complaints are investigated, negotiations will of course begin. As the KDP, we are holding discussions with the PUK with the aim of reaching an agreement in both Kirkuk and Mosul that serves the interests of the people of Kurdistan. Thank you for your attention."

Kurdistan's Resilience Shines at Davos: PM Barzani Condemns Erbil Attack, Gains International Support

Economic Triumph: KRG Secures Contracts and Investment Surge

Prime Minister Masrour Barzani of the Kurdistan Region of Iraq (KRG) took center stage at the 54th World Economic Forum in Davos, Switzerland, reaffirming the Kurdistan Region's global standing through crucial diplomatic engagements.

Diplomatic Engagements with World Leaders

During the three-day summit, Prime Minister Barzani held key meetings with world leaders, including French President Emmanuel Macron, Hungarian President Catalin Novak, UN Secretary-General Antonio Guterres, and other prominent figures. The discussions aimed at bolstering diplomatic ties and garnering international support for the Kurdistan Region.

Show of Solidarity Amidst Crisis

The diplomatic efforts coincided with a tragic event—the Iranian Revolutionary Guards' missile attack on Erbil. Prime Minister Barzani's presence at Davos provided an opportunity for global leaders to express immediate support and solidarity with the Kurdistan Region, condemning the attack and extending condolences to the KRG.

Kurdistan's Message Amplified

Utilizing the platform provided by Davos, Prime Minister Barzani conveyed the Kurdistan Regional Government's positions on various fronts. The summit served as a strategic venue to amplify the message of the KRG, garnering increased support and solidarity for the Kurdish people on the international stage.

Vision for the Future

In a tweet on December 17, 2024, Prime Minister Barzani outlined the Kurdistan Region's commitment to progress despite challenges. He stated, "Our resolve will not be shaken. From today, we will double down on our aggressive program



in banking, digital payments, energy, agriculture, and manufacturing. There is no alternative. We will transform Kurdistan."

Davos 2024: Building Confidence

The 54th World Economic Forum in Davos, held under the theme "Building Confidence," attracted participation from 100 governments, numerous international institutions, and organizations. With over 1,000 global leaders, experts, youth representatives, entrepreneurs, and media representatives, the summit provided a comprehensive platform for discussions on global economic issues and regional collaborations.

KRG Delegation's Dynamic Engagement

In a noteworthy presence at the 54th World Economic Forum in Davos, Prime Minister Masrour Barzani led a diverse delegation, including government officials, investors, and entrepreneurs from Kurdistan, marking their first participation at the global summit. Initiated by the Prime Minister, the Kurdistan House was inaugurated in Davos, serving as a pivotal platform to showcase the region's political, economic, and investment potential.

Economic Impact: Contracts and Commemoration

During their stay, Kurdistan investors and entrepreneurs

engaged in over 80 meetings, resulting in the signing of significant contracts. Notably, on December 17, 2024, a ceremony at Kurdistan House paid tribute to the late Peshraw Dzeyi, a poignant moment attended by officials, Davos guests, investors, and entrepreneurs. The ceremony honored his memory alongside an Iraqi business friend, Karam Mikhail.

Kurdistan House: A Catalyst for Global Recognition

Highlighting the impact of the Kurdistan House, the Chairman of the Kurdistan Regional Investment Board emphasized its crucial role in showcasing the political, economic, and investment capabilities of the Kurdistan Region to the countries participating in Davos.

Prime Minister's Message of Perseverance and Truth

Prime Minister Masrour Barzani conveyed a powerful message during the forum, stating, "This year at the World Economic Forum, we told the story of Kurdistan's perseverance, introduced local companies to the world, and strengthened ties." He denounced misrepresentations targeting innocent civilians and pledged a resilient return next year.

Positive Outlook from International Experts

International relations

experts highlighted Prime Minister Barzani's diplomatic prowess, anticipating favorable outcomes for the Kurdistan Region. They acknowledged his ability to effectively convey the struggles of the Kurdish people to the international community, leveraging his diplomatic skills and knowledge.

Prime Minister's Vision for the Future

In a message on December 18, 2024, Prime Minister Masrour Barzani affirmed, "We will return stronger next year," underscoring a commitment to continued global engagement and strengthening Kurdistan's position on the international stage.

Diplomatic Revolution: Unprecedented Success

International relations expert Rebwar Babkaei praised Prime Minister Masrour Barzani's participation in Davos as a groundbreaking diplomatic revolution, characterizing it as an unparalleled achievement in the political history of the Kurdish liberation movement. Babkaei emphasized the Prime Minister's strategic diplomatic steps to garner international support, particularly in addressing Iran's aggression against the Kurdistan Region, with a focus on Erbil.

Strategic Principles in Action

Babkaei outlined three key principles characterizing Prime Minister Barzani's political approach

in Davos. Firstly, the Prime Minister conveyed an unequivocal message, demonstrating his persuasive capabilities. Secondly, through modern diplomatic language and a wealth of knowledge, he effectively communicated the oppression faced by the Kurdish people to the international community. Lastly, Babkaei affirmed that the Prime Minister's meetings in Davos would yield positive outcomes for the future of the Kurdish people.

Refusal to Meet Iranian Foreign Minister: A Defiant Message

Notably, Prime Minister Barzani's refusal to meet with the Iranian Foreign Minister conveyed a clear message—upholding the sovereignty of the Kurdistan Region and preserving the memory of the Erbil attack's martyrs. This refusal stood as a resolute response to previous assertions questioning the Kurdish leadership's strength in international relations.

High-Stakes Meeting with US Secretary of State

Prime Minister Barzani met with US Secretary of State Anthony Blinken, who strongly condemned the Erbil attack as a violation of Iraqi sovereignty. Expressing condolences to the victims' families, Secretary Blinken affirmed the United States' commitment to addressing such threats, emphasizing President Joe Biden's concern for

regional security. The Prime Minister underscored the unjustifiability of the attacks, urging the international community to break its silence and emphasized the need to resolve issues between the Kurdistan Region and the federal government, ensuring constitutional rights.

Unified Condemnation: UK Foreign Secretary and Prime Minister Barzani

Prime Minister Masrour Barzani held discussions with UK Foreign Secretary David Cameron in Davos, centering on the Iranian attack on Erbil. Expressing condolences, Secretary Cameron strongly condemned the assault, labeling it unjustified and a breach of Iraqi sovereignty. The Prime Minister acknowledged the UK's sympathy and support, emphasizing mutual cooperation in the fight against ISIS and terrorism. The meeting underscored the significance of nurturing friendly relations between the Kurdistan Region and the UK and prioritizing the resolution of issues with the federal government, ensuring constitutional rights and financial entitlements.

Strategic Dialogue with French President Macron

In another significant diplomatic encounter, Prime Minister Barzani met with French President Emmanuel Macron to address the Iranian attacks on Erbil. The leaders emphasized the real threat posed to the Kurdistan Region and the clear violation of Iraqi and Kurdish sovereignty. Both sides affirmed the paramount importance of maintaining security and stability in Iraq and the Kurdistan Region. President Macron conveyed deep condolences and reiterated France's unwavering support for the Kurdistan Region. Prime Minister Barzani expressed gratitude for France's continuous support, emphasizing their historical commitment to the Kurdish people at various stages.

Missile Attack on Erbil

President Massoud Barzani: "They can kill us,



President Massoud Barzani: "They can kill us, but rest assured they cannot take away our resolve."

In a tragic incident, the Kurdistan Regional Government (KRG) city of Erbil became the target of a missile attack, resulting in the death of four civilians and injuries to six others, as reported by the Security Council.

KRG Security Council: IRGC Attacks Baseless, Urges International Response

The KRG Security Council disclosed that on December 15, 2024, at 11:30 pm, the Iranian Revolutionary Guards (IRGC) launched several ballistic missiles at civilian areas in Erbil. Six individuals sustained injuries, with some in critical condition.

IRGC's Baseless Excuse: KRG Rejects Allegations, Calls for International Action

The IRGC claimed the attack was directed at Iranian opposition groups, an assertion vehemently rejected by the KRG. Describing the excuse as

baseless, the KRG emphasized that Erbil, known for its stability, has never posed a threat to any entity.

Violation of Sovereignty: KRG Urges Global Response to IRGC's Aggression

"This is a blatant violation of the sovereignty of the Kurdistan Region and Iraq. The federal government and the international community must not remain silent about this crime," asserted the KRG, urging a robust response to this transgression.

US Officials Confirm: No Americans Among Erbil Attack Victims

According to two US officials, no Americans were among the victims of the missile attack on Erbil. The IRGC claimed responsibility for the assault, stating it was executed through a ballistic missile.

KRG's Commitment: Collaboration for Inquiry into Erbil Attack

In response to the attack,

the KRG Security Council expressed its commitment to collaborating with a federal government committee to uncover the facts surrounding the incident. A source within the KRG Security Council condemned the "cowardly missile attacks" and highlighted the strong federal government reaction, calling for accountability.

Erbil's Assurance: Governor Emphasizes Preparedness for Citizens' Safety

Erbil Governor Omid Khoshnaw assured citizens of the city's calm state, emphasizing that security forces and police have taken all necessary precautions for any potentially unwanted situation.

President Barzani's Resolve: Condemns IRGC's Ongoing Attacks

President Barzani delivered a poignant message to the public, condemning the series of missile and drone attacks by the IRGC. He underscored the resolve of the Kurdish people, stating, "They can

kill us, but rest assured they cannot take away our resolve."

President Barzani's Message to Iran: Invites Iranians to Witness Truth in Erbil

President Barzani expressed disdain for the perpetrators, noting that the recent attack resulted in the tragic loss of innocent lives, condemning it as the utmost shame for those responsible. He extended a message to the Iranian people, emphasizing the baselessness of the attackers' claims and inviting them to witness the truth in Erbil.

Global Concerns: International Community Awaits Unified Response

As the world condemns this act of aggression, concerns over regional stability and the safety of civilians continue to escalate. The international community awaits further developments and a unified response to address this violation of sovereignty.

International Outcry

and Urgent Appeals Following Erbil Attack

The Kurdistan Regional Presidency has forcefully denounced the Iranian Revolutionary Guards' assault on Erbil, declaring the excuses offered by the IRGC as entirely baseless and untrue. In a statement, the Presidency expressed deep condemnation for the hostile attack, which claimed the lives of several civilians and left others injured. The Presidency extended sincere condolences to the victims' families, emphasizing their wish for a speedy recovery for the injured.

KRG PM, Masrour Barzani: Denounces "Unjustified and Cowardly" Attack

The KRG Prime Minister, Masrour Barzani, addressed the media in a press conference to denounce the "unjustified and cowardly" attack by the Revolutionary Guards on Erbil. Expressing deep sorrow over the loss of lives, including Mr. Peshraw, his daughter, and other family members, Barzani called for swift

recovery for those injured.

KRG's Call for Action: Urges Iraqi Government to Investigate

"This hostile attack against the Kurdistan Region has no reason and is without justification," asserted Prime Minister Barzani. He highlighted the efforts made by the Kurdistan Region to serve its people and foster peaceful relations with neighboring countries. Barzani urged the Iraqi government to move beyond mere condemnation, emphasizing the need for substantive action to prevent further attacks.

Masrour Barzani's Appeal: Seeks International Support for Kurdistan

PM Masrour Barzani appealed to the international community for assistance in putting an end to such assaults on the innocent and powerless people of Kurdistan. He called for concerted efforts to ensure peace and freedom in the region, emphasizing the right of the Kurdish population to live without fear

Raises Global Concerns

but rest assured they cannot take away our resolve.”



of attacks.

Global Concerns Persist: Urgent Need for Unified International Response

As the world watches the developments in Erbil, the global community is compelled to respond to these appeals, raising concerns about regional stability and the safety of civilians in the Kurdistan Region. The urgency for a unified international response is underscored by the gravity of this attack and the potential implications for peace and security in the region.

Global Outcry Intensifies: Political Responses to Erbil Attack

KDP: Denouncing Unjust Aggression

The Political Bureau of the Kurdistan Democratic Party (KDP) issued a stern condemnation of the Iranian Revolutionary Guards' assault on Erbil, characterizing it as an unjust and criminal attack. The party firmly asserts that this aggression aims to destabilize the Kurdistan Region,

creating chaos while violating international law and the sovereignty of both the Kurdistan Region and Iraq.

PM Sudani's Warning: A Disturbing Escalation

Iraqi Prime Minister Mohammed Shia Sudani, reacting to the attacks on Erbil, labeled them as a dangerous development that poses a clear threat to Iraq. Describing the assault as a hostile act against the nation, Sudani highlighted the tragic targeting of residences, including that of a Kurdish family with children. He emphasized the dangerous implications of such actions, emphasizing the potential harm they pose to the strong ties between Iraq and Iran.

Sudani stressed Iraq's commitment to defending its rights, vowing to pursue all necessary diplomatic and legal measures in alignment with national principles. The gravity of the situation is underscored by the urgent need for a robust response to counteract the evolving crisis.

Diplomatic Fallout: Canceled Meetings in Davos

In the wake of the Iranian missile attack on Erbil, Kurdistan Regional Government (KRG) Prime Minister Masrour Barzani and Iraqi Prime Minister Mohammed Shia Sudani have canceled a scheduled meeting with Iranian Foreign Minister Hossein Amir-Abdollahian in Davos. The meeting, originally set for December 17, 2024, was abandoned due to the direct fallout from the Iranian Revolutionary Guards' missile assault on Erbil.

The cancellation was not unilateral; rather, both the KRG and Iraqi Prime Ministers jointly rejected the proposed meeting. Iranian Foreign Minister Hossein Amir-Abdollahian, seeking to engage with regional leaders, had requested the meeting, only to be refused by both leaders in light of the recent attacks. This diplomatic snub signifies a significant strain in relations following the assault on Erbil, further complicating the

already delicate diplomatic landscape.

The Vatican Condemns Erbil Attacks: Pope Francis Urges De-escalation

Pope Francis has strongly condemned the missile attacks by Iran on the Kurdistan Region of Iraq (KRG). Expressing condolences to the victims of the Iranian Revolutionary Guards' assault on Erbil, Pope Francis calls for restraint from all parties to prevent the escalation of tensions in the Middle East and avoid war scenarios.

US Secretary Blinken: Firm Condemnation of Iranian Attacks on Kurdistan

US Secretary of State Anthony Blinken has unequivocally condemned the Iranian Revolutionary Guards' missile attacks on Erbil. Asserting the close partnership between the United States and the Kurdistan Regional Government (KRG), Blinken stressed the condemnation of Iran's aggression. His tweet emphasizes the clear

stand against the attacks on the Kurdistan Region.

Iraqi Investigation: House Targeted was Civilian, Not Mossad Headquarters

Iraqi National Security Advisor Qassem al-Araaji, leading the committee probing the missile attacks on Erbil, clarified that the targeted house was that of a civilian businessman, not an Israeli Mossad base. Al-Araaji highlighted the existing security agreement between Iraq and Iran, revealing that steps had been taken to address the situation. He refuted suspicions of a Mossad presence, emphasizing the civilian nature of the targeted property.

British Ambassador Condemns Breach of Sovereignty in Erbil Attacks

British Ambassador to Iraq, Stephen Charles Hitchen, has condemned the missile attacks by the Iranian Revolutionary Guards on Erbil. Expressing condolences to the families affected, Hitchen labeled the attacks a vio-

lation of Iraqi sovereignty and a threat to security in the Kurdistan Region.

Arab League Takes Decisive Action: Condemns Iranian Aggression

In response to the Iranian missile attack on Erbil, the Arab League Council convened an emergency ministerial meeting, resulting in Resolution No. 8989. Key points include a strong condemnation of the aggression, rejection of Iranian excuses, and an assertion that Iran will bear consequences for the violation. The resolution underscores the unity and sovereignty of Iraq, calling for support from the UN Security Council to address this breach of neighborliness and international law. Arab ambassadorial councils worldwide are instructed to convey the decision, with the Secretary-General of the Arab League monitoring the situation and engaging with relevant UN authorities. The Iraqi government has officially submitted a complaint to the UN Security Council.

Estonia President Visits Erbil: “Impressive to See Erbil Developing so Fast”

The Estonian President expresses his astonishment of the rapid development in Erbil, following a visit to Kurdistan Region.

Alar Karis, President of Estonia was welcomed in Erbil International Airport by Nechirvan Barzani, President of Kurdistan Region on 17 January 2024. Karis expressed his appreciation to the bilateral security cooperation between Estonia and Kurdistan Region, while expressing his astonishment to the fast development in Erbil, promising further intense bilateral collaboration through “digitalization” in a statement on his account on X following his visit to the capital of Kurdistan Region.

Nechirvan Barzani, President of Kurdistan Region stated following the meeting with his Estonian counterpart



that, in addition to the development of the ties between Estonia and Kurdistan, they aspire to draw upon Estonia’s suc-

cessive experience and expertise, especially in the fields such as information technology and e-governance, to which

Estonia is a leading example. He added that Kurdistan Region Government delegation has travelled to Estonia reg-

ularly in order to benefit from Estonia’s expertise on transparency and institutionalization.

The visit coincided

with missile attacks by Iran on the house of a Kurdish businessman in Erbil, Kurdistan Region, killing and injuring several civilians, including children. President of Kurdistan Region also discussed with the Estonian President the IRGC’s missile attacks on Erbil on 15th January, the region’s developments, humanitarian situation in Gaza, as well as the war in Ukraine.

Estonia has deployed 110 soldiers in Kurdistan as a part of the US-led global coalition against ISIS since 2014. It has been aiding Peshmerga and Iraqi army with arms in the fight against ISIS since then, in addition to providing over 9 million us dollars for the humanitarian sector, demining and stabilization in the region.

Kurdistan Presidency’s Met with IHEC: Date for Parliamentary Election to be Set

Spokesperson of Kurdistan Region’s Presidency (KRP) stated that a date for Kurdistan’s parliamentary election will be announced according to Iraqi High Electoral Commission (IHEC)’s timetable, following consultation with the political parties. Head of IHEC says that they will manage the election after the date is announced by President of Kurdistan Region, regardless of whether the election system is single constituency, or otherwise multiple.

A delegation from KRP met with IHEC led by judge Omar Ahmed Muhammed, head of IHEC on Tuesday, 16 January 2024, shedding the light on discussions about setting a date for the 6th parliamentary election in Kurdistan. Following the meeting, Dilshad Shahab, KRP’s spokesperson and judge Omar Ahmed Muhammed held

a press conference.

“Consultation with Political Parties”

Kurdistan Parliamentary election was initially planned to be held on 25 February this year, however, due to some “factors out of control”, the IHEC announced its inability to manage the election on the planned date. In the bilateral meeting between Kurdistan Region Presidency and the IHEC, both sides are believed to have reached an understanding, while IHEC is kick-starting the preparations for the election. “We will assess our situation with the relevant parties in the KRG, but we are tied to certain timelines in the future, because the IHEC’s term expires in July and it is the end of the academic year at schools, therefore, we must set a suitable time for the process to en-

sure its success” KRP’s spokesperson stated.

The Kurdistan Region Presidency is determined to consult the political parties, as the process concerns all parties, later on, the Kurdistan Region President will assign a date for the election that’s compatible with the IHEC’s agenda.

Head of IHEC Omar Ahmed Muhammed described the meeting as fruitful, and stated in the press conference that the Commission will be ready to manage a free and fair election for Kurdistan Parliament in an appropriate time. Muhammed emphasized the Commission’s readiness for all options, including single, or multiple constituency of the election system, and to manage the elections in the “best” manner once Kurdistan Region President sets the date. He also added that the Commission is ready

in terms of logistics and technicality.

Although the commission had worked on scheduled election on 25 February, however, due to “some unexpected challenges” the election will not be held in the set date.

“Kurdistan will take all possible legal and constitutional means against the attacks”: KRP Spokesperson

In a press conference, the Kurdistan Region Presidency’s spokesperson, Dilshad Shahab offered the Presidency’s condolences to the families of the victims of “the massive terrorist and unfair attack” on the capital of Kurdistan Region on 15 January 2024. “We express our deep concern, and call on all the Federal institutions and authorities, to take steps in cooperation with Kurdistan Region,

to prevent the violation of Iraq’s border and sovereignty, and destabilization of the security of Kurdistan, as inseparable part of Iraq’s security and stability” Dilshad Shahab stated. “This is not the first threat on Kurdistan Region and won’t be the last one. But we believe in our existence and the struggle of our people. What’s being done now is a political matter. Whoever believes in a unified Iraq, and Kurdistan Region being part of it, must be concerned of defending the sovereignty of this country” the Spokesperson said, expressing his deep concern over targeting civilians.

Shahab promised a serious stance to be taken on this issue, pointing out that the issues between states are regulated by international law. The attack on Erbil comes at a time while the Islam-

ic Republic of Iran has a representation in the Kurdistan Region and an official consulate.

KRP’s Spokesperson also stated that they will take every possible legal and constitutional means “to defend the sovereignty of Kurdistan Region”, adding that steps will be taken with a unified voice and stance to protect the interests of the people. “Iraqi parties also must have a clear response” he reaffirmed.

In his recent visit to Baghdad before the last attack on Erbil, the Kurdistan Region President delivered a clear message to the Iraqi political parties and Federal authorities regarding the incidents and attacks that targeted Peshmerga forces and Erbil International Airport, warning that it will lead to Iraq’s instability in general.

The Secretariat of the Iraqi Council of Ministers called to stop the eviction of Newroz residents from Kirkuk

The General Secretariat of the Iraqi Council of Ministers asked the Iraqi Ministry of Finance to speed up the implementation of an earlier decision requiring the eviction of residents of the Newroz neighborhood in Kirkuk. Representatives of the Newroz neighborhood will soon meet with the Secretary General of the Iraqi Council of Ministers to discuss the problems of their neighborhood.

The letter seeks to stop the execution of a previous letter involving the 11th division of the Iraqi army in houses near Kirkuk last week, and troops went to Kurdish families and demanded that they vacate their houses.

The letter was signed by Vice Chancellor Farhad

Nimatullah Hussein and sent to the Ministry of Defense, Justice, Reconstruction and Housing, the General Secretariat of the Council of Ministers, the Office of the Council of Ministers, the Operational Council of Kirkuk Province, and the financing of the General Secretariat of the Council of Ministers was also sent.

Five representatives of the Newroz region are since yesterday in Baghdad to solve the housing problem and the representative of the neighborhood of Newroz Hemn Qasim told Rudaw on Sunday, Vice President of the House of Representatives, Shakhawan Abdullah; they will meet Dr. Hamid Ghazi, Secretary General of the Iraqi Council



of Ministers, to provide them with evidence and documents showing that the houses in the Newroz neighborhood belong to

the Ministry of Finance. December 2, 2023 The Iraqi army attacked the Newroz area of Kirkuk and ordered the evacua-

tion of 122 houses built during the Baath regime. The Secretariat of the Iraqi Council of Ministers previously sent a letter to

the Ministry of Finance on 28 December 2023 requesting the eviction of the residents of the neighborhood, stating that the land belongs to the Ministry of Finance and the Ministry of Finance. Protection.

The former Kirkuk Provincial Council passed a law allowing citizens to stay in 122 houses until the government paid them compensation, but the Iraqi army attacked the neighborhood and confiscated any families that were not at home. senior parliamentarians lined up.

The Iraqi army finally retreated under pressure, but seven houses in the Newroz neighborhood were handed over to the police..

Iraqi government to send 618 billion dinars for the public service salaries

The Iraqi Council of Ministers has decided to send 618 billion dinars to provide salaries to the Kurdistan Regional Government (KRG) as part of the Kurdistan Region's share in the 2024 budget.

"The 618 billion dinars that the Iraqi Council of Ministers has decided to send is not a loan, but it part of the Kurdistan Region's share in the 2024 budget law," Justice Minister Khalid Shwani said.

The Iraqi government had previously sent a loan of 700 billion Iraqi dinars to the KRG to distribute salaries of the public sector employees, but has reduced the amount, as following adjustments made by the Iraqi Ministry of Finance, they estimated that the amount of money required for employees' salaries is around 615 billion IQD while the KRG should resolve the deficit from its local revenues.

KRG has been in deficit in recent months even when the Iraqi government was sending 700 billion dinars of loan to pay salaries. Therefore, the KRG delegation had requested to increase the 700 billion dinars to 750 billion dinars, however the KRG demand has not been met yet.

According to media reports, the Iraqi government will provide the KRG with the 618 billion

IQD until the budget law is amended, with the hope that the amendment would completely resolve the issue of salaries of public employees in the Kurdistan Region.

Last week, the Kurdistan Region President Nechirvan Barzani was in Baghdad for two-days-visit and held several meetings with government and party officials to discuss the KRG's budget share and continued drone and rock-

et attacks on the Kurdistan Region.

In a speech on the occasion of the commemoration of the martyrs of the Mihrab, President Nechirvan Barzani said, "Now due to the lack of budget, employees and people live in a very bad financial situation "It is the responsibility of all of us to resolve this problem as soon as possible, because the Kurdistan Region and its employees are part of

Iraq."

Meanwhile, A ministerial delegation from the KRG visited Baghdad in early January to continue budget talks with the Iraqi federal government. Such visits are expected to continue until a final agreement is reached between the KRG and the Iraqi federal government.

Iraq deprives Kurdish doctors, health workers who died of COVID from state compensation

According to a decree by the Iraqi Council of Ministers, the Iraqi Ministry of Health has asked the families of doctors and health workers who died of the coronavirus to contact them in order to receive 10 million dinars as compensation, however, the decision does not apply to doctors who died in the Kurdistan Region.

The Iraqi Ministry of Health has sent a letter to all hospitals and health centers to notify the families of what it called "coronavirus martyrs" including health workers and doctors who died during the COVID outbreak to visit the pen-



sioners department of the ministry to complete the

necessary paperwork and receive the compensa-

tion. Riaz Abdul Amir Hala-

fi, director general of administration, finance and legal affairs at the Iraqi Ministry of Health stated that "The decision does not apply to the Kurdistan Region," saying that the Kurdistan Regional Government (KRG) should work on compensating the health workers.

In 2021, the Iraqi Council of Ministers issued the decree No. 95, which was related to the payment of 10 million dinars to the families of doctors and health workers who died during the COVID outbreak. According to the Ministry of Health statistics, the number of doctors and health workers who died of COVID

is 214.

According to the KRG's Ministry of Health, 466,963 people have been infected with the virus since March 2, 2020, and 7,468 have died, including a number of doctors and health workers.

In 2005, the Kurdistan Region and Iraq agreed that Kurdistan's budget share would be 17 percent to reflect the needs of its population. However, Iraqi government during Nouri al-Maliki's premiership in 2014 cut the KRG share and successive Iraqi governments since then have not fully delivered the payment.

Expect a consistent growth in the economic sector of the Kurdistan Region



By **Jawad Qadir** *

The economic growth and development of the Kurdistan Region over the past two decades have been remarkable. The region has witnessed a substantial increase in its GDP per capita, which currently stands at approximately \$7,038 as of 2022 (Board of Investments BOI 2022). This growth can be attributed to the influx of investments from both domestic and international sources since 2006.

One of the key factors driving the economic expansion of the Kurdistan Region has been the significant amount of capital invested in the region. The total capital invested has surpassed an impressive sum of \$66 billion, which has played a crucial role in fueling economic growth and development (BOI 2022). This influx of investments has allowed for the establishment and expansion of various industries and sectors, contributing to job creation and increased economic activity.

The Kurdistan Region has recognized the importance of stability, security, and economic progress in the region, and has made significant efforts to achieve these goals. One crucial aspect of their strategy has been to attract foreign direct investment (FDI) and promote the growth of a thriving private sector.

Since its establishment, the Kurdistan Region Board of Investment has been successful in granting over 1,120 investment licenses. These licenses have resulted in a cumulative capital of more than \$67 billion, with approximately \$12 billion coming from foreign direct investment and collaborative ventures. This significant influx of capital has not only contributed to the economic growth of the region but has also created numerous job opportunities for the local population.

The efforts have been instrumental in diversifying the economy of the Kurdistan region. Previously reliant on oil and gas, the region has now seen investments in various sectors, including agriculture, tourism, manufacturing, and infrastructure development. This diversification has not only reduced the

region's dependence on a single industry but has also contributed to the overall stability and sustainability of the economy.

The Kurdistan Region has attracted investments from a wide range of sources, including both domestic and international investors. This diversification of investment sources has helped to mitigate risks and ensure a stable and sustainable economic growth trajectory. Domestic investments have been driven by the region's favorable business environment, including supportive government policies, tax incentives, and a skilled workforce.

International investments have also played a significant role in the economic development of the Kurdistan Region. The region's strategic location, rich natural resources, and potential for economic growth have attracted foreign investors from various sectors, including energy, construction, tourism, and agriculture. These investments have not only brought in capital but also technology, expertise, and access to international markets, further enhancing the region's economic potential.

The economic growth and development of the Kurdistan Region have had a positive impact on various aspects of society. The increased GDP per capita has led to improved living standards, better access to education and healthcare, and increased opportunities for social and economic mobility. The region has also witnessed infrastructure development, including the construction of roads, airports, and other essential facilities, which has further facilitated economic growth and connectivity.

However, it is important to note that the economic growth of the Kurdistan Region has not been without challenges. The region has faced political instability, security concerns, and occasional conflicts, which have impacted its economic progress. Additionally, the region's heavy reliance on oil revenues has made it vulnerable to fluctuations in global oil prices, highlighting the need for further diversification and sustainable economic policies.

Rawanduz: Magic Beauty and Hidden Crucial History

From Rawanduz, continue journey passing by the Pank Resort, enjoy remarkable views of waterfall Gali Ali Beg and Bekhal



Rawanduz, located in the northeastern part of Kurdistan near the borders of Iran and Turkey, offers breathtaking views that are sure to delight any hiker exploring its canyons. The Gali Ali Beg waterfall, a two-hour drive from Erbil, is situated at the convergence of the Rawanduz and Sidakan rivers. This mountain resort is popular during the summer.

Close to the town, there is Pank resort which has 100 apartments available for rent. Two meeting rooms: one can hold 600 people and the other holds 100 people. The restaurant seats 500 persons. There are many different sports activities like football, basketball, swimming pool, internet service, laundry service and car parking.

As you make your way towards Rawanduz, the countryside becomes increasingly dramatic with snake-like rivers winding through the canyons. There are numerous viewpoints to choose from, making it difficult to decide which one to visit. Gali Ali Beg Waterfall is the place where many people take pictures with the 5000 IQD currency marking the waterfall.

Bekhal waterfalls, a popular summer tourist resort, showcases one of the region's remarkable natural landmarks.

Near the base of the mountain, you can find shops and food stalls. During the summer, people can be seen paddling at the top of the waterfall, but in winter, the low temperatures makes it less appealing. Tourists can stop at the ski resort of Korek Mountain for dinner while enjoying the picturesque views.

About 10 km east of Bekhal Waterfalls, you'll find Rawanduz, a town perched on the edge of a gorge overlooking majestic mountains.

Rawanduz, historically, holds the distinction of being the oldest district in the region. It was once the capital of the Emirate of Soran, a powerful ruling entity that governed vast areas of the Iraqi Kurdistan Region for centuries. Throughout its history, Rawanduz faced numerous battles against the Ottoman forces and valiantly resisted their formidable army. However, following the downfall of the Emirate, Rawanduz became a district under the jurisdiction of the county of Kirkuk within the Ottoman State.

Rawanduz found itself under the administration of the newly created division. Due to its status as the capital of a Kurdish Emirate and the notable contributions of its inhabitants to the Kurdistan Liberation Movement, oppressive

regimes sought to suppress Rawanduz through various means, including downgrading its administrative status to that of a sub-district. There were even plans to destroy the city and displace its residents, but the 1991 Uprising of the people of Kurdistan prevented such actions.

Recognizing the historical significance of this city, the Kurdistan Regional Government elevated Rawanduz's status by reclassifying its administration as a district affiliated with Erbil. However, with the creation of the districts of Choman, Mergasor, and Soran, which were previously dependent on Rawanduz, the district's size diminished. Presently, Rawanduz consists of one sub-district, Warte, and twelve villages. The city itself is situated on a rocky slope and is encompassed by two deep valleys.

The entire region is encompassed by towering mountain ranges that meet the clear blue sky, creating a breathtaking landscape. A road connects the city of Soran to Rawanduz, allowing one to catch a glimpse of Rawanduz's public and private buildings, which showcase an architectural style that harmoniously blends with the mountainous surroundings.

Unraveling the Dynamics of the Evolving US Strategy in Iraq”



By *Saadula Agrawi*

The intricacies of the United States' strategy in Iraq have witnessed significant transformations in recent years, navigating the complex interplay of geopolitical forces, internal political dynamics, and the ongoing threat posed by extremist groups. In this comprehensive exploration, we delve into the multifaceted issues shaping the contemporary US policy in Iraq, drawing on recent research, examples, and nuanced insights to provide a detailed examination of the challenges and opportunities facing both nations.

The withdrawal of US combat troops from Iraq in 2011 marked a pivotal moment, intending to conclude the Iraq War. However, this move inadvertently created a security vacuum, allowing extremist groups, prominently ISIS, to gain prominence. Recent research suggests that the power vacuum and the challenges within Iraq's security apparatus contributed to the resurgence of extremist activities. In response, the US has recalibrated its strategy, placing a renewed emphasis on intelligence-sharing, targeted operations, and the bolstering of Iraqi security forces. The evolution of the US strategy is evident in the ongoing shift towards advisory and training roles. Recent research highlights a strategic pivot towards empowering local forces to autonomously counter security threats. Training programs led by the US, collaboration with regional partners, and the integration of advanced technologies exemplify this dynamic approach. Real-world examples underscore the commitment to building the capabilities of Iraqi security forces, fostering a self-sufficient

and resilient defense apparatus.

The political landscape in Iraq is rife with challenges, with a delicate balance required in managing relations between the United States and neighboring countries. Recent research sheds light on the intricate nature of these relationships, emphasizing the need for a stable governance system. Notably, the protests in Iraq, driven by grievances related to corruption, unemployment, and inadequate public services, underscore the urgency of addressing governance issues. The US strategy must navigate this complex terrain, recognizing the importance of promoting stability at both the national and local levels. Ongoing strategic dialogues between the United States and Iraq continue to grapple with critical questions, reflecting the dynamic nature of the situation. Recent examples include discussions on the safety of US forces amid heightened regional tensions, efforts to control armed militias, and Iraq's commitment to reducing its dependence on energy imports. Research indicates that these discussions are central to shaping the future of US-Iraq relations, and real-time examples illustrate the complexity and urgency of these negotiations. Recent developments underscore the potential consequences of a failed strategic dialogue. Research suggests that a breakdown in communication could lead to increased instability, risking the resurgence of extremist threats.

The economic ramifications, exacerbated by the recent situation, highlight the urgency of maintaining a constructive dialogue. Real-world examples showcase the ripple effects that a failure in strategic negotiations could have on the overall stability of Iraq and the broader region. Recent initiatives illustrate US efforts to contribute to Iraq's future, focusing on combating corruption, infrastructure development, and educational initiatives. Research underscores the impor-

portance of aligning these efforts with Iraq's evolving needs, particularly in the context of socio-economic challenges exacerbated by the pandemic. Real-world examples showcase the impact of targeted interventions in areas such as anti-corruption measures, infrastructure projects, and educational partnerships, emphasizing the commitment to long-term stability and prosperity. Recent research underscores the enduring significance of the existing Joint Status of Forces Agreement and Strategic Framework Agreement. These historical agreements form the bedrock of ongoing discussions, providing a foundation for addressing mutual expectations and obligations. The relevance of these agreements in the context of evolving geopolitical dynamics remains a critical aspect of the dialogue, with real-world examples highlighting how the principles outlined in these agreements guide present-day negotiations.

Navigating Iraq's multifaceted landscape demands a comprehensive understanding of the historical context, recent developments, and the ongoing challenges shaping the US strategy. The strategic dialogue between the United States and Iraq serves as a crucial platform for addressing security concerns, governance issues, and regional dynamics. Through a detailed examination, incorporating recent research and real-world examples, this analysis underscores the importance of a nuanced understanding of each other's expectations, fostering mutual cooperation, and jointly shaping a future of stability and prosperity for both nations in the midst of the complex geopolitical landscape in the Middle East. The Middle East has long been a region marked by geopolitical complexities, regional rivalries, and intricate diplomatic challenges. In recent years, the United States has undergone a reevaluation of its policies in the Middle East, reflecting shifts in

global dynamics and regional priorities. This article explores the contours of the new US policy in the Middle East, examining key developments, strategic objectives, and the implications for regional stability. The traditional focus of US policy in the Middle East has revolved around issues such as counterterrorism, nuclear proliferation, and regional stability. However, the evolving global landscape, coupled with changing dynamics within the region, has prompted a reassessment of priorities. The new US policy seeks to balance the pursuit of American interests with a more pragmatic approach to regional challenges. A notable shift in the new US policy is an emphasis on multilateral engagement. The United States recognizes the interconnectedness of regional issues and the need for collaborative solutions. Initiatives such as rejoining the Iran nuclear deal Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action or JCPOA and supporting diplomatic efforts in resolving conflicts in Yemen and Syria underscore a commitment to diplomatic avenues and partnerships.

Iraq remains a central focus in the new US policy in the Middle East. The decision to reengage with the JCPOA is a cornerstone of this approach, reflecting a commitment to preventing nuclear proliferation and reducing tensions in the region. The US seeks to address concerns over Iran's nuclear program through diplomacy, while also engaging with regional partners to counter Iran's destabilizing activities. The new policy places a greater emphasis on addressing humanitarian concerns in the Middle East. Ongoing conflicts in countries such as Yemen and Syria have resulted in significant human suffering. The United States is actively supporting diplomatic efforts to find peaceful resolutions to these conflicts and providing humanitarian aid to alleviate the plight of affected populations.

The Middle East's strate-

gic significance in global energy markets is a key consideration in the new US policy. As the world undergoes an energy transition, there is a growing recognition of the need to diversify energy sources and promote sustainability. The US is engaging with Middle Eastern countries to explore opportunities for economic cooperation, innovation, and investments in renewable energy. While the fight against terrorism remains a priority, the new US policy places a greater emphasis on addressing the root causes of extremism. Efforts to promote economic development, education, and good governance aim to create conditions that undermine the appeal of extremist ideologies. This holistic approach recognizes that a sustainable solution requires more than military interventions. The United States continues to strengthen its alliances in the Middle East, with a focus on security cooperation. The new policy seeks to bolster the capabilities of regional partners to address common threats and challenges. This includes initiatives to enhance military capabilities, joint exercises, and intelligence-sharing arrangements to promote regional stability. The implementation of a new US policy in the Middle East is not without challenges. Regional complexities, historical rivalries, and differing national interests necessitate careful navigation. Striking a balance between engaging with key stakeholders and addressing diverse priorities will be critical for the success of the policy. The recent spate of attacks on US military bases in the Kurdistan Region underscores the fragility of the security situation in Iraq and in this strategically significant area. The motives behind these attacks are complex and multifaceted, requiring a careful examination of regional dynamics. As tensions continue to escalate, it is essential for all parties involved to prioritize diplomatic solutions and dialogue to

de-escalate the situation and ensure the long-term stability of the Kurdistan Region and the broader Middle East. The evolving situation warrants close attention from the international community as efforts are made to navigate the complexities of the region and address the root causes of these attacks. I believe that it should be noted that two large and comprehensive issues in Iraqi politics dominate all other issues: the balance between the United States and the neighbor countries with regard to foreign policy and at the local level, and how to create a stable and sustainable governance system that will bring prosperity to Iraq, enhance the legitimacy of the government, and bring to power Iraqi politicians who serve the people. Which is the source of their political power? These two issues now greatly limit Iraq's ability to emerge from its current political crisis and have the potential to destroy the country and prevent it from being an effective state managing its affairs.

The balance between the United States and Iraq neighbor's countries is considered a thorny problem for Iraqi politics because the political camps in Iraq depend on the patronage of both countries or on the balancing function that they perform. The new US policy in the Middle East reflects a nuanced and adaptive approach to the region's challenges. By prioritizing diplomacy, multilateral engagement, and addressing humanitarian concerns, the United States aims to contribute to regional stability and foster collaborative solutions. The evolving dynamics of the Middle East will continue to shape and test this policy, highlighting the need for flexibility, strategic foresight, and sustained diplomatic efforts in navigating the complex landscape of the region.



Social insurance systems in Middle East

By *Roger Corregon*

Social insurance systems are systems in which social contributions are paid by users or others, or by persons working on behalf of their employees, with the aim of providing the right to social benefits, in the current or subsequent period, and payment to users or other participants or to their dependents or bequeathed to them. These systems can be private or affiliated with government institutions. And social insurance disbursements in cash or in kind, based on certain circumstances that may determine people's social livelihood either through increased or decreased access to its resources. Covered emergencies vary between insurance systems and others, but we include some entitlements within health insurance. Health insurance does not depend only on covered emergencies, but also depending on the method of providing coverage. Social Security refers to government action programs that aim to enhance the well-being of the population by taking assistance measures that ensure access to sufficient resources for food and shelter and to improve the health and well-being of populations in large and potentially vulnerable sectors such as children, the elderly, the sick and the unemployed. Services that provide social security are often called social services. Article 22 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights states that every person, as a member of society, has the right to social security and has the right to have it provided to him, through national effort and international cooperation and in accordance with the organization and resources of each State, economic, social and cultural rights. Which are indispensable for his dignity and the free development of his personality. In simpler terms, this means that the signatories agree that the society in which a person lives should help him develop his personality and make the most of all the

benefits (culture, work, social welfare) offered to him in the country.

The law is "among the priorities of draft laws in the government program, as well as our confirmation of the principles stipulated in the Constitution, and in response to developments in the current and future stage. Social insurance, where people receive benefits or services in recognition of their contributions to an insurance program. These services usually include the provision of retirement benefits, disability insurance, survivor benefits, and unemployment compensation. The Services provided by the government or designated bodies responsible for providing social security. This may include, in different countries, medical care, financial support during unemployment, illness or retirement, health and safety at work, aspects of social work and even industrial relations. Basic security regardless of participation in specific insurance programs where eligibility may be an issue on the other hand. For immediate assistance given to newly arrived refugees to obtain basic necessities such as food, clothing, housing, education, money and medical care. Terminology in this field in the United States differs somewhat from the rest of the English-speaking world. The general term for a program of work to support the welfare of the population in the United States is a welfare program, and the general term for all such programs is simply welfare. In American society, it can be said that the term sponsorship has negative connotations. In the United States, the term Social Security refers to a specific social insurance program for retirees and the disabled. In the Roman Empire, Emperor Trajan expanded social welfare to help the poor. Trajan's program received praise from many, including Pliny the Younger. In Jewish tradition, charity (represented by the He-

brew word tzedakah) is a matter of religious obligation rather than donation. Charity is now treated as a sacred tax or tithe to the poor, as are sacred practices such as allowing the poor to gather the remaining crop at the sides of the field and harvest during Shmita (the year of Shmita). Voluntary charity, prayer, and repentance are among the things that help alleviate the consequences of bad actions in Jewish culture. The Song Dynasty (from 1000 AD) supported various forms of social assistance programs, including the establishment of homes for the elderly, public clinics, and cemeteries for the poor. According to Robert Henry Nelson, the medieval Roman Catholic Church operated a system of far-reaching universal social welfare for the poor... The concepts of social welfare and retirement salaries were put into practice in early Islamic law of the Islamic Caliphate as a form of zakat (charity), one of the five pillars of Islam, since the time of the Rightly Guided Caliph Omar ibn al-Khattab in the seventh century. Taxes (including zakat and tribute), collected in the treasury of the Islamic government, were used to provide income for the needy, including the poor, the elderly, orphans, widows, and the disabled. According to the Islamic jurist Abu Hamid al-Ghazali (Al-Ghazali, 1058-1111), the government was also expected to stockpile food supplies in each region in the event of a disaster or famine. There is relatively little statistical data on transfer payments before the middle Middle Ages. From the Middle Ages until the Industrial Revolution, the function of welfare payments in Europe was mainly fulfilled by paying the poor personally or in charity. In these early times, there was a much larger group considered to be poor than in the 21st century. Early social welfare programs in Europe included the English Poor Law of 1601, which

gave parishes responsibility for providing poverty relief to the poor. This system was significantly modified by the English Poor Law of 1834, which introduced a system of poorhouses. It was mostly in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries that the system of regulating state welfare provision was introduced in many countries. Otto von Bismarck, Chancellor of Germany, introduced one of the first welfare systems for the working classes in 1883. In Great Britain, the Liberal government headed by Henry Campbell-Bannerman and David Lloyd George introduced the National Insurance System in 1911, a system that was later expanded by Clement Attlee. The United States did not have an organized welfare system until the Great Depression, when a system of emergency relief measures was introduced under President Franklin Roosevelt. In addition, the New Deal focused mostly on a job creation program and stimulating the economy through government spending on projects rather than cash payments. Income Maintenance... This policy is usually implemented through several different programs designed to provide residents with income during times when they are unable to care for themselves. Income maintenance depends on a combination of five main types of program. Benefits after financial resources survey. This is financial assistance provided to those who are unable to cover basic needs such as food, clothing and housing, due to poverty or lack of income due to unemployment, illness, disability or child care. While assistance is often in the form of financial payments, those eligible for welfare can usually access health and education services for free. The amount of support is sufficient to cover basic needs and eligibility is often subject to a comprehensive and complex assess-

ment of the applicant's social and financial situation. See also, Income support. Non-aid-based benefits. Many countries have special programs, run without conditions for contributions and without any solicitation of financial resources, for people in particular need - for example, veterans of the armed forces, people with disabilities and the elderly. Discretionary benefits. Some programs rely on the discretion of an administrator, such as a social worker. Blanket or categorical benefits, also known as a grant. These are non-contribution-based benefits provided to entire sections of the population without survey of financial resources or need, such as family allowances or New Zealand's public superannuation (known as New Zealand Superannuation). The also, Alaska Permanent Fund Distributions. The term social protection refers to the provision of a range of benefits available (or unavailable) from the state, the market, civil society and households, or through a combination of these bodies, to the individual/household to reduce multidimensional deprivation. This deprivation can affect both less active poor people (e.g. older people, people with special needs) and active poor people (e.g. the unemployed). This broad framework makes this concept more acceptable in developing countries than the concept of social security. Because social security is more applicable in circumstances where large numbers of citizens depend on the formal economy for their livelihood. Through defined contributions, Social Security can be administered. However, in the context of the widespread informal economy, formal social security arrangements are almost non-existent for the vast majority of the working population. Besides, in developing countries, the state's ability to reach the vast majority of the poor may be limited by

its limited resources. In such a context, multiple agencies that can provide social protection are important in terms of political considerations. Therefore, the social protection framework is able to hold the state responsible for providing support to the poorest sectors by organizing non-governmental bodies.

Collaborative research from the Institute for Development Studies, which discusses social protection from a global perspective, suggests that social protection advocates fall into two main categories: "instrumentalists" and "activists." "Instrumentalists" argue that extreme poverty, inequality and vulnerability are dysfunctional in achieving development goals eg, the Millennium Development Goals. In this view, social protection consists of putting risk management mechanisms in place that will compensate for deficient or missing insurance and other markets, until such time as private insurance companies can play a more important role in society. While "activists" argue that persistent extreme poverty, inequality and vulnerability are signs of social injustice and structural inequality and see social protection as a right of citizenship. Targeted care is a necessary step between humanity and the ideal concept of a guaranteed social minimum. Iraq look forward to strengthening cooperation with all parties to ensure the effective implementation of the law, and to include millions of workers in the private sector under the umbrella of social security. Priority will now be given to the Social Security Department or the Authority according to the new name in the law, to modernize its procedures and systems to efficiently manage the reforms introduced under the law, with the support of the International Labor Organization.

Real development indicators classify Iraq as one of the poor countries

By *Dr. Mathew Jose* *

Iraq contains a wide range of diverse natural resources, including oil, which is the main source of revenue in the country, and natural gas, as Iraq has large reserves of it, in addition to coal, which is abundantly available, especially in Kirkuk Governorate, and there is also a wealth of minerals, including phosphate, sulfur, zinc, iron, copper, and lead. Gold, silver, and uranium, not to mention the fresh water provided by the Tigris and Euphrates rivers for irrigation and human use.

The real development indicators classify Iraq as one of the poor countries and that it is at the bottom of the ranking among the countries of the world in terms of education and health, in addition to the fact that the infrastructure is completely destroyed, not to mention the electricity problem that has not been solved for decades. As for the standard of living, Baghdad is classified as the worst. It is a city to live in the world, as a large percentage of the population lives in rent and slums, while more than 35 percent of young people suffer from unemployment. All of this is a result of wars and conflicts, the spread of administrative and financial corruption, and the lack of diversification of the economy, but rather relying solely on oil as a resource to bring revenues to the state. We call for serious work to advance the country, as there is a need for "ambitious and strategic economic partnerships that will bring revenues, move the economic wheel, reduce the unemployment rate, and achieve prosperity for the people." Reaching the large market value of Iraqi wealth of oil, gas and minerals was not reflected in the reality of the citizen. Iraq contains several natural resources that enabled it to rank ninth in the world in terms of possessing raw resources that would contribute to reviving its economy that is completely dependent on oil and prospering the lives of its citizens, as the market value of the oil reserves in the ground exceeds 15 trillion dollars, but at the same time Not exploited optimally by successive



governments. The specialists in economic affairs point out that these natural resources, estimated at trillions of dollars, qualify Iraq to have a strong economy by adopting strategic goals such as speeding up and increasing production and exports, efficiently managing and spending revenues, and succeeding in investing in infrastructure, leading to achieving popular prosperity, but in At the same time, they stressed that achieving the large market value of Iraqi wealth was not reflected in the reality of the citizen.

"Iraq is considered one of the most important countries in the world, if not at the forefront of nations rich in natural resources or raw materials within the scope of the international classification of resources on the planet, as it possesses natural diversity and economic quantities in the capacity of raw material reservoirs capable of manufacturing, exporting, or national industrial use.

International economic circles estimate "the market value of these raw wealth in our country at more than 15 trillion dollars in current value, which places it in ninth place on the global list, topped by the Russian Federation with about 75 trillion dollars, followed by the United States of Amer-

ica with about 45 trillion dollars.

We find that the Iraq has a unique model of economic development that places it in the ranks of developed nations, and development can begin strongly from the theory of manufacturing raw or natural materials and exporting them to lead development," indicating that "the Iraqi economic model of development has the ability to manufacture raw exports with dozens of natural resources that can be exploited, provided Conducting high-tech manufacturing chains that are capable at the same time of generating internal transformative manufacturing links, which are called 'value-added chains generated from links or backward linkages of inputs and outputs' within the Iraqi National Factory, through which the process of manufacture and industrialization is maximized and added value flourishes before being exported as products. They serve as production inputs to world markets. The importance of knowledge is the impact of this on the prosperity of economic development and the growth rates required to be achieved, in light of the degree of development of physical capital accumulation and its rise in value, or in terms of the increase

in our country's gross domestic product. The market value of Iraqi wealth is only an estimated number of resources hidden in the ground, which are unexploited and have not been invested or converted into assets or capital assets by extracting them as useful raw materials and carrying out manufacturing stages on them, in order to generate real income from this, which will contribute to the well-being of the citizen. He continued, "Therefore, such a matter requires putting forward an economic model for investing in basic resources directed to export in order to generate significant development and sustained growth in the country's gross domestic product. Iraq has oil reserves of approximately 150 billion barrels, making it the ninth largest country in the world, while natural gas reserves reach 1.9 percent of the global reserves, ranked 13th. As for free sulfur, its proven reserves reach 600 million tons, and the industrial reserve of phosphate exceeds 10 billion tons, ranking second in the world. In addition to other natural resources such as salt and sodium sulfate, as well as limestone and dolomite, in addition to silica sand, quartzite, and hundreds of hydrocarbon sites that have not been ex-

cavated.

The Natural resources are the key to economic and social progress if a long-term strategy is developed for a mineral investment policy for these resources. These Iraqi natural resources, estimated at trillions of dollars, qualify Baghdad to be a strong economy by adopting strategic goals such as speeding up and increasing production and exports, efficiently managing and spending revenues, and succeeding in investing in infrastructure to achieve popular prosperity.

Iraq's oil reserves are classified as the fifth largest in the world, amounting to 140 billion barrels. The largest Iraqi oil fields are located in Basra and Kirkuk governorates. After that, come the fields of Maysan, Baghdad, Salah al-Din, Diyala, and Nineveh governorates. The Majnoon oil field is one of the largest oil fields in the world and is the largest producing field in Iraq, producing about a third of the country's oil. The field is located in southern Iraq, 60 km from the center of Basra Governorate. The field was discovered by the Brazilian company Bras petro in 1975 AD. Work on extracting oil from the field stopped for long periods during the Iran-Iraq war. In 2007, the French compa-

nies Total and the American Chevron signed an agreement with the Iraqi government to explore the field. In May 2018, the American company KBR announced that it had been awarded a contract by the Basra Oil Company (BOC) to develop the field. Also, there is the Rumaila field, which is one of the largest giant oil fields in the world. It is located in southern Iraq, 50 km west of the city of Basra. The field also produces approximately one-third of Iraq's oil production. The field represents 12% of Iraq's oil reserves. The Iraq Petroleum Company discovered the Rumaila field in 1953. A number of companies share work in this field. The British Oil Company has an operating share of 47.6%, while China's PetroChina holds 46.4%, compared to 6% for the Iraqi company SOMO. The field is of interest to the Iraqi government. In December 2022, the Iraqi Oil Minister visited Rumaila and stressed his country's endeavor to raise the field's production capacity by 300 thousand barrels per day, to reach one million and 700 thousand barrels.

* PHD. California University 33 Camino Capistrano, Suite B San Juan Capistrano, CA 92675

Implementing Electronic Health Records (EHRs) in Iraq:

A Comprehensive Approach to Revolutionize Patient Data Management and Strengthen Healthcare Systems



By *Dr. Nojdar Akreyi*

In recent years, Iraq's healthcare system has grappled with multifaceted challenges, ranging from infrastructure deficiencies to limited access to quality healthcare services. To address these multifaceted issues, the adoption of Electronic Health Records (EHRs) has emerged as a transformative tool. The potential of EHRs to revolutionize patient data management promises enhanced efficiency, improved patient outcomes, and a more resilient healthcare system. This op-ed explores the nuanced benefits of EHR implementation in Iraq, delving into specific aspects that contribute to comprehensive healthcare improvement.

At its core, an Electronic Health Record serves as a vast digital repository encompassing an individual's entire health history—comprising medical records, diagnoses, medications, treatment plans, immunization details, allergies, radiology images, and laboratory test results. Beyond mere digitization, EHRs offer real-time access to critical patient information, fostering seamless communication among healthcare providers and ensuring a continuum of care.

The introduction of EHRs in Iraqi hospitals holds the promise of substantial efficiency gains by transforming digital data management. Transitioning from paper-based records streamlines processes, reducing the time and resources spent on manual record-keeping. This operational efficiency not only frees up time for healthcare professionals to focus on patient care but also elevates the quality of medical services provided.

EHRs play a pivotal role in fostering enhanced coordination of care, crucial in a country like Iraq where patients often seek treatment from various healthcare facilities. A centralized digital record ensures that all healthcare professionals involved have access to the same comprehensive information. This seamless sharing of data not only prevents duplication of tests but

also significantly reduces medical errors and facilitates more informed decision-making in the course of treatment.

Iraq's diverse and geographically dispersed population poses challenges to healthcare accessibility. EHRs offer a robust solution by enabling telemedicine and virtual consultations, particularly advantageous for patients in remote areas. Beyond addressing geographical barriers, EHRs empower individuals to actively participate in their healthcare by providing access to their records, fostering informed decision-making about their health status.

Acknowledging legitimate security concerns surrounding EHRs, especially considering the sensitive nature of health information, is paramount. Robust data encryption, stringent authentication measures, and privacy protocols within EHR systems enhance data security compared to traditional paper records. Establishing a secure digital infrastructure is vital for building trust among healthcare providers and patients, fostering a culture of data confidentiality and integrity.

The implementation of EHRs opens up avenues for advanced analytics and data-driven insights. Aggregating anonymized patient data allows healthcare administrators and policymakers to gain valuable information about disease trends, resource utilization, and areas requiring targeted interventions. This intelligence becomes the bedrock for evidence-based decision-making, enabling more efficient allocation of resources and the development of proactive healthcare strategies.

In post-conflict Iraq, where infrastructure rebuilding takes precedence, the introduction of EHRs aligns seamlessly with broader efforts to modernize the healthcare system. While the initial investment in digital infrastructure might seem substantial, the long-term benefits, including improved patient outcomes, reduced healthcare costs, and a



more resilient healthcare system, far outweigh the initial costs.

Anticipating and addressing challenges during the transition to EHRs is crucial for success. Common concerns such as resistance to change, staff training, and initial setup costs can be mitigated through strategic planning. Investing in comprehensive training programs for healthcare professionals and adopting a phased implementation plan are instrumental. Learning from successful EHR adoption experiences in other countries provides valuable insights into best practices and potential pitfalls.

Furthermore, involving healthcare professionals, IT experts, and policymakers in the planning and implementation stages is essential. Collaborative efforts ensure that the unique needs and nuances of the Iraqi healthcare system are considered, fostering a sense of ownership among stakeholders. Regular feedback loops and continuous evaluation become the pillars for refining the system over time, ensuring it evolves to meet the dynamic demands of the healthcare landscape.

In conclusion, the implementation of Electronic Health Records in Iraq represents a comprehensive and strategic approach towards improving patient data management and fortifying the healthcare system. The benefits, including enhanced efficiency, better coordination

of care, increased accessibility, improved data security, and the potential for data-driven insights, underscore the significance of embracing digital innovation in healthcare. As Iraq navigates its path towards a resilient and modern healthcare system, the adoption of EHRs stands out as a strategic investment with far-reaching positive implications for both healthcare providers and the individuals they serve. The transformative potential of EHRs positions them as a cornerstone in building a healthcare system that is not only efficient but also patient-centric and adaptable to the evolving healthcare landscape.

The selection and implementing of electronic health record (EHR) systems, it was observed that several publications were addressing a specific aspect or a few aspects of the selection and implementation. However, there were very minimal to no publications that include most, if not all of the required aspects from selection, regulatory, to implementation and post-implementation of the EHR system in one source. The authors list a series of recommendations and tools for use. EHR systems has become a requirement in the United States. The Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS) have lead this transition with financial incentives for healthcare providers and healthcare organizations,

name "providers" in this paper. However, not implementing the EHR will bring financial penalties for non-compliance. Many providers have been using a legacy (current/old) system as an EHR. The EHRs are mostly hybrid and some providers have service-lines or departments with computers that do not have an informatics system build for their use. Neither they have systems that can interoperate with the computers from the rest of the organization; an example can be the pharmacy or laboratory departments.

Some providers may have certain departments with an informatics system integrated such as the lab or billing, but the reporting capabilities are not sufficient to meet the needs of the business and the accreditation requirements and thus reports are manually created. For these clinical and administrative healthcare informatics problems, providers give priority to the implementation of a certified EHR and allocate a budget for the acquisition and adoption of the healthcare informatics system: EHR.

EHR met most of the specifications per criteria selected by the hospital and was the most economical software and still met the requirements. The implementation of the new EHR, will mitigate patient safety events from occurring such as medication errors due to pulling the wrong medication for

a patient, minimization of risk of loss of patient health information due to the security systems that will be implemented such as specific user access to information per employee role and username and password, and compliance with HIPAA rules and accrediting and licensure agencies. Also, it will provide patients access to their health information, which meets meaningful use criteria.

The implementation process will first consist of performing an evaluation of the current organization's workflows for every department in two to three days, define the needs and preferences of the organization to have in the EHR for the hospital to function planned into one to three months, including hardware needs, deployment of selection and training of super users, to take about one week, and then plan the implementation and staff education to go live in about one more month. The plan for complete implementation roll out from go-live day to full adoption will be between six and eight months.

the scope of the test will be defined as the testing for infrastructural readiness, application configuration readiness, and training readiness. These testing will include the evaluation of workstations, printers, servers, and wireless devices and related security measures.

Kurds in America Learn English to Get Engaged

Promoting Assimilation, Reinforcing Social Ties, and Broadening Prospects

As the Kurdish community in the United States flourishes, the necessity for Kurdish adults to master the English language to get engaged is profoundly critical. There are many reasons that make language proficiency a key element for Kurdish adults to integrate effectively into American life, highlighting the widespread benefits that can be realized on personal, communal, and broader societal scales.

The acquisition of the English language stands as a cornerstone for Kurdish adults who aspire to assimilate successfully into the fabric of American society. Mastery of English provides access to job markets, educational growth, and everyday social exchanges, equipping individuals with the essential means to participate fully in community life.

"I remember when I

came to the United States, I did not know the language even a bit. I was wishing I would have a job I liked, but it was impossible without knowing English. I was thinking that only skills and degree will take me to wherever I want to be at, but later I realized that integration, connections, and knowing the language should come first," said Ali Hameed, a 55 years old man who immigrated to United States 25 years ago

Hameed, who is running a restaurant now, had to take English classes at the Adult Basic Education for two years before creating his business and creating connections with the community members.

Kazhal Nuri, another Kurdish person who is working as a paraprofessional in one of the school districts in North Dakota said "Before coming here, I was a teacher and had a four-year degree. But the language barrier prevented me from practicing what I learned and did in Kurdistan. I tried very hard to learn English. I am now a para. It is not the exact job I wanted, but it is still an educational job."

Nuri said that she chose to work in the schools because she loves to be



around kids and serve as an assistant to teachers who need help.

Language acts as a bridge connecting diverse groups. Kurdish adults who attain fluency in English can form stronger ties with neighboring Americans, encouraging mutual understanding and cooperation. Such linguistic proficiency not only dismantles cultural divides but also aids in the creation of a cooperative, multicultural environment.

For Kurdish parents with children in American schools, English fluency is key to involve parental participation in their education. It ensures clear communication with educational establishments and staff, empowering Kurdish parents to aid in the educational achievements and cultural assimilation of their offspring.

A common language enhances connectivity within the Kurdish population and encourages collaboration with other ethnic

and cultural collectives. As Kurdish adults acquire English, they contribute to the greater unity and harmony of their community, nurturing a sense of togetherness and collective identity.

The Kurdish communities in the country have formed many organizations aiming at engaging members into American society through opening English language courses and workforce projects and helping them participate in the community

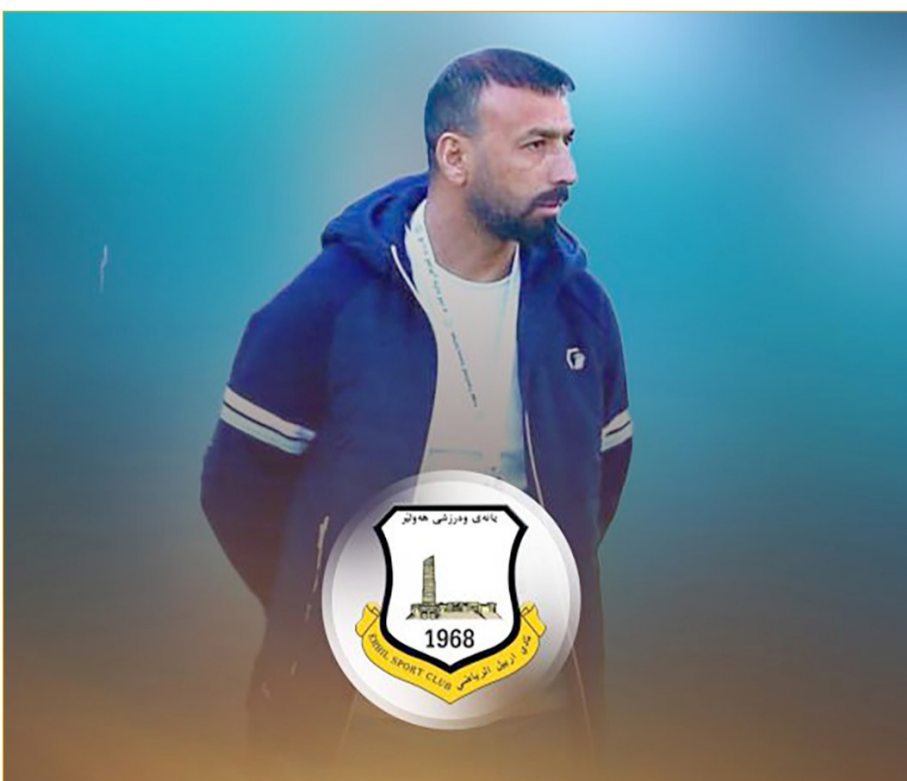
events.

"Those who come to our organization are better integrated because we teach them how to communicate, get engaged and behave in general," said Yousef Goran who works in the Kurdish Community in Minnesota.

Goran thinks that assimilating into American society does not imply forgetting one's original identity, but it means keeping identity and knowing how to deal with issues in a new environment.

Erbil Soccer Club Appoints New Manager

The club is making some changes in the squad and is bringing new players



Erbil Soccer Club announced last week that they have appointed the former Zakho club manager, Haidar Abdul-Amir, as new coach for their first team.

Abdul-Amir will be supervising and coaching Erbil for the rest of the Iraq Star Pro league games aiming at improving the team's performance level and seeking a better standing in the domestic league.

As his first step to boost the team level, Abdul-Amir has requested the Erbil club administration to make some crucial changes in the squad and first line up by bringing some new players in the team.

According to Yariga Sports Network, Abdul-Amir has requested the transfer of a midfielder,

a right-back, a defender and a goalkeeper. The new Erbil coach is also unhappy with the performance of professional midfielder Khalifa Abubakr.

To meet the demands of their new coach, the club administration are now looking at two Asian Nations Cup players to sign after the tournament.

Erbil has identified three goalkeepers and will decide soon to choose one of them to sign with for this season. Iraqi national team goalkeeper Fahd Talib, former Najaf goalkeeper, Sarhang Mohsen and former goalkeeper, Raad Salim Karkh are the keepers Erbil is eyeing to contract.

Erbil are fourth in the Iraqi Stars League with 12 points from 12 rounds, with 11 goals scored and

15 conceded.

Haidar Abdul-Amir Hussain is a former Iraqi football defender. He last played for the Al-Zawraa football club in Iraq, and was known as one of the calmest players in Iraq.

He played four matches in the 2004 AFC Asian Cup and his solid defending ensured a move from 11-time Iraq league champions Al Zawra'a to Jordan's Al Faisaly at the start of the 2006/07 season. He led the 30-time Jordan league champions to their second consecutive AFC Cup title in November 2006, scoring a vital goal in the second leg of the final against Muharraq. As a coach, he has trained Al-Zawraa SC and Zakho SC before.



Dr. Tyler Fisher

Kurdistan's Most Valuable Export

Far more promising than Kurdistan's resources in oil and gas, far more profitable than the Kurdish pomegranates now finding their way to markets abroad, the students from Kurdistan who pursue higher education internationally are the country's most valuable export. The Kurdistan Regional Government's Ministry of Higher Education and Scientific Research (MHE), over the past 14 years, has supported more than 4,000 students from Kurdistan who have undertaken degrees abroad. Representing Kurdistan globally, these students are a crucial means of cultural diplomacy; upon returning to Kurdistan, they contribute to important sectors of the Region. There is significant scope for extending this opportunity to additional students, thereby deepening Kurdistan's active engagement with international higher education.

The key to ensuring the successful emigration of Kurdistan's students to the best universities abroad, and to easing their integration at those universities, is a matter of establishing, from the start, realistic expectations and well-informed perspectives regarding the international student's sojourn. For insight, we turn to relevant experts and those who have gained first-hand experience as international students.

Linnea Tighe serves as Student Regulatory Ombudsperson for NAFSA Region VII. Formerly the National Association of Foreign Student Advisers, NAFSA: Association of International Educators is the world's largest and most diverse nonprofit association dedicated to international education and exchange, working to advance policies and practices that ensure a more interconnected, peaceful world. Linnea advises international students throughout the immigration process and during their studies in the USA. She guides them through the hurdles of student visa applications, maintaining their student visa status, and applying for the benefits that come with student visas, such as work authorizations.

"The visa process itself can be incredibly lengthy," Linnea cautions. "Currently, Erbil is only accepting emergency visa appointments, but applying at other visa posts is a possibility." Before plunging into the visa process, however, stu-



dents from Kurdistan must successfully apply for admission to a US university that is designated to sponsor international student visas. In addition to meeting a particular university's admission requirements, international applicants are required to submit English test scores, official translations of college or school transcripts, and US-approved standardized test scores. "A further complication," Linnea advises, "is that US universities have varying application deadlines by which students need to successfully submit all of these records. This results in an extremely long process." In light of this, students from Kurdistan should plan at least two years in advance of the time when they hope to study internationally so as to be sure that they can meet all the requirements and successfully receive a visa to start an academic degree program.

Laura Daniela Pineda Vásquez, age 20, is pursuing a degree in Journalism with a minor in Political Science as an international student in the United States. She agrees that the long immigration process is daunting: "The bureaucracy has been challenging, and there is much additional paperwork for obtaining an internship." Originally from Colombia, Laura struggles with being far from her family, as any international student might expect. More unexpected challenges involve differences in ordinary social interactions in the United States. "In Co-

lombia, people talk before and after class," she recalls, "and that's how we make friends, [but in the US] people do not always stay after class to chat." Students from Kurdistan likewise confront nuances of unfamiliar socialization patterns. Instead of conversing leisurely over tea in distinct groups of men or women, for instance, US students may be more likely to interact in co-ed contexts on the basis of interest groups, often in the form of Registered Student Organizations (RSOs).

Zack Salloum, Director of International Student and Scholar Services at the University of Central Florida (UCF), underscores the value of such organizations: Even before arriving on campus, "students are able to get connected to Registered Student Organizations, which may [organize around] similarities of nationality, religious similarities, or academic similarities. That engagement outside the classroom is paramount, [and] remaining physically active helps. Sport and friendly competition are culturally transcendent. It's a great way to socialize, develop friendships, share laughs, and remind ourselves that we are more similar than we are different."

From navigating immigration paperwork to finding relevant organizations, so much depends on a student's independent initiative. The same holds true for the academic side. Laura has thrived amid these challenges. "An un-

expected delight for me has been to learn to be more independent," she says. "In the classes, the professors set up the guidelines. It depends on you if you follow them and turn the assignment in on time. Everything depends on the student's autonomy, effort, and time management." Students from Kurdistan heading abroad for their higher education must expect a more independent, self-directed manner of study, less reliant on rote memorization. The payoff is critical acumen and increased confidence to delve more deeply into students' own areas of interest.

The process for obtaining a visa is long, but it is no time for mere waiting. A student's strategic preparation before departing Kurdistan lays a groundwork for success. Zack calls this his most important piece of advice for international students: "Develop as many relationships with the staff and faculty in their academic program ahead of arrival. Address as many questions and concerns ahead of time, before arriving, as possible. That will limit the amount of inevitable culture shock experiences upon arrival." Host universities actively welcome this approach from international students. "Many graduate program directors or even undergraduate admissions counselors are eager to assist and communicate with incoming students," Zack advises. "Certainly, this is something our International Student and Scholar Services office does on a daily basis [at UCF] and we reach

out continually to our incoming student population to ensure they are aware of all they can expect upon arrival. In other words, don't want until you arrive here to ask questions and resolve uncertainties."

When studying far from home, it is important not to lose sight of one's origins. Laura reflects on advice she would give to students who, like her, embark on higher education internationally: "Don't be afraid to embrace your culture. Even if everything looks different in this new place always remember where you come from and don't change your identity just to fit in." And maintaining one's roots need not detract from immersing oneself in everything a host country has to offer. "Be open to learning more about the USA," Laura says. "Join organizations that are aligned with your hobbies, career, and goals. This will help you to understand the American culture and make friends."

This essay's opening analogy suggested a parallel between Kurdistan's profitable exports and its academic emigrants. But the analogy drawn from commerce is limited. In universities, students are the products as well as clients -- and, optimally, are also co-creators of a collaborative service (their education). As Kurdistan's most valuable export, these students call for our committed investment, for they promise precious dividends.

KURDISTAN MATTERS