

We pictorize Kurdistan Region for you!

THE KURDISH GLOBE

No: 576' Monday, November 27, 2023



PM Barzani's Urgent Plea: A Call for Peace Amidst Escalating Middle East Crises

P 4,5

Editorial

MEPS: A Forum for Diverse Perspectives



By | **Dr. Salar Othman**

In the vast expanse of spacetime, where notions of place, time, and their myriad dimensions converge, the essence of humanity unfolds. Within this cosmic tapestry, one defining aspect of human experience stands out — opinion. It is not merely a definition but a barometer for the evolving human narrative, particularly in an era where the very fabric of established concepts is undergoing constant renewal.

The Fourth Middle East Peace and Security Conference at the American University of Duhok (MEPS) on November 20, 2023, served as a nexus for ideas, blending the geographical context of places like Kurdistan, the temporal significance of major events, and individuals as conveyors of diverse opinions and recipients of unfolding events.

The contemporary proceedings of the conference underscored that the Kurdistan Region not only contemplates effectively but also executes well. Perhaps, in the 30 years of freedom, it has adeptly navigated the landscape of opportunities, tasks, and challenges—both inherent and externally imposed. In this comparative analysis, the Kurdistan Region has demonstrated a capability to outshine its neighbors, notwithstanding their enduring states, established sovereignty, global support, and self-sustained economies.

MEPS is here to gather everyone in Kurdistan to talk on peace and security, with a particular focus on the Kurdistan Region, which serves as a remedy for the afflictions plaguing the Middle East, including Iraq and its Kurdish regions.

Platforms like MEPS should be expanded, and the commitment behind MEPS should permeate throughout education intellectual discourse, understanding, and solutions. This way, we can live in peace and security and move forward together, realizing our shared destiny.

In a world fraught with complexities, MEPS stands as a beacon, urging us to collectively strive for a harmonious coexistence — a shared aspiration that defines our collective destiny.

Iraq's Political Turmoil: Top Court Ousts Parliament Speaker Over Forgery Charges, Shaking Regional Stability

In a stunning turn of events, Iraq's Supreme Federal Court has delivered a seismic blow to the country's political stability by ordering the removal of powerful Parliament Speaker Mohammed Al Halbousi over forgery charges. This move, which comes amidst a protracted legal battle with Sunni legislator Laith Al Dulaimi, has the potential to reshape Iraq's political landscape significantly. The court's decision, final and non-appealable, raises concerns about the fragility of Iraq's political alliances, particularly in the lead-up to next month's provincial elections.

The roots of this political upheaval lie in a months-long dispute between Al Halbousi and Al Dulaimi, who accused the Speaker of forging his signature on a resignation letter. The court's decision to remove both Al Halbousi and Al Dulaimi from their parliamentary positions adds a layer of complexity to Iraq's already intricate political dynamics.

During a parliamentary session, Al Halbousi, a prominent Sunni leader, expressed his surprise and labeled the court's decision as "strange." He hinted at external forces seeking to destabilize Iraq, emphasizing his commitment to constitutional rights, and pledging to seek clarifications on the ruling. The Taqadum Party, led by Al Halbousi, denounced the court's decision as a "flagrant violation of the constitution and a clear political targeting." In response, key ministers from the party submitted their resignations, and a boycott of parliamentary sessions was announced.

An Iraqi legal expert told the media outlets and shed light on the next steps, stating that the forgery case would be referred to the investigation court, and a new speaker would need to be elected by MPs with an absolute majority. This process is likely to be a pivotal moment in Iraq's political evolution, shaping the trajectory of alliances between Sunnis, Shiites, and Kurds.

Al Halbousi, a former governor of Anbar province, had emerged as a significant Sunni political leader, securing the majority of Sunni votes in the 2021 national elections. His ability to forge alliances with Shiite rivals and Kurds showcased a nuanced approach to navigating Iraq's complex political terrain. However, critics, including rival Sunni politicians accused Al Halbousi of centralizing power and sidelining polit-

ical rivals, drawing parallels to the era of former Iraqi dictator Saddam Hussein.

The court's decision, rooted in a dispute between Al Halbousi and Al Dulaimi, adds fuel to longstanding accusations of corruption and mismanagement within Iraq's sectarian power-sharing system. The country's political structure, where the parliament speaker is always Sunni, the prime minister Shiite, and the president Kurdish, has faced criticism for promoting widespread corruption and fostering loyalty to political parties over the state.

The timing of this political shake-up is particularly sensitive, given Iraq's scheduled provincial elections on December 18. The removal of Al Halbousi introduces a degree of uncertainty that could impact the electoral landscape and potentially influence the delicate balance between Sunni, Shiite, and Kurdish interests.

The court's decision has also triggered resignations from three ministers affiliated with Al Halbousi's Taqadum Party, further highlighting the potential ramifications of this ruling on the government's functionality. The Minister of Culture, Tourism and Antiquities, Ahmed Fakak Al-Badrani; Minister of Planning, Muhammad Tamim; and Industry Minister, Khaled Battal, all handed in their resignations, citing the "targeting" of Al Halbousi.

While Al Halbousi's removal undoubtedly has domestic implications, its reverberations extend beyond Iraq's borders. The international community closely watches developments in the region, especially as Iraq grapples with the aftermath of the court's decision. As Iraq navigates this period of uncertainty, the potential for increased sectarian tensions and political instability raises concerns about the broader impact on regional stability.

This landmark court decision has unveiled deep-seated divisions within Iraq's political fabric, with Al Halbousi's supporters denouncing the ruling as a violation of constitutional principles. The political fallout, marked by resignations and boycotts, underscores the challenges Iraq faces in maintaining political cohesion amid internal strife.

Iraq's political history has been marred by periods of instability and conflict, often fueled by ethno-sectarian tensions. The removal of Al

Halbousi raises questions about the future trajectory of Sunni representation in Iraqi politics, potentially exacerbating historical grievances and contributing to a cycle of violence.

In response to the court's decision, Al Halbousi has vowed to take constitutional measures to challenge the ruling, alleging external pressure on the court. In a press conference on November 15, he argued that the Iraqi Constitution does not grant the court the authority to adjudicate accusations against the president of the CoR and its members or the authority to remove them from office. While Al Halbousi did not address the specific allegations against him, his refusal to accept the court's decision set the stage for a protracted legal and political battle.

The consequences of this decision are not limited to the immediate political fallout. The resignation of ministers and the potential withdrawal of Al Halbousi's political bloc from parliamentary committees could disrupt the functioning of key government institutions. The vacuum left by Al Halbousi's departure raises questions about who will fill the void in Sunni representation and whether a new speaker can navigate the complex web of political alliances.

As Iraq grapples with the fallout from this landmark court decision, it is essential for the international community to monitor developments closely. The potential for increased political polarization, coupled with the ongoing regional challenges, underscores the need for diplomatic efforts to support Iraq's journey toward political stability.

Iraq's political turmoil, sparked by the court's decision to remove Parliament Speaker Mohammed Al Halbousi, introduces a new chapter of uncertainty in the nation's complex political narrative. The repercussions of this ruling extend beyond domestic politics, raising concerns about regional stability and the delicate balance between Sunni, Shiite, and Kurdish interests. As Iraq navigates this period of uncertainty, the international community plays a crucial role in supporting diplomatic efforts to address the challenges and promote a path toward sustainable political stability.

Kurdistan Takes Center Stage at MEPS 23: A Beacon of Peace and Democracy in the Middle East's Pursuit of Lasting Peace

The Fourth Middle East Peace and Security Conference (MEPS) held at the American University of Duhok on November 20, 2023, marked a significant gathering of minds, political figures, and thought leaders from around the world. This conference, held in the Kurdistan Region, unfolded as a crucial platform addressing peace and security issues in the Middle East, capturing global attention, and delivering potent political messages.

Prime Minister Masrour Barzani, a key figure in the Kurdistan Region of Iraq, set the tone for the event with his impassioned remarks on peace, security, and improved relations with Baghdad and neighboring countries.

Prime Minister Masrour Barzani's opening address resonated with attendees as he emphasized the Kurdish commitment to fostering democracy, peace, and security. His speech outlined a vision for strengthened ties with Baghdad and neighboring nations, envisioning a future marked by cooperation and mutual prosperity.

Importance of the MEPS Conference

The MEPS conference in Duhok assumed paramount importance against the backdrop of the complex geopolitical landscape of the Middle East. The region has long been plagued by conflicts, unrest, and geopolitical tensions, making a forum like MEPS essential in fostering open dialogue, sharing insights, and exploring collaborative strategies for addressing shared challenges. Duhok, strategically located in the Kurdistan Region, served



as a symbolic hub for deliberations on peace and security, emphasizing the importance of regional cooperation in addressing shared challenges, emphasizing the need for inclusive governance models that respect diverse cultures and promote the rights of all citizens.

In addition to the formal sessions, the sidelines of the conference provided opportunities for informal discussions and bilateral meetings. Delegates engaged in constructive dialogues, fostering personal connections that would lay the groundwork for future collaborations. The conference's success was not only measured by the resolutions adopted but also by the relationships built and strengthened during these less formal moments.

Speeches and Insights

The conference featured a roster of influential speakers, including political leaders, scholars, and

experts in the fields of diplomacy and international relations. These speeches provided insightful perspectives on the current state of affairs in the Middle East and proposed innovative solutions to longstanding issues. Notable figures articulated their visions for a more stable and secure region, emphasizing the role of collaboration and diplomacy in achieving sustainable peace.

Global Attention

MEPS garnered global attention due to its unique positioning as a forum hosted in Duhok, a region that has witnessed its share of historical challenges. The international community tuned in to witness the unfolding discussions and solutions proposed at the conference. Global attention underscored the recognition of the Kurdistan Region as a key player in shaping the future of the Middle East, transcending its regional boundaries to

become a focal point of global discourse on peace and security.

One of the highlights of the conference was the attendance of former UK Prime Minister Boris Johnson. Johnson's presence underscored the global significance of the issues discussed at MEPS 23 and demonstrated the international community's commitment to supporting efforts toward peace and stability in the region. In his address, Johnson commended the organizers for bringing together leaders from diverse backgrounds to address common challenges.

Political Messages

The conference served as a platform for conveying powerful political messages that reverberated far beyond the conference halls. Leaders and representatives articulated their commitments to diplomacy, cooperation, and conflict resolution. The political messages emanating from MEPS reso-

lated with a call for unity and collaboration, highlighting the imperative of transcending political differences for the collective good of the region.

MEPS and Regional Dynamics

MEPS addressed the complex regional dynamics of the Middle East, providing a space for open dialogue on contentious issues. The conference acknowledged the intricate web of relationships and conflicts that have defined the region and sought to unravel these complexities through diplomatic channels. By fostering a spirit of cooperation, MEPS aimed to contribute to a more stable and secure Middle East, where nations could coexist peacefully despite historical and political differences.

Challenges and Opportunities

The conference also delved into the chal-

lenges and opportunities facing the Middle East. Participants engaged in discussions on economic development, social progress, and brainstorming innovative solutions to challenges such as regional conflicts, economic disparities, and the impact of global events on the Middle East.

In conclusion, the MEPS conference in Duhok stood as a beacon of hope and diplomacy in a region marred by conflicts. Its importance lay not only in addressing immediate concerns related to peace and security but also in laying the groundwork for a more collaborative and prosperous Middle East. The speeches, global attention, and political messages emanating from MEPS underscored the significance of such forums in shaping the narrative of the region and charting a course towards a more peaceful and secure future.

Kurdistan Region Meets Self-Sufficiency in Vegetables and Poultry Products

The General Director of Agriculture in Erbil states that sufficient rain has fallen in all areas of Erbil province, while adding that they have exported about 600,000 tons of fruits and vegetables to the markets of the central and southern Iraq.

There are over a million dunams of agricultural land in Erbil province

that are suitable for planting grain. Hemn Sayed Murad, Director General of Agriculture in Erbil, says that larger area of land is expected to be cultivated with grain this year, as the rainfall has increased compared to previous years.

Ministries of Agriculture in the Kurdistan Region and the Iraqi Federal Government

have reached an agreement this year to keep the checkpoints between Kurdistan Region and southern Iraqi cities open for products of the local farmers to freely pass, and to ban the import of agricultural products from abroad. "29,000 trucks carrying about 600,000 tons of domestic farmers' produce have been exported to central

and southern Iraq from the Erbil warehouses" Hemn Sayed Murad said, adding that Kurdistan region has exceeded the domestic needs in the summer vegetables, and a large part of it is exported to central and southern Iraq.

The Kurdistan Region has already met its self-sufficiency in poultry production (eggs and

chicken), and are exported to the central and southern Iraqi markets.

Regarding the projects in the irrigation sector and rainwater harvesting, the Director General of Agriculture of Erbil pointed out that several important projects of dams and ponds have been completed in Erbil province, and some of them are under

implementation, including Gomespan, Bastora, Mandawa dams, in addition to 12 ponds, some of which have started rainwater harvesting this year. By completion of the dams and ponds, the reservoir will be used in irrigation and agriculture, for which mostly underground water is currently being used.

PM Barzani's Urgent Plea: A Call for Peace

"Kurdistan's Digital Renaissance: PM Barzani Pioneers Innovation for Economic

BBC Chief Presenter Maryam Moshiri interviewed Kurdistan Region Prime Minister Masrour Barzani in a special session at the MEPS23 Forum in Dohuk. The Gaza crisis, Iraqi minorities, and women's rights were discussed.

Call for Peace in the Middle East

Prime Minister Masrour Barzani condemned the violence in the area, emphasizing its devastation, in response to the Middle East crisis. He questioned military operations and supported nonviolent approaches to avert conflict escalation. Barzani stressed the suffering of innocent residents in Gaza. He stressed proactive problem-solving to avoid military conflicts and save innocent lives. Barzani expressed fears about the crisis spreading throughout the Middle East, highlighting the region's fatigue with warfare. He advocated peace and conflict resolution.

Iraq and Humanitarian Aid

Barzani advised Iraq to avoid engagement in the war owing to its domestic issues. He suggested supporting the Kurdistan Regional Government's humanitarian help. Barzani underlined the importance of actual activities like giving medication and food over words.

Internal politics: Baghdad's unwanted crisis

Moving to domestic politics, Moshiri addressed the federal court's ouster of Sunni speaker Mr. Al-Halbusi, sparking unrest in Baghdad. Prime Minister Barzani called the decision's timing a catastrophe that distracted from more pressing matters. He stressed the need to tackle internal issues together, recognizing Iraq's diversity.

Collaboration and Baghdad Tensions

Prime Minister Barzani stressed teamwork and honoring all Iraqi stakeholders. He urged for reforms via legitimate methods and stressed teamwork to solve the country's problems.

Premier Barzani emphasizes Kurdistan's constitutional rights to oil extraction, production, and sales, saying the problem is Constitutional interpretation and obedience.

"The fundamental issue is whether we are a federal state or if Baghdad functions as a central government," said Barzani. He believes a federal state must share authority and distribute power to regions as the constitution requires. He notes that Baghdad favours centralized authority, which causes constant disputes between the two insti-



In a candid discussion with BBC presenter Maryam Moshiri, the Kurdistan Regional Government's Prime Minister Masrour Barzani addressed a spectrum of issues, ranging from regional conflicts to internal political and economic challenges.

tutions.

Prime Minister Barzani emphasizes Kurdistan's constitutional conformity and federal government coordination on oil sales and production in the oil conflict. He blames Baghdad's lack of cooperation and oil production cost differences.

He details legal contracts with multinational oil corporations, emphasizing that they have invested in Kurdistan and should be reimbursed for their production expenses and revenues. Prime Minister Barzani disputes Baghdad's \$6 oil production cost per barrel, citing Kurdish wells with \$34 costs.

Prime Minister Barzani says he'll begin oil exports immediately if Baghdad recognises foreign oil firms' production costs in Kurdistan.

Maryam Moshiri examines the Kurdistan Region's economic diversification attempts despite budget constraints and export halts. To strengthen the economy, Prime Minister Barzani lists investments in agriculture, manufacturing, tourism, education, and health. He cites successful regional efforts like agricultural exports as proof of resilience and flexibility.

Digital Banking Transforms Economy

Prime Minister Barzani calls these economic measures a "revolution" to usher in a new era for Kurdistan. Digitization, especially in banking, is crucial to this transition, placing the Kurdistan Region at the forefront of digital innovation.

Prime Minister Barzani re-

mained positive about continuing talks with Baghdad, hoping for a conclusion that will boost Kurdistan's economic stability and position as a varied and technologically advanced economy.

Kurdistan and Iraq's cash-based economies presented obstacles, according to Prime Minister Barzani. To serve people well, he stressed the need for a strong financial infrastructure. "My Account," Barzani's pioneering endeavor, aims to reach over one million government workers by 2024. The programme seeks to integrate the public and private sectors into digital banking to boost development and benefit people. Barzani said that participating institutions may become national financial powerhouses.

The Prime Minister also announced plans to establish 1,000 ATMs and 40,000 payment terminals in Kurdistan to encourage digital transactions and reduce cash use. He was optimistic that credit card transactions would boost the area's economy and attract foreign tourists.

Anticorruption Measures

To address concerns about corruption stifling growth, Prime Minister Barzani highlighted the need for transparency and control. He stressed that digitizing government services would make corruption harder. Barzani recognized the need for individual responsibility and said the battle against corruption has begun, with a focus on preventing rather than responding to mis-

conduct.

Water Scarcity and Climate Change

Premier Barzani voiced real worry about climate change's influence on regional water shortages. He suggested medium- and large-scale dam construction to manage water supplies and adapt to shifting rainfall patterns. Barzani also announced plans for afforestation and oil well gas collection, demonstrating Kurdistan's environmental commitment.

Barzani stressed worldwide responsibility for climate change. He stressed the significance of financial assistance and comprehensive solutions to prevent social, political, economic, and security issues in host nations and mass migrations if the problem is not addressed upstream.

Climate Change: Global Responsibility

Premier Barzani hinted at taking a message to COP28 encouraging the world community to confront climate change at its source. He stressed the necessity for financial help to minimize large migrations and prevent their downstream effects, demonstrating the interdependence of global issues.

Prime Minister Masrour Barzani's policies show a committed commitment to address economic, anti-corruption, and environmental concerns and prepare Kurdistan for a sustainable and prosperous future.

PM Masrour Barzani emphasizes the necessity of tackling climate change's immediate ef-

fects in an exclusive interview. The Prime Minister emphasizes that the concerns are genuine and need global attention and collaborative solutions.

He told Maryam Moshiri that Kurdistan has resources, but the climate catastrophe affects everyone of Iraq. He worries that the nation doesn't take the matter seriously.

Barzani discussed climate change and initiatives to teach environmental consciousness at the basic level. He underlined global action and the KRG's efforts to work with international partners at COP28. Barzani further stressed that climate change affects all nations.

When asked about the apparent disparity in climate change impacts, Barzani stressed the global aspect of the issue and the need for a community solution. He stressed the need to confront climate change globally, saying no one is immune.

PM Barzani's vision for Kurdistan includes addressing climate change, empowering youth, and achieving gender equality while mobilizing the global community to solve these concerns.

Women's Empowerment Outside Big Cities

Maryam Moshiri asked about women outside big cities and stressed the need for education and chances. In response, Prime Minister Masrour Barzani pledged to diversify resources and decentralize authority. He promoted tourism, giving women in different places new opportunities. He stressed the necessity for equitable Baghdad

Amidst Escalating Middle East Crises

Growth and Financial Inclusion”, Prime Minister Masrour Barzani

budget distribution to establish schools and infrastructure in outlying communities despite constraints.

Minority Rights Protection

PM Barzani resisted calling Kurdistan's many groups, faiths, and ethnicities 'minorities', emphasizing the need to recognize their uniqueness. He stressed that all groups had equal rights and promised to handle concerns quickly. The Prime Minister underlined Kurdistan's hosting of many IDPs and refugees, demonstrating the region's dedication to different community rights.

Yazidis Return to Sinjar

PM Barzani called for the dignified return of ISIS-displaced Yazidis. He revealed how Sinjar groups are blocking a critical federal deal. The Prime Minister called for help to execute the accord and allow Yazidis to return home.

Press Freedom in Kurdistan

Maryam Moshiri questioned Kurdistan's journalistic freedom, citing Reporters Without Borders. Prime Minister Barzani, speaking about his area, said the media may criticize the government without fear of jail. He distinguished freedom of speech from slander, emphasizing responsible journalism.

Kurdistan Prime Minister Masrour Barzani stressed the significance of media in the area, emphasizing constructive criticism and encouraging journalists to help build Kurdistan. Barzani stressed the government's support for legitimate journalism and asked opponents to give statistics and context when analyzing the region's development.

Barzani's thought-provoking question challenged the prioritization of individual liberties above community life. He advocated balancing individual and national freedom of speech.

Bridging Challenges and Visioning the Future

The conversation switched to geopolitics, focusing on US backing. Barzani praised U.S. help, especially against ISIS. While admitting changing U.S. participation, he stressed economic and political cooperation.

The talk also covered China's growing regional influence. Barzani welcomed international investment, especially China's, highlighting Kurdistan's economic potential.

Barzani said he wanted to build the Kurdistan Region with inhabitants in mind. He envisioned a model of Kurdistan based on fairness, equality, and honesty.

After the conversation, Barza-

ni stressed the need for fairness and honesty in achievement, especially in the face of past injustices. He said honesty and keeping commitments are essential to building confidence and growth in the area.

Kurdistan production exports



Moshiri started by discussing Kurdistan's export progress. Prime Minister Barzani gladly hailed the successful export of pomegranates, apples, honey, and grapes to the Gulf area. The Prime Minister stressed the government's responsibility in regulating and connecting markets and enabling private sector participation to get Kurdistan's goods to global customers.

Energy Transition and Development Plans

Prime Minister Barzani answered a question on energy transition by outlining Kurdistan's energy goals. Hydroelectric power, solar energy, and fossil fuel reduction were discussed. He stressed public engagement and that energy resources belong to the people, encouraging responsible usage to create government-citizen collaboration.

Education quality via accreditation

The interview mentioned the new Kurdistan Accrediting Association for Education. Prime Minister Barzani pledged to raise education levels by adopting global norms. The certifying organization, however young, aspires to improve Kurdistan's institutions' education by encouraging healthy competition and worldwide standards.

Erbil-Baghdad relations

When asked about encouraging collaboration, stability, and unity between Erbil and Baghdad, Prime Minister Barzani recognized the problems. He was optimistic that ongoing efforts and collaboration may resolve conflicts between the two areas.

The conversation revealed Prime Minister Masrour Barzani's vision for Kurdistan's growth and efforts to tackle sectoral problems. The administration prioritizes economic development, efficient governance, and sustainable practices as the area looks forward.

Defence of Constitutional Rights

Prime Minister Barzani stressed that he would not sacrifice Kurdish constitutional rights to suit any party. He stressed the need for real cooperation and asked constitution implementers to consider Kurdistan a friend. Barzani stressed that Kurdistan would not give up constitutional rights despite repeated attempts to connect with Baghdad.

UK-KRG Economic Relations and Opportunities

Barzani proposed encouraging UK enterprises to investigate economic prospects in Kurdistan when asked how UK allies of Kurdistan may help the KRG. He was pleased with UK connections and suggested further political, military, and economic cooperation. Barzani invited UK enterprises to use Kurdistan's abundant resources, stressing the excellent relationship.

Private Sector Support and Job Creation

Security, legislative changes,

and a stronger banking system were key to helping the private sector and creating jobs, according to Barzani. He lauded Peshmerga and other security forces for preserving peace. Barzani described continuing attempts to change investment legislation and enhance the banking system

to attract investors and boost the private sector.

PM Barzani emphasizes youth empowerment and employment, highlighting their importance in Kurdistan's future. With 60-70 young professionals in his office, he emphasizes youth investments via the Kurdistan Innovation Institute and the Bloom project, which turn ideas into concrete strategies and fund entrepreneurs.

PM Barzani emphasizes private sector strengthening to create jobs and reduce government dependence in response to young people fleeing the nation for chances. He encourages people to work with the government and advance the country.

PM Barzani says gender equality is crucial. He emphasizes the need for a cultural transformation to promote and encourage women's active involvement in society, citing his cabinet's high female representation.

Over Speeches: Success

Prime Minister Barzani stressed action over words when questioned about Kurdistan-changing efforts. He preferred outcomes over promises during his regional trips. Barzani feels that showing achievement is key to building public confidence, as they need to witness good improvements to trust the administration.

International Security Support:

Prime Minister Barzani stressed the importance of security, political stability, and economic growth in Kurdistan's security and the international community's support. He demanded worldwide acceptance of the Kurds' right to self-determination and simultaneous development in all three areas. Barzani asked the international community to ensure Kurdistan's safety against assaults, massacres, and ethnic cleansing.

Postponed Election Concerns:

A viewer asked what would happen to Kurdistan if the February elections were postponed. Prime Minister Barzani pledged to democracy in Kurdistan and hoped the elections would go as planned. He blamed deception for earlier delays and demanded responsibility. Barzani warned against political interference in democracy.

Diaspora Engagement

When asked for advice for diaspora Kurds, Prime Minister Barzani advised them to learn from their host nations and establish Kurdistan upon return. He believes the diaspora is crucial to regional development.

Audience Engagement

One audience member wondered whether a secular Iraqi state could address ideological and religious difficulties in Iraq and Kurdistan. Prime Minister Barzani recognized the issue's complexity and suggested a secular approach to ideological and religious issues.

Prime Minister Barzani said, "It's not about secularism or a religious state. It's about justice." He stressed the importance of a government that prioritizes human rights and equality for all citizens, regardless of religion.

Prime Minister Barzani stressed Kurdistan's geopolitical relevance as a hub for many ethnicities and cultures when questioned about the Middle East Peace and Security Forum's location. Kurdistan, located between Turkey, Iran, Iraq, and Syria, seeks to unite rather than divide. Prime Minister Barzani said Kurdistan wants to lead the area in growth, prosperity, and democracy.

Prime Minister Barzani finished the interview by saying Kurdistan wants to unify the region's varied populations to promote stability and growth. The Middle East Peace and Security Forum showcases Kurdistan's beneficial impact on the region and globe.

“Kurdistan Region Ready to Resume Oil Export.”

Kurdistan has delivered up to 85,000 bpd of oil to the Federal Government

The Minister of Oil of the Federal Government of Iraq, accompanied by a high-level delegation, visited Erbil on 12 November and met with the President, Prime Minister and the Kurdistan Regional Government officials.

Acting Minister of Natural Resources Dr. Kamal Mohammed told the KRG's Department of Media and Information that no technical problem

is standing as of now for exporting oil, as the Turkish side has expressed its readiness to the resumption of the Kurdistan Region oil via Ceyhan pipeline. The only standing issue, according to the KRG's acting Minister is that the Iraqi budget has determined the maximum production wage for the companies as 8,699 dinars per barrel. The oil companies operating in Kurdis-

tan region are not able to produce oil with the suggested wage, the Minister stated. "The Iraqi delegation, which consisted of the Ministry of Oil, and other experts, are aware that oil cannot be produced at this amount [of wages]" Dr. Kamal continued.

The Federal Iraq delegation has asked the KRG's Ministry of Natural Resources to provide them

with samples and profiles of the oil fields, which the KRG's Ministry complied. The ministry has also requested the amount of wage to be amended in order for the companies to resume the production of oil. The KRG's Ministry of Natural Resources has complied with the requests by the Federal Iraq's delegation, including providing clear data on oil production. "We complied

with their request officially on 19 November; therefore, we expect to resume negotiations soon before the beginning of December" Dr. Kamal hoped.

"The Turkish side and the Kurdistan Regional Government are ready to resume oil exports, and when production and transportation issues are resolved by the federal oil ministry, oil exports will resume" the Minister as-

sured.

The Kurdistan Region currently has the capacity to produce 400,000 bpd of crude oil. The Kurdistan Region has been delivering 80,000 to 85,000 bpd of oil to the Federal Government since June 26 this year, up on which the Kurdistan Region's share of the budget is allocated.

Tahin Festival Held in Amedi



A two-day festival for Tahin was held in district of Amedi, Duhok Governorate, exhibiting Kurdish tahin and other local products.

Tahin Festival was held on Thursday last week in the district of Amedi in Duhok Governorate, with the contribution of 27 tahin factories and mills in the area. The festival exhibited a range of local products from the area and encompassed various other activities.

Tahin of Amedi is well-known to be 100% domestic. The production method is completely manual, domestic and natural. This has made the Amedi tahin

to be in great demand due to the unique taste and the fine quality of the product.

"We produce over 10 tons of produce annually, we buy local sesame seeds to produce tahin, or people bring the seeds to us to make tahin for them," said an owner of a tahin factory who took part in the festival.

Another owner of a tahin factory said that "in addition to producing tahin, we also separate the oil that is used as an ointment for joint pain." He added that the price of each kilogram of oil costs 10,000 dinars, which is more expensive than tahin itself.

In addition to tahin, local

pomegranate, local honey, jam and many other products were exhibited at the festival.

Around 2,653 dunams of land have been allocated for sesame cultivation across Duhok Governorate, with an annual production of 623 tons of sesame, of which 470 tons of tahin is produced. In Amedi district alone, about 800 dunams of land have been allocated for sesame cultivation, which produces 188 tons of sesame seeds, out of which 141 tons of tahini are produced.

Kirkuk Street Theater Exhibits Suffering of Kurdish Children

The third street theater festival was held in Kirkuk with the participation of a number of theater groups from the Kurdistan Region, Iraq and Iran.

The Kirkuk Street Theater Festival started on 19th of November 2023 in front of Kirkuk Castle and lasted for three days.

The International Street Theater Festival was held in Kirkuk, was attended by a large number of local and foreign artists, launched with marching

and range of other artistic activities. Two plays which have been produced by local groups of the city were also performed in the festival.

The festival was held in a different ceremony than in previous years, with drums and horns, and dance exhibitions. Artists marched in the public streets from the garden of Kirkuk Castle to the Kirkuk Cultural Center with music and songs. The festival opening commenced with a play

by Mukhtar Muhammadi, which revolves around the suffering Kurdish children, who always fall victims of the massacres of the invaders, amid the international community's lack of action to save them.

Several seminars, conferences and cultural and theatrical meetings were held on the sidelines of the festival which was attended by the residents of the city Kirkuk.



Bringing Heritage Kurdish to Classroom America

A Bold Initiative in Moorhead High School Promotes Cultural Diversity and Understanding

For the first time in the history of the state of Minnesota in America, Moorhead High School is taking a bold step to promote cultural diversity and cross-cultural understanding by integrating heritage Kurdish into its curriculum. This innovative program aims to teach students the Kurdish language while also cultivating a deeper appreciation for Kurdish culture and heritage.

By incorporating heritage Kurdish, the school celebrates the diversity of its student body. Recognizing and embracing students' diverse linguistic and cultural backgrounds fosters an inclusive learning environment that transcends traditional boundaries.

For Kurdish-American students, learning their heritage language is a way to maintain their cultural identity. Language is an integral expression of one's roots. By providing Kurdish as a language elective, the school supports Kurdish students in preserving their connection to their heritage. This demonstrates the school's commitment to helping all students feel a sense of belonging.

Beyond just language

instruction, the heritage Kurdish program allows students to explore the rich culture of the Kurdish people through literature, music, traditions, and more. This immersive cultural education enriches the learning experience and promotes cross-cultural awareness and global perspectives.

Additionally, research shows bilingualism has cognitive benefits like enhanced problem-solving, flexibility, and creativity. Learning heritage Kurdish unlocks new educational and professional opportunities for students in our increasingly interconnected world.

The introduction of heritage Kurdish is a collaborative community effort, with support from local Kurdish groups who recognize its value. This partnership between the school and Kurdish community highlights the power of education to make a positive societal impact.

By embracing Heritage Kurdish, this high school sets an example for other schools to support cultural diversity and cross-cultural exchange. More than just language education, this initiative promotes cultural awareness, under-



standing, and unity in our diverse world. The school is paving the way for global connections built on respect and appreciation of our rich human tapestry.

Kurdish families in the Moorhead city already have great feedback about the program. Beside the academic advantages the students get through learning about the culture and language, the students

are learning Kurdish alphabets and Kurdish curriculums are used for that purpose.

Learning and recognizing letters, forming words and sentences are continuing throughout the whole year. Students are expected to be able to write short paragraphs and improve their communication skills through creating situational dialogues.

One of the issues Kurdish families have been facing in the diaspora is that kids are so well adapted to the host country, and they rarely are able to speak and write in their mother language. On the other hand, some parents who had little chance to learn the host country's language are still using interpreters for running their daily errands. For this reason,

communication between parents and children is not well conducted since parents speak Kurdish while children speak English in most Kurdish American households. Heritage Kurdish class is helping to improve communication among Kurdish family members by encouraging children to speak Kurdish at home.

Kurdistan Region: A Space for Freedom of Press and Journalistic Excellence

The Kurdistan Regional Government (KRG) is actively revising its media policies to broaden the media landscape, while upholding the safety of journalism.

The KRG is committed to advancing the freedom of the press and fostering a vibrant media landscape, recognizing it as a cornerstone of good governance and the protection of human rights and liberties.

Under the purview of the Ministry of Culture and Youths, and in partnership with the Journalists Union, a remarkable 127 local channels, 30 satellite channels, 176 radio stations, 121 websites, and 988 newspapers and magazines have been granted licenses in the Kurdistan Region, signaling a rapid and robust expansion of the media sector.



Sherwan Abdullah, Director of Media, Print and Publications at the Ministry of Culture and Youths, highlighted the importance of Kurdistan's journalism legislation in its unwavering support for a free press. He noted that these regula-

tions have evolved to also encompass the burgeoning electronic media landscape, aimed at safeguarding the public interest and fundamental human rights.

Emphasizing the necessity of media regulation, Abdullah explained, "Elec-

tronic media entities must register to comply with legal requisites, ensuring that they operate within the boundaries of the law. Failure to do so may result in legal proceedings and prosecution as an unauthorized media source. Reg-

istration also empowers electronic media to engage in journalism without constraints. The guidelines and regulations seek to facilitate orderly conduct rather than impose censorship or restrictions. It is imperative that every media outlet is known and documented in the interest of the public."

To date, more than 8,000 journalists have been officially registered with the Journalists Union.

Azad Hama Amin, Secretary of the Journalists Union, emphasized the effectiveness of the legal framework governing journalism in the Kurdistan Region, ensuring professionalism and adherence to high standards. He stressed that these regulations are designed to support those who maintain professional integrity and contribute to the robust media presence

in the region.

In evaluating press freedom in the Kurdistan Region, Hama Amin underscored the importance of impartial assessments, devoid of political affiliations or special interests. He recommended that such evaluations should be conducted by experts and academic institutions, drawing upon their data and expertise, to provide a comprehensive and unbiased view of the media landscape.

Kurdistan Region has issued law no 35 in 2007 with regard to organizing the work of media, and continues to work on amendments to the laws and regulations to facilitate work of media. Soon, regulation number 1 in 2023 will also be implemented, which is devoted to organizing the frequency space in Kurdistan Region.

Displaced Yazidis Hesitant to Return to Sinjar

The process of returning the displaced Yazidis to Sinjar (Shingal) is still slow amid the continuing instability and the security vacuum in the district. While the Sinjar agreement reached between Kurdistan Region and the Federal Government was to normalize the volatile situation, however, the fully implementation of the agreement is yet to be achieved by the Iraqi government.

Around 300 thousand displaced Yazidis from Sinjar are currently living in the Internally Displaced Person's (IDP)'s camps and urban communities in Kurdistan Region, mainly in Duhok Governorate. There have been unsteady and slow returns of the Yazidi families to Sinjar as the situation in the district remains uncertain amid presence of multiple armed groups, the damaged infrastructure and lack of basic services. According to an assessment conducted by UN agencies, 80% of public infrastructure and 70% of civilian homes in Sinjar were destroyed by ISIS in 2014. The displaced Yazidis seem to be not willing to return to Sinjar due to the uncertainty they have regarding the future of their area. Despite the efforts taken by the Iraqi government and international humanitarian organizations to urge the displaced Yazidis in the camps to return to Sinjar, however, Yazidis are still hesitant to take the decision, even though the 9 years of displacement and living under tents of the camps and enduring the harsh weather and living conditions have not been an easy experience for them. In the past two years, according to the Office of Displacement and Migration in Duhok, only 205 families out of 60 thousand displaced Yazidi families have voluntarily returned to Sinjar. The displaced families who took shelter in Duhok Governorate and stayed in the IDP camps and urban communities after ISIS attacked Sinjar in 2014. Office of Displacement and Migration in Duhok closely monitors the movement of the displaced community in the Duhok Governorate, especially that of Yazidis of Sinjar. The families who show willingness to return to their areas of origin are financially supported by the International Organization for Migration (IOM) and the Iraqi Minis-



Displaced Yazidis stand by their tents at the Chamishko camp for internally displaced persons in the city of Zakho, Kurdistan Region, May 5, 2022. (AFP)

try of Displacement and Migration. The amount of money (1200 USD by IOM and 1.5 million IQD by the Iraqi government) given to each returning family is intended to help them reestablish their livelihood in Sinjar. However, according to Pir Deyan Jaafar, the director of the Office of Displacement and Migration in Duhok, the support for the families has been significantly reduced due to IOM's budget deficit, which has subsequently slowed down the process of returning of the displaced people to Sinjar. The Office called for increasing efforts by the IOM to help more displaced families return to their area of origin.

Security situation and presence of armed groups

The security situation in Sinjar remains volatile amid the presence of the armed groups and factions in the district. Following the October 2017 events, which led to the withdrawal of KRG's Peshmerga forces as well as the legitimate administration from Sinjar, there has been a volatile security situation in the district. Sinjar is situated within the areas of article 140 of the Iraqi constitution which are disputed between the Kurdistan region and Iraqi federal government. Officials in the Kurdistan Region government have continuously stressed the need to normalize the areas under Article 140. Normalization of

the situation in Sinjar, will pave the way to the reconstruction and returning of the displaced families.

The presence of various armed groups continues to be a factor of the instability in Sinjar. The KRG officials and Yazidi representatives in the Iraqi parliament have recently called for expulsion of the armed groups from Sinjar. Viyan Dakhil, a Yazidi MP and the spokesperson of Kurdistan Democratic Party's bloc in the Iraqi Parliament criticized the Iraqi government's "incapability" to expel the "foreign [armed] groups" from Sinjar. Ms. Dakhil stated in a press conference earlier in October this year, that armed groups, including the those who are affiliated to external forces, namely PKK, hinder the normalization process in Sinjar, as the Iraqi government "is not capable" of expelling those groups from the Sinjar. Ms. Dakhil also reiterated the importance of the implementation of Sinjar agreement between the Federal Government and the Kurdistan Region for reestablishing stability in the district. She pointed out that the political situation in Iraq is not currently in line with the implementation of the agreement, as the armed factions in Sinjar pose an obstacle to the stability of the district. Ms. Dakhil also stressed the importance of the full implementation of the agreement in order for the displaced people of Sinjar to return with no risks to

their lives, and to ensure stability and security is maintained in Sinjar.

Sinjar agreement not fully implemented

For normalization of the administrative and security situation and the reconstruction of Sinjar, an agreement was reached between the Kurdistan Region and the Federal Government on 9 October 2020. One of the articles of the agreement is expulsion of all the armed groups from Sinjar, for the local police and Iraqi national security services to take over the security dossier in the district. The Kurdistan Region Government has repeatedly called on the fully implementation of the agreement since then, however, the agreement has been met with challenges and obstacles. The Iraqi government has not yet shown flexibility to implement the core articles of the agreements, except for few articles, including the employment of 2500 members of police from the local population, out of which only employment of 1500 has been ratified in the recent Iraqi budget law.

For the Kurdistan Region, Sinjar agreement is not the [ultimate] goal, but rather is a ground for implementation of the article 140 [of the Iraqi constitution], stated Reber Ahmed, KRG's Minister of Interior in a panel of MERI Forum held in Erbil in October this year. He pointed out that PKK remains the main obstacle on the way of Sin-

jar agreement. Mr. Ahmed referred to the "unwillingness" of Baghdad in the implementation of the Iraqi constitution, agreements and political understandings that have been reached between KRG and the Federal Iraq, asserting that there is a "will" behind the will of the Federal government which prevents the agreements to be enforced on the ground. This KRG Minister reiterated on the importance of sharing responsibility in making decisions that impacts Sinjar, especially in the domains of security, administrative and reconstruction of the district, otherwise "[KRG] would not be the one held responsible for the consequences" of not implementing the agreements, he warned. The restoration of the legitimate administration to the district was planned to take effect immediately after the agreement was reached, however, "some illegitimate Iraqi and non-Iraqi forced affiliated to the PKK are not allowing this to happen, while the administration has the legitimacy from the people", according to Mr. Ahmed.

Despite the fact the Iraqi government's new cabinet led by Mohammed Shia' Al Sudani has been praised for putting in serious efforts into implementation of the Sinjar agreement, however, the efforts have failed as Al Sudani's partners in the cabinet, as well as the forces and parties which have strong military presence in Sinjar are seen

to be impeding the implementation of the agreement on the ground.

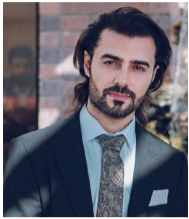
Iraqi government urged to act on Yazidi captives

The humanitarian situation of the Yazidis is still concerning whilst thousands of Yazidi women and children who had been abducted by ISIS remain missing. According to the Yazidi MP, Viyan Dakhil over 2000 Yazidi women and children remain in ISIS captivity to date. The Yazidi MP criticized Iraqi government for not facilitating its diplomatic and intelligence efforts to investigate and follow up on the issue of the Yazidi captives, urging the Iraqi government to act "seriously" on the matter of Yazidi captives.

According to the Kidnapped Yazidi Rescue Office, 6,417 Yazidis were abducted by ISIS in August 2014, out of which 3,458 have been rescued as of June 2023. According to statistics revealed by the KRG's Minister of Interior, around 100 to 150 thousand Yazidis have left Iraq and currently live abroad, while about 300 thousand still live the Kurdistan Region, and 30 to 40 thousand are currently living in Sinjar. Mr. Ahmed added that Sinjar is still suffering the aftermath of the genocide committed by ISIS, as many people remain missing.

By Shvan Goran

Solutions for the oil and gas struggle between Federal and Kurdistan Regional Government



By *Mohammed Rahman Ahmed*

As we lack a precise federal system structure, it is the type, nature, characteristics, and formation of the federal state that dictates the constitution and power distribution. One critical aspect is the division of powers concerning the management and ownership of natural resources. In federal states composed of independent regions, these regions often wield substantial power. In the UAE's federal system, for instance, regions have authority over oil and gas resources. Conversely, federal states transitioning from a centralized state, like Brazil and Venezuela, grant more power to the federal government, which assumes absolute authority over natural resource ownership and management.

Certain federal systems, like the German model, explicitly outline ownership, management, and oil and gas partnerships between the federal government and regions. This division may also stem from factors like ethnic differences, loyalty levels, geographical distinctions, and variations in income and wealth among regions.

The Iraqi permanent constitution, framing the state as a federal system, delineates powers between the federal government and regions. Certain powers are restricted to the federal government (Exclusive Powers), particularly those tied to state sovereignty. Conversely, other powers are limited to regions (Residuary Powers), focusing on administrative and cultural aspects falling outside the federal state's jurisdiction. Additionally, some powers are shared between the federal government and regions (Share Powers). This complexity arises from the post-2003 formation of the Iraqi state, initially appearing simple but characterized by the Kurdistan Region functioning independently and autonomously from Baghdad's central system.

The oil and gas problem

Articles 111 and 112 of the Iraqi permanent constitution touch upon oil and gas but with ambiguity, sparking a constitutional dispute between the federal government and the Kurdistan Regional Government. Article 111 asserts, "Oil and gas are owned by all the people of Iraq in all the regions and governorates." While this indicates ownership by the Iraqi people, it lacks specification on the governing authorities.

Article 112, paragraph 1, states, "The federal government, with the producing governorates and regional governments, shall undertake the management of oil and gas extracted from present fields." Although it outlines shared management between the federal government and the region, ambiguity arises with the phrase "from present fields." What about future fields? This has fueled significant disputes.

Despite Article 115 stating, "All powers not stipulated in the exclu-

sive powers of the federal government belong to the authorities of the regions and governorates that are not organized in a region," the constitution remains vague. In cases of shared powers between the federal government and regional government, priority is given to the law of the regions and governorates not organized in a region in case of dispute. Consequently, any matter not explicitly governed by the constitutional text as exclusive powers of the federal government falls within the jurisdiction of the region. The constitution's ambiguous language has led to controversy, with both sides presenting their constitutional evidence and offering distinct interpretations.

Dispute Resolution Methods in Federal Systems

1. Supreme Constitutional Court:

In every federal state, there exists a Constitutional or Federal Court to settle disputes and interpret ambiguous constitutional texts. While

one solution is resorting to the Supreme Constitutional Court, in Iraq, past concerns about its independence, distrust, inefficiency, and weakness undermine its credibility. Consequently, the Federal Supreme Court's current role in addressing issues with the Kurdistan Region is viewed as politically influential, limiting its reliability due to previous constitutional violations.

2. Constitution:

Another solution involves amending the constitution, a challenging task given the rigidity of the Iraqi constitution. The amendment process necessitates three-quarters of the National Assembly members, a majority of the population, and the president's signature, along with the non-rejection by two-thirds of the three provinces in the Kurdistan region. Success requires prior political agreement.

3. Legislative Approach:

Passing the oil and gas law, currently under development, is another potential solution. According to Article 112 of the constitution, "this shall be

regulated by law." However, without a political agreement between the federal government and the Kurdistan Region, enacting the law may not provide a fundamental solution and could exacerbate the dispute. The federal government's inclination to dominate the sector, disregarding the partnership principle integral to the federal system, raises concerns.

4. Political Agreement:

Deemed the most appropriate approach, a political agreement offers a swift and mutually acceptable resolution to the oil and gas problem. Alternative methods may favor one side over the other. Subsequently, a legal path can be taken based on the political agreement, leading to the issuance of an oil and gas law approved by all parties involved.

As the federal system's essence lies in common interests and partnership work, power division should occur within the framework of participation and sharing in institutions. Rather than exclusively vesting powers in the federal government,

with the regions playing a role solely in coordination, cooperation, and consultation, a more collaborative approach is needed.

The nature of federal systems varies, and those based on geographical, ethnic, linguistic, and religious differences require broader powers for regions and constituent units to ensure political stability and loyalty to the federal state. Even within a single federal state, regional variations may necessitate different principles, as exemplified by Quebec in Canada. The Kurdistan Region, distinguished by wider gaps in ethnic, social, cultural, and linguistic aspects, should not be treated merely as a province. If additional regions are formed in Iraq in the future, they should be granted more powers based on their unique characteristics.

In conclusion, for the attainment of political stability and loyalty to the Iraqi federal state, special consideration and enhanced powers, encompassing political, economic, administrative, and military domains, must be granted to the Kurds.





The democratic system and the national sectarian quota system in Iraq

The Armed militias, weakness of the state, determines the form of the political system

By *Saadula Agrawi*

I believe the Democracy, if it is achieved, takes upon itself the responsibility of regulating the relationship between society and the state, through laws and systems of social, economic and political relations between the different social classes, and this relationship between the state and society ultimately brings the Council to the conclusion that the peaceful struggle between the social classes is what determines the form of the political system, and, of course the Democratic, through the peaceful transfer of power.

It is very difficult to describe the national sectarian quota system in Iraq as a democratic system. The existence or allowing the establishment of political parties, organizations, and civil society organizations, and holding periodic elections to form a legislative authority/parliament, does not mean achieving democracy. Moreover, democratic transformations cannot be achieved in short periods of time, but rather come through rather long periods of time and the quantitative and qualitative accumulation of a series of peaceful conflicts in society.

We know, It is illogical to talk about democracy in Iraq today without the conditions for its establishment being met, which are represented by a number of things that have not been achieved, and if they are achieved, then bypassing and circumventing them are the two basic features in dealing with it by the authority. The rule of law and its rule are shocked by the presence of a large number of armed militias. Which, as a result of the weakness of the state and the fatwas of the religious institution, now has legal status, represented in the legislative and executive authorities, and has other extensions as a result of its armed influence and influence on the judicial authority and the fourth authority.

Public freedoms, which are a basic pillar of the structure of democratic systems, are also absent as a result of their sup-

pression in their infancy, as was the case with the October uprising and the killing of hundreds of demonstrators who the law and constitution allow freedom to demonstrate and assemble. In addition to violating the Constitution and its provisions related to individual freedom, human rights, and providing a decent life for the members of society, what has resulted is a huge gap between society and the state, which only remembers this society during election seasons!

The Iraqi State recognizes political pluralism in the country. In fact, political pluralism is considered a pillar of democracy, since the peaceful political struggle between parties and the political programs they present to voters shape the legislative authority/parliament, through fair and transparent elections and a series of laws guaranteeing a true democratic struggle. Have there been any indications of their integrity and transparency in the Iraqi elections since the American occupation of the country? Have the shape of the political scene and the shares of nationalist sectarian parties in power changed?

Boycotting the elections and educating the masses to boycott them not only deprives the corrupt authority of its legitimacy, but is also considered an arena for the democratic forces and the masses of our people to engage in a broad peaceful struggle to change the balance of power in the future in a way that is consistent with the aspirations of our people to live in dignity and security.

Corruption, poor distribution of wealth, unemployment, poverty, illiteracy, the absence of a conscious cultural scene, the failure to find solutions to the social and economic problems facing our people, and many others by the quota authority, all play a major role in the lack of development of democracy in our country and its remaining trapped in the green zone and religious, tribal, and tribal homes, and this is what Egyptian thinker Samir Amin comments on it, saying that it expresses the crisis of the general authoritarian regime.

The real stakeholders in building the democratic system and extricating Iraq from the deep abyss it has reached

due to the national sectarian quota system are not only the political parties and organizations that carry programs and visions different from the programs and visions of the dominant powers, but rather the various social forces in society that were damaged as a result of the Baathist regime's wars. And the harsh siege imposed on our people, leading to the loss of their astronomical budgets as a result of corruption and terrorism, including state terrorism with its militias as well. This requires it and civil society organizations to translate a number of issues contained in the constitution adopted by the authority itself into reality by organizing demonstrations, sit-ins and strikes, which will not succeed unless a broad political front is established to confront the tyranny and corruption of the authority.

These issues include freedom of expression, demonstration and assembly, respect for civil, social and political rights, and spreading a democratic culture. In light of the great disparity in the balance of power between the parties in power and those outside it, the existence of a free, democratic and courageous visual media directed at the broadest social groups remains a powerful weapon in the face of the culture of ignorance, backwardness and demagoguery pursued by the power media and its parties.

What is happening today in Iraq is a form of sectarian religious tyranny with a distorted democratic mask, and therefore any political process related to or resulting from this tyranny, including the upcoming legislative elections, does not represent the democratic system, and only its name is known from democracy. Also, the powerful forces that dominate the country's capabilities are not qualified to build a true democratic system in the country, let alone build the Iraqi person and his homeland.

Boycotting the elections and educating the masses to boycott them not only deprives the corrupt authority of its legitimacy, but is also considered an arena for the democratic forces and the masses of our people to engage in a broad peaceful struggle to change the balance

of power in the future in a way that is consistent with the aspirations of our people to live in dignity and security.

Iraq is a strategically important country in the Middle East, providing the opportunity to build bridges and alliances where the United States cannot. Inevitably, the relationship between the two countries is affected by the United States' relationship with other regional powers, and its dynamics with neighboring countries, including Iran. We are trying to look at the broader strategy, challenges and opportunities for both countries in the future.

"Iraq is the cornerstone in the arc of the region...what is good in Iraq will be good for the broader region, United States consider Iraq's sovereignty to be crucial to everything that should be right about it... Every decision taken is framed by whether it is good for Iraq's sovereignty. the relationship between the United States and Iraq is a 360-degree partnership" based on security, stability, and sovereignty, a relationship that goes beyond building a strong Iraqi defense force, to include projects focused on the economy, climate change, and strengthening cultural ties.

Iraq must create a business-friendly environment, where organizations and individuals are able to operate with transparency and predictability.

It is remarkable to me how the security environment is moving forward, because of the good work of this government. The US government's advisory role in assisting the Iraqi government is very important. At this stage, there is a lack of understanding of the extent to which Iraq has changed externally. There is no Understanding sufficiently Iraq's potential outside the energy sector," the Iraqi government must support and encourage Iraqi youth to visit America and tell their story. "There are all kinds of perceptions or obsessions.

A society whose institutions and organizations were formed independently of state authority; It is united by a voluntary, optional bond, and it is based on social work to achieve common interests. Such as parties, charities, non-governmental organizations, social movements,

unions, human rights organizations, and others, but it is not considered a homogeneous society due to the lack of clarity in the boundaries between it and the government or commercial entities. Building civil society is complex and somewhat diverse, but it is important and essential for expressing the unheard of people by strengthening local participation in political decision-making and service provision. It is also considered the third sector of society alongside government and business. The United Nations also supports communities. Civility because it advances the ideals of the entire organization. The term civil society began to appear in the 1980s through non-governmental movements opposed to authoritarian regimes in political and economic discussions. Civil society has sufficient power to influence policy makers, and is in constant development as a result of technological developments and changes that occur constantly.

I believe that in Iraq, the Cooperation for survival is one of most important goals through social practices and coordination between them in several ancient and contemporary methods. The term civil society is considered a global term, especially after the emergence of modern democracy movements, as they work to stimulate political life and find solutions to social problems. It reflects a number of concepts and ideas in the modern era, the most important of which are pluralism and social benefit. Which is important in order to improve conditions in the world and block what prevents them from being achieved. Such as fanaticism, threats to freedom of action and belief, and others, but it is considered a somewhat difficult idea to achieve, but the communication of individuals with each other, starting with the family and ending with the state through a network of values and morals, leaves a positive impression about the ability of individuals to change through participation in private life and society.

Opportunities for Inspiring Women to Take on Greater Leadership Roles in Iraq



By *Dr. Mwafaq Ramzi*

There are still several significant barriers that hinder women from holding leadership roles, making decisions, and actively participating in politics, business, economics, and both the public and private sectors in Iraq, despite recent improvements in the number of women in leadership posts in Iraq. Some of the obstacles that still need to be conquered include local customs and cultural barriers, socioeconomic factors, safety and security concerns, gender bias, harassment and discrimination practices, economic empowerment, limited education and education disparities between urban and rural areas, the ISIS crisis, conflict and refugees, women's violence and abuse, and many other issues. In this article, we will discuss some significant challenges, advancements made and present some brilliant opportunities to support women in Iraq in adopting leadership positions across a range of industries.

Like many other nations, Iraq has unique difficulties when it comes to women in leadership roles. Even with the recent advancements, women in Iraq still face major obstacles to achieving leadership positions: Here are some of the challenges that face women's leadership roles in Iraq as follows: **Social and Cultural Norms:** Women in leadership roles may not be as accepted due to cultural norms and traditional gender roles. Women may face obstacles in assuming leadership posts due to societal standards that favor men in these positions. **Political Unrest:** Political unrest has been a major issue in Iraq, which can make things more difficult for women in leadership positions. The long-term advancement of women in leadership roles may be hampered by frequent changes in governance and leadership structures. **Security Concerns:** Women may be disproportionately impacted by security concerns in Iraq, which might make it difficult for them to engage in public life, especially leadership positions. Women in leadership roles may be more vulnerable because of their prominence in public roles. **School Access:** Women's and girls' unequal access to school can reduce the number of capable individuals vying for leadership positions. Enhancing women's access to education is essential to developing their leadership potential and building a pipeline of future female leaders. **Discrimination**



and Bias: Prejudice and discrimination against women can still exist in a number of contexts, such as employment and promotion procedures. Perceptions of women's competence in leadership positions may be influenced by gender role stereotypes. **Legal and Policy Barriers:** It's possible that laws that encourage women to take on leadership roles won't be passed into law or that existing laws won't completely support gender equality. **Lack of Networking Opportunities:** Establishing professional networks and mentorship opportunities, which are essential for job success, can be difficult for women. Inadequate networking may hinder their access to the tools and assistance needed to succeed in leadership positions. **Work-Life Balance:** Women may find it more difficult to strike a balance between their obligations to their families and their careers, which may hinder their chances of achieving and retaining leadership roles.

Collaboration across a range of parties, including the government, civil society, and international organizations, is necessary to address these issues. To increase the number of women in leadership positions in Iraq, it is imperative to implement strategies including advocating for gender-sensitive legislation, offering mentorship and leadership development programs, building inclusive workplaces, and spreading awareness of the value of women's leadership.

There has been some progress and advancements made for Iraqi women in the commercial world, as well as in politics, the

economy, and positions of leadership in civil society. In Iraq, there are now quota mechanisms in place, and a sizeable fraction of parliamentary seats are reserved specifically for women. Also, leadership roles for women in government participation in Iraq have been strengthened, including advisory and ministerial positions. This has been accomplished by the Iraqi officials. Women's rights organizations and activities have been promoting gender equity and women's rights, as well as women's participation in leadership roles. Specifically, this has been done by encouraging women to take on leadership positions. In addition, the officials of Iraq have enacted laws and established regulations in the interest of protecting women from abusive relationships, particularly those that occur within the home. Women have benefited from increased access to higher education, the role of local media in reforming Iraqi society in order to establish a new form of business, economic, political, and social life, and regional development, and a cultural shift toward a more positive perception of women's potential and rights.

After addressing the pressing concerns, the following potential avenues for collaboration and partnership between public and private organizations on a national and international scale should be investigated once the immediate problems have been resolved: This will help to develop an environment that is inclusive, equal, accessible, and belonging for the purpose of sus-

tainably strengthening and cultivating leadership roles for women, as well as active engagement in Iraq's public and private sectors. It is recommended that the educational gaps between rural and urban areas be closed in order to empower women with the essential information as well as the technical and soft skills to assume leadership roles. It is very suggested that women participate in some kind of leadership development program in order to improve their confidence and communication abilities. In order to protect women from potentially damaging actions like discrimination on the job, domestic violence, and other forms of abuse, new policies and procedures need to be formulated, implemented, monitored, and enforced. It is important to provide women with access to funding, mentorship, and training programs, as well as fair employment opportunities, in order to assist them in achieving economic independence and self-sufficiency. Develop a program for community participation that will encourage women to actively participate in the decision-making processes of their local governments, as well as the outcomes of those decisions. In order to assist working mothers in balancing the demands of their families with those of their jobs, employers should give working mothers options including flexible work hours, paid time off for the birth or adoption of a child, and access to daycare centers. Access to the internet and other forms of vital technology should be made available to rural women so that they can be

supported and ensured that they have access to knowledge and technology. It has been argued that mentoring programs and networking opportunities provide experienced women leaders with the opportunity to pass on their knowledge to aspiring female leaders. It is recommended that positive media literacy be developed in order to lessen the prevalence of negative stereotypes about women, as well as to educate the general public on women's rights and the traits of a good women leader in society. In order to provide assistance to local Iraqi women's leadership projects, partnerships and cooperative efforts with international women's rights organizations and civil society are required. This will make it possible to not only acquire new knowledge and resources but also to share existing ones with other people.

To recap, although women's rights and active participation have made strides forward in Iraq, there are still significant barriers preventing women from gaining equitable access to the public and private sectors of the economy. Cooperation and partnership between all local and international efforts are required in order to achieve a climate that is sustainable, inclusive, equitable, diverse, and healthy. This climate must be one in which all women, regardless of their backgrounds or differences, are able to find a place and a voice to contribute to the reconstruction of their society in a manner that is in their best interests and maximizes their potential.

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

By *Dr. Mathew Jose* *

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

Part: 2

According to the latest report issued by the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC), the extent and severity of desertification has increased in the Middle East and North Africa region over the past decade, especially in Iraq and including the Kurdistan region, as well as according to the latest NATO assessment report 2023 entitled. Assessing climate change and its impact on NATO security, in the case of Iraq on page 18 states that "In recent years, Iraq has experienced periods of extreme heat with temperatures rising for several days above 50 degrees Celsius. When temperatures reach 50 degrees Celsius, helicopters cannot "Flying and landing with ease. Temperatures are expected to exceed 50°C for 72 days a year, meaning one-fifth of air operations will be halted annually.

In the first part of this assessment series, we provide a general illustration of warming scenarios and their consequences such as dust storms and rain.

During the next decade in Iraq, temperatures will rise by 1°C in the short term and 2°C in the medium and long term, while the whole world is now trying not to rise by 0.5°C."

According to the first scenario, in the short term (2020-2060), the number of days with temperatures above 35 °C will reach 160-170 days, while in the long term, the number of days will be more than half a year.

Also, in the second scenario, the number of days with temperatures above 45°C will increase by 40-50 days in the next few decades, and in the short term (2020-2039) the number of days with temperatures above 45°C will rise to 72. In the long term (2060-2079), the number will reach more than 111 days per year.

In the third scenario, which takes the highest temperatures in Baghdad during the months (June, July, August) as a basis and forecast for the coming years, it appears that the highest temperatures during (1995-2014) were 49 degrees Celsius, however, according to short-term forecasts (2020 -2039) will reach 50 degrees Celsius, and in the medium term (2040-2059) the highest daily temperature will be 52 degrees Celsius, while



in the long term it will reach 54 degrees Celsius.

According to forecasts, the number of days without rain, which has a direct impact on drought and dust, is high. In Iraq's worst-case scenario, there would be about 319 consecutive dry, painless days per year. When approaching Baghdad and its surroundings, the number of days reaches 330 days, which is 90% of the days of the year.

In terms of temperature changes in the Kurdistan region, over the past decade, the average temperature rose above two degrees Celsius in the summer, so that the average temperature in Erbil at the governorate level was 33.75 degrees Celsius in July 2009, and in Sulaymaniyah it was 31.55 degrees Celsius, and in Dohuk. It was 32.6°C, but in July 2021 the average temperature in Erbil was 35.7°C, Sulaymaniyah 35.3°C, and in Dohuk 34.7°C. It rose by 1.95 degrees Celsius in Erbil, 3.75 degrees Celsius in Sulaymaniyah, 2.1 degrees Celsius in Dohuk, and 2.6 degrees Celsius warmer than the entire Kurdistan region.

Another interesting difference is the increase in the average annual maximum and minimum temperatures in the Kurdistan Region, which means that winters were not colder but warmer. For example, in 2009 the average annual minimum temperature was 15.3°C, but in 2021 it became 15.6°C, which is a 0.3°C drop in winter temperatures, see Table 1 for average annual temperatures.

In fact, this increase in tem-

perature also means a decrease in annual rainfall. Therefore, according to data from the General Directorate of Meteorology and Seismology in the Kurdistan Region, the average rainfall in the past decade in the Kurdistan Region decreased by 289.6 mm, although there were wide fluctuations during this period (2009-2021). The difference was 231.2 mm during that period. While the average rainfall in the Kurdistan Region was 467.9 mm in 2009, it will be 236.7 mm in See Chart 1 for 2009-2021 rainfall in the Kurdistan Region.

All signs indicate that the consequences of climate change for Iraq will lead not only to record high temperatures, drying up of water resources, disappearance of marshes and burning of forests, but also mass internal migration, desertification of villages and increased urban congestion in the future.

While there is no infrastructure to accommodate the large population and meet their needs, the population is expected to double in years with temperatures above 50°C and 90% of days with dust.

Iraq and the Kurdistan Region are in some ways a small part of the contributors to climate change, but the consequences of the changes on them are in a way that cannot be ignored, so Iraq can limit its effects with the help of powerful countries and international organizations because human resources and local income can be easily provided and built in the days that do not arrive. It brings temperatures to new records and reduces the number of dust days throughout

zens who suffer from respiratory problems, such as those with asthma, should not leave their homes and wear masks if they have to go out.

Iraq is one of the five countries most exposed to climate change, desertification, and dust storms in the world, as the number of dusty days has increased, according to a statement by the Director General of the Technical Department in the Ministry of Environment, which he made to the Iraqi News Agency (INA), a few days ago, bringing the number of dusty days to (272).) days per year for a period of two decades, and it is likely to reach (300) dusty days per year in the year 2050.

The document titled (Iraq's Nationally Determined Contribution on Climate Change), prepared by the United Nations Development Program (UNDP) and the Ministry of Environment in Iraq, and submitted by Iraq in accordance with the requirements of the Framework Convention on Climate Change and the Paris Agreement legislated under its umbrella, refers to (climatic phenomena that Iraq has not experienced before, such as a decrease in rates Rainfall... and rising temperatures at unprecedented rates, more than double the global average, and the occurrence of fires and an increase in dust storms in their intensity, frequency, and time periods of their occurrence...). It is noteworthy that this document expresses a vision that represents Iraq's supreme policy in dealing with the problem of climate change nationally and internationally for the time period from 2021-2030.

People wonder whether these dust storms are due to climate change, the lack of rain, desertification, and the lack of vegetation cover, or is there something behind the mound and that there is a hidden climate war? Are we witnessing a new generation of what the British Defense Secretary, Penny Mordaunt, calls the dark wars that are waged in the dark? We do not see their parties, we may not know them, we do not hear their rumblings, and we do not notice their battles. Rather, they are managed and fought in by ghosts, minds, and wills, so that the world is surprised by their results?

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

The Kurdish literature during the modern era



By *Dlan Ramadan*

The history of contemporary Kurdish literature is the literature of the Kurdish people during the modern era. It is concerned with classifying poets and writers within literary schools and sects, and includes exemplary poetic examples from the communicative language in its multiple dialects, to give us a comprehensive picture of the literary civilization of Kurdish history during the last seventy years.

As for European languages, writings about contemporary Kurdish literature are nothing but comprehensive and not free explanations. The Beirut scholar Thomas Bois wrote in French his opinions about new interpretations at the conference, full coverage of an article by Al-Mustakard to S. Edmund on the Tamil poet Sheikh Raza. There are many studies in Russian on contemporary Kurdish literature, which were submitted as papers to obtain academic degrees. Kurdish literature was influenced by the cultures of the peoples in the region, and the press became acquainted with the encounter with the literature of the European peoples. Kurdish literature was enriched and its extremism spread, admired and penetrated into the inner world of man, and objected to the stage of establishment and construction to the stage of renewal and renewal of form and language. Such as what we find in (Kurran, Bex, Dildar, Nour Salih) poets of the new generation, and their poetry is characterized by bitterness, sadness, hypocrisy, pain, and the depiction of the miserable Kurds. However, the motives of the sheikh of love, sad love, and the splendor and realism of nature, are pioneering spiritual moderation, and in this period The poetic drama was born by the poet Kuranvi, the blood-soaked rose and the unhappy bride.

Their theme revolves around protesting tradition and social conventions and the struggle to liberate social restrictions. Ahmed Mukhtar also enriched the love poems with new artistic images that demonstrate a profound poetic skill woven into the tragic ghazal poems. Ahmed Mukhtar Al-Wajh is considered one of the old generation of poetry among con-

temporaries. He still preserves the traditional literary form in his poetry and identifies harm with what contains modernity, while Hamdi was An artist with literary images and an exclusive literary language that matches the language of Abd Wahid Nouri in his poems and stories, who renewed poetry and was able to get rid of the old, sick language, and Ghani Zivar takes advantage of the youth of his people, and here he depicts communication and communication:

Everything about you is amazing..

French face and African scales

Russian qualities and Persian stature

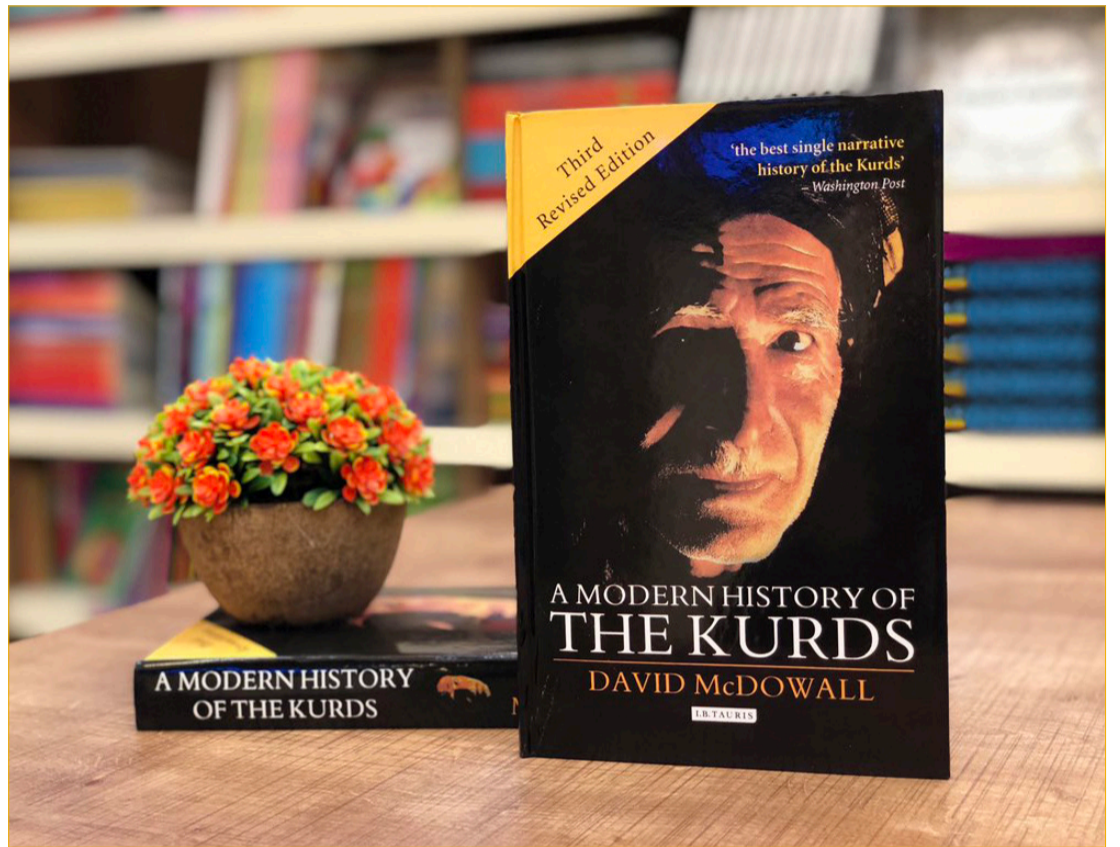
But you are Kurdish, because you have a keffiyeh on your head

Bakki's poetry is diverse in simplicity and collectivity and is not popular among the Kurdish people. Dildar's poems are superior to them, which are more popular, as his poetry approaches the concerns of his people. After World War II, Kurdish literature approaches new topics taken from the history of the Yemen region and is related to the liberation struggle of the Kurds, to prepare popular texts that It is inspired by the history of the Kurdish people, especially the legend of mourning (Kawa and the Eid of Nowruz), the army of Ferdowsi's Shahnameh, and this tone has been used in many Kurdish poetry, such as (Kuran, Jamal Bayan, and Zaki Hanadi.)

...And there is the poet Pira Mered, who emerged in the historical literary vision that emerged in the basic stages of the artistic development of Kurdish literature. He was also interested in popular cultural literature and practiced popular wisdom and ideals and expressed them in poetry. His poems also targeted partnership and some poems intended for children.

It was renewed in the famous epic of Mem and Zain. The poet Salam was interested in popular poetry, writing stories, literary articles, and translations of Khayyam and the quatrains of Kudiya Nahi. Kuran's favorite poems are in all their literary genres. He weaves dramatic romantic poems, quatrains, dramas, and dramatic epics. He is famous for his brilliant literary articles, and he translated stories by English writers. Wernsin...

The works of the poet Jakar



Khoin began in the thirties, and his works are characterized by simplicity and description of the content in expressive and joyful paintings about real, daily life. Dildar belongs to the new generation of writers, and romantic themes occupy a wide place in his writings, especially nature, and the wonderful love remains among them.. The poet's specialized and different artistic tools Colors, classical and modern poetry, computer meters were written in one poem, and the richest vocabulary of traditional poetic connections, even 77 quatrains by the poet Baba Taher Al-Hamdani into the language of the conference.

Hajar is a prominent contemporary poet. He wrote rare poems about love, human relationships, and nature. His literary vocabulary is simple, sociable, and close to oral language. The book chronicles the personality of conversational communication writers such as (Shaker Fattah, Ibrahim Ahmad, Muharram Muhammad Amin, Marouf Barzanji)... Contemporary Kurdish literature has taken a strong, important step during the birth of Kurdish prose, which was evident in the birth of literary genres, such as literary articles and stories.

The Kurds have a wealth of popular or oral literature. Unfortunately, the Orientalists were more interested than the Muslims in collecting and publishing a lot of Kurdish popular

literature.

The richness of this literature is represented in the following, First: in proverbs, popular sayings, riddles, and riddles. The Kurd likes to decorate his speech with rhyming and balanced sentences, or with some aphorisms of wisdom that show his awareness and the strength of his observation. Proverbs also provide us with a focused summary of practical wisdom. Thousands of such proverbs have been published. Dr. Badrakhn Al-Sindi wrote a book entitled: Kurdish Wisdom, published by Baghdad Publications, in the mid-nineties of the twentieth century.

Second: In the songs, their forms and types: there are dance songs (diluk), love songs (lawek), war songs or passionate singing (shar), there is the religious anthem or chant (lavis, lavisuk, laze), and finally there is the collective anthem (periti or biliti.)

There are categories of Kurdish singers: there is (Denkebez) or (Istranfan), who is the famous singer. Next comes (Jirukbez), a simple singer who sings sometimes and narrates other times, and mostly tells short stories. There is a "murtib" or mutrib, which is a gypsy singer and dancer. There is also (Sazband), the musical artist who walks with Dinkebyz. Finally, Balorfan comes, who is the flute player.

Kurdish myths, in turn, are divided into sections. There is the

story (Jiruk), and there are the stories (Jir Jiruk), and the two sections are balanced prose, narrated by a person called (Jirukbez) or the narrator, and sung by (Denkebez or Estranfan) or the singer.

Stories, anecdotes, and anecdotes have a close relationship with imagination, wonders, and humor, such that they make one forget the worries and troubles of life. Anecdotes, stories, and stories (particularly accusative) do not hesitate to criticize the mistakes of individuals, regardless of their status - and competing tribes. Kurdish storytellers are also fond of animal stories that always contain a moral virtue, such as Kalila and Dimna.

Due to the spread of illiteracy among the Kurds, their literature was passed down through generations, including narrators, poems, and songs - war songs, love stories, and epics, such as the epic of the Kurds' struggle in the castle of "Dum Dum," which describes their heroic resistance to the armies of Shah Abbas, King of Persia, in the nineteenth century. And the epic (Mem and Zain), which describes the innocent romantic relationship between (Mem) and (Zain) (2). This epic was translated into Arabic in a bright prose style by Dr. (Muhammad Saeed Ramadan Al-Bouti) under the title (Mem and Zain - a love story that grew in the ground and flourished in the sky).

Ruwanga Awards for 2023 Announced

36 youths were awarded out of 1,119 people who submitted their projects



In a ceremony held in Duhok city on November 11, the winners of the Ruwanga Awards for 2023 were announced. The ceremony was attended by a large number of officials at the Iraqi Government, KRG and other officials from institutions including the United Nations.

Idris Nechirvan Barzani, founder and president of Ruwanga Foundation, attended the awards ceremony wherein 36 participants reached the finals and competed for first place in the categories of entrepreneurship, scientific innovation, programming, short stories, poetry, drawing, recycling art, short films, solo music and photography.

Abdulsalam Madani, Executive Director of Ruwanga, said "The principles and culture of Ruwanga is how to compete with ourselves and how to improve ourselves and continue on that tradition.; adding , "Since mid-2013, Ruwanga has been able to implement 296 projects, an average of about 33 projects annually and three projects monthly."

Ruwanga, a non-governmental organization, works in four main areas, including education, youth, environment and vulnerable people. It was established in September 2013. In 2014, the awards ceremony began and became one of the projects of the Ruwanga Foundation.

Winners in the short film category were: 1st place: Hevar Omar Sadiq; Second place Mohammed Mahdi Salah Jassim; Third place: Cardin Karwan Ali.

Winners of the Kurdish Short Story Section included: 1st place: Kasia Aswad Osman; Second place: Mohammed Idris Abdul Razzaq; Third place: Zanyar Mohammed Hassan.

Business Initiative category winners were: First place: Mohammed Baqir Hikmat Abdul Ghaffar;

Second place: Sonia Ismail Ali; Third place: Hakem Hisham Abd.

Winners of the Arabic Short Story Section were: 1st place: Haira Musa Abdulamir; Second place: Ali Hussein Mahmoud; Third place: Dalal Bashar Abdullah.

Graphic Design category winners were: First place: Mohammed Ahmad Salih; Second place: Kovan Tariq Rafiq; Third place: Murtaza Fazal Hussein.

Winners in the Scientific Innovation category were: 1st place: Roj Yadgar Abdulrazzaq; Second place: Mohammed Safin Sabah; Third place: Mohammed Hashim Ibrahim

Winners in the solo music category were: 1st place: Ayad Osman Salih; Second place: Mohammed Nawzad Saeed; Third place: Rojyar Luqman Majid

Winners in the programming category were: 1st place: Zahra Qasim Sabri; Second place: Osama Abbas Sabir; Third place: Mohammed Aqil Abd.

Winners of the Arabic Poetry category included: 1st place: Zainul Abdin Majid Fazil; Second place: Rabbi Saeed Hassan; Third place: Jawad Mohammed Ali.

Winners in the photography category were: 1st place: Diyar Shaban Mohammed; Second place: Sarmad Omid Mohammed; Third place: Abdulqadir Latif Abdulqadir.

Winners of the Kurdish Poetry Section included: 1st place: Dilshad Hassan Majid; Second place: Iman Fuad Fakhreddin; Third place: Nehro Jarjis Omar.

Winners in the drawing category were: 1st place: Dunya Fazil Abdulrahman; Second place: Rahand Nehro Khzaei; Third place: Mohammed Mukhlif Abdul Razzaq.

Ruwanga identifies itself as a non-governmental organization that strives to create a world where every individual has access to quality education. The strategic objective of Ruwanga is to develop platforms where young people can discover their hidden talents and abilities, introduce the latest technologies, especially online learning systems, to raise education to international standards, and create culture and interest in education among young people.



Kurdish Players Shine at Chess Tournament

The 11th and final round of the Iraqi boys' chess tournament ended last Wednesday night. The results were as follows: Hussein Ali, Akar Ali and Ali Lays are in first place with 7:5 points, while Ali Firas ended in fourth place and Muazzaz Zahir is in fifth place with 7 points.

However, to determine the second and third places, three players including Hussein Ali, Akar Ali and Ali Lays faced each other and after the rapid system that all three players played six games. Hussein Ali won first place, Ali Lays won second place and Akar Ali won third place.

Regarding the last day of the tournament, Pash-tiwan Sheikh Ahmad Hamad, a member of the Iraqi Chess Association, said "After a strong competition for eight days, 12 players were selected for the Iraqi national male team.

Sheikh Ahmad also hailed the Kurdish players of Sulemani and Erbil city for shining at the chess game. He said the Kurdish cities have become the platform and home of sensitive and important games. He hoped all Iraqi players



in all cities had the best time in the tournament.

He finally encouraged the players to focus their efforts on future challenges since now they have to prepare well for

international tournaments with the national team.

Meanwhile at the female levels, the national team has been dominated by the Kurdish players.

After eight days of strong competition among 11 Iraqi girls chess players, five players were selected for the Iraqi girls' national chess team.

The competition and

selection process ended after 10 rounds of qualifying matches. Iraqi girls chess players and their rankings are as follows: Dilpak Ismail won 1st place, Sara Mas-

soud placed 2nd place, Sali Abbas secured 3rd place. Karin Kamal ended in 4th place and the 5th place was secured by Yamama Asaf.

Big Ramy in Erbil for Business

For the first time, the giant international bodybuilder, Big Ramy, arrived in Erbil last week and was received by Kurdistan Regional Government's sports officials.

"I have been waiting for this opportunity for a long time and thank God it has come true," Egyptian and world bodybuilding star, Big Ramy told reporters.

Big Ramy, whose real name is Mamdouh Mohammed Hassan Elssbiay, has brought a branch of his company specializing in nutritional supplements to Erbil and met with the Director General of Sports in Kurdistan to discuss gymnastics and several joint projects.

"I am very happy to be with you today. I hope to be a light-hearted guest. I am among my brothers and sisters here. I am happy to be in Iraqi Kurdis-



tan. This would not be the final visit for sure.

He also thinks there

should be more mutual understanding about sports between Kurdistan

region and Egypt.

"We have very good partners here, at Bio

Guard, we look forward to always helping athletes in Iraqi Kurdistan. We want

to offer something different than what is available. Let's offer them better and better." He added.

Big Ramy also disclosed that he has plans to explore the city and described the people of the Kurdish capital city of Erbil as the most beautiful thing about the city. "They welcomed me in a very friendly way, and this made me very happy. I have been waiting for this meeting for a long time," said Big Ramy

Big Rami, 39, is one of the most famous gymnasts in the world. He won the Mr. Olympia title twice in 2020 and 2021, but he finished fifth in his last appearance in 2022. In addition, Big Ram won the World Bodybuilder of the Year award three times in 2013 and 2014 in New York and 2016 in Kuwait.

Unlocking the Potential: The Interconnected Benefits of Iraq and the Kurdistan Region



By **Jawad Qadir** *

The oil and gas issues present a common ground for the Kurdistan Region and Baghdad to collaborate and find solutions. Both parties share a vested interest in resolving these matters, which can lead to significant benefits for both sides. By working together, the Kurdistan Region and Baghdad can address the challenges related to oil and gas including in the production, distribution, and revenue sharing. This collaboration can foster a stronger relationship between the two entities and contribute to the overall development and robust growth in both Iraq and its Kurdistan Region.

The Kurdistan Region surpasses Iraq in terms of natural gas expertise. Despite Iraq's vast reserves of approximately 156 trillion cubic meters, the country now relies on gas imports. While there are various gas fields in Iraq, including those with oil and free gas, they have not been fully utilized, and minimal progress has been made in this area. Surprisingly, Iraq continues to import 50 million cubic feet of gas and electricity from Iran, incurring an annual cost of \$2-3 billion. In contrast, the Kurdistan Region, demonstrates success in this sector with its limited 1-2 fields and production of around 400 million cubic feet. This achievement is noteworthy considering the region's short lifespan and its adherence to international standards and experience.

If the lingering issues persist within the international trade courts, it will have a detrimental impact on the reputation of Iraqi manufacturing. The ongoing problems serve as evidence of the unstable and problematic environment in Iraq, encompassing legal challenges as well. Consequently, numerous companies are deterred from resuming operations in Iraq.

Iraq currently expends substantial amounts of money annually on legal firms to pursue lawsuits against the

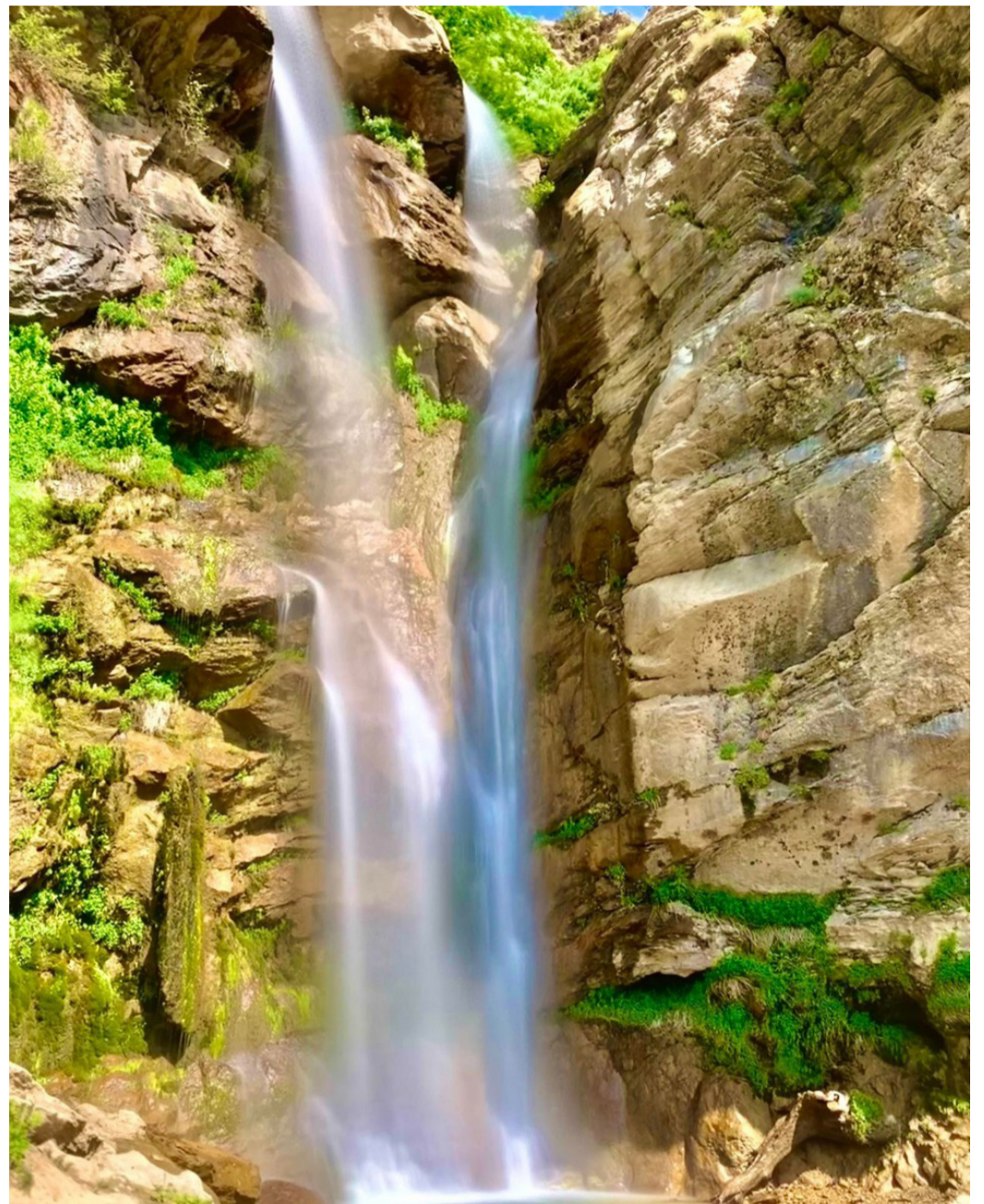
Region, despite having lost several cases against companies operating in the south. This negligence in contract management results in an annual loss of 10-20 million dollars from the Iraqi budget in the form of fines imposed on the state. In legal terms, such negligence poses a significant detriment to the Iraqi government. Consequently, the only viable solution lies in engaging in dialogue and fostering cooperation with the Kurdistan Region.

Putting an end to the conflict between Baghdad and Erbil can bring about two or three additional benefits for Baghdad. Firstly, it would enable the country to increase its exports. For instance, the pipeline connecting the Kurdistan Region and Turkey can ship around 100,000 barrels of oil daily, with the assistance of the Kurdistan Region and the Ministry of Natural Resources, without any cost. If the amount of oil shipped exceeds \$80 per barrel, the daily profit would amount to \$8 million, which translates to \$240 million monthly and \$2.8 billion annually.

Resolving the issues holds significant importance for Iraq due to the potential impact of the ongoing conflict on various pending matters between Baghdad and Erbil. If the energy sector issue remains unresolved, it will have a direct impact on other crucial matters such as the budget, the Peshmerga, and the implementation of the constitutional Article 140. Hence, finding a solution to the oil problem becomes imperative for the progress of other files.

These long-standing problems, if successfully addressed by the Iraqi government, would be considered a remarkable achievement and a symbol of victory. Previous cabinets have struggled to resolve this issue; therefore, it is expected that the current Iraqi cabinet will prioritize and actively work towards resolving this matter.

Kurdistan Region's Highest Waterfall Is A Natural Wonder



In summer time, the waterfall attracts thousands of tourists

Sandwiched between two mountains, Kokha and Sheikh Nasir, the Kurdistan Region's highest waterfall has become a natural tourist attraction.

Locally called Kani Bast "The frozen waterfall", the waterfall is fifty meters high, making it the highest among the waterfalls of the Kurdistan Region. It is 1,700 meters above sea level.

The name comes from the fact that its water freezes in winter.

Kani Bast is located between Choman town and Soran city. To reach the waterfall, you have to drive to Qasre subdistrict until the dead end where you have to park your car and start walking. But not for long. It is just a ten minute walk through both Kokha and Sheikh Mountains.

The waterfall attracts hundreds of tourists each year, especially in summer time.

"We have come by bus, after we parked over there, we had to walk to reach the waterfall," said Jabir Mohammed, a tourist from Baghdad. "It is incredible!"

The water is fresh, coming from the springs and mountains in the rugged mountainous areas of Balakayati area.

"The water is so fresh, so cold, it just freezes your hand and feet," Mohammed said. "I bet you could not stay longer than ten seconds in the water. It is that cold."

The waterfall is surrounded by trees and flowers. Its temperature will not exceed 20 degrees

Celsius in summer.

"I was here last year in August, we were burning in the city heat, but here it was like 15 degrees," said Shayda Akram, a local tourist from Erbil. "Now, in June, it is even colder, that is why I love it. Getting here is a bit hard, as you have to be careful not to fall. But it is not that bad, it is doable."

Tourists complain about the road and think that it can be better.

"The government can fix the road and can build a small bridge," added Akram. "If this was in Europe, it would have been a famous attraction by now. But even now, it is not too late, it can be developed."

Kani Bast is so special that it is depicted on the 50,000 Iraqi dinar note.

"I am proud of this waterfall and we were delighted that the Iraqi government chose it to put it on the 50,000 dinar note," said Khalid Rasul, a local resident from Qasre subdistrict. "This could be one of the wonders of the world if it was developed."

If it was developed into a touristic place, Rasul noted, it would provide jobs for the many young people.

"This natural wonder can change our life one day, it just needs a good plan," Rasul added.

By Goran Sabah