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October protest demonstrations in Iraq (External causes and attitudes)

Professor Dr. Khamis Daham Hamid

University of Baghdad -College of Political Science Political systems

Email: Ka64mes@yahoo.com

Athraa Muhammad Abdul Reda

University of Baghdad -College of Political Science Political systems

Email: athraamohammad1993@gmail.com

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Abstract

Despite the success of the power parties in vigorously aborting the protest movement, its results remain dominated by Iraq's political scene, and the subject of controversy and discussion within the institutional buildings, and its effects were evident by influencing the legislative institution that has taken important decisions. Perhaps the most important of these is changing the electoral system through proportional representation to the system of the highest votes, which will inevitably affect the drawing of an electoral map that differs from its predecessors, and with the ruling parties' endeavors to make the electoral environment suitable for their survival but this does not preclude or affect the continuation of the social act refusing to remain at the top of the decision-making process, except for the similarities between the 2013 and 2019 protests, uniting them in terms of peacefulness and provocation of the authority, the 2013 protests were Sunni, including the predominantly Sunni northern and western regions, and the 2019 protests were mainly Shiite youth, and thus demonstrated to the authority the grievances of Iraqis far from their affiliation.

Keywords

Protest, change, political quotas, crises, external interference, peaceful demonstration.

October protest demonstrations in Iraq (external causes and attitudes)

The phenomenon of popular protests has preoccupied the various political

systems based on their influence on the political arena, whether democratic or undemocratic, but in democratic systems, it usually draws the attention of governing regimes to social gaps and injustices or political marginalization. In undemocratic regimes, they perpetuate and possibly deepen their crises because they are unable to respond to the protesters' social demands through changes in the structure of the relationship between the regime and the protesters. They work to circumvent them, responding to one side and rejecting others that may be fundamental demands, and because there is no democracy without opposition or a peaceful transfer of power, the authority will not last for a person, no matter how strong he is. That is why some paragraphs and articles of the Iraqi constitution of 2005 confirmed it, including (Article 15 and Article 38) as part of human rights if they were peaceful.

The research objective

The research seeks to clarify the events in Iraq after 2003 in general and the demonstrations in November 2019 in particular, and the maturity of the Iraqi people and their freedom to express their opinion as well as their opposition to some of their government's policies.

The research problem

The problem with research is that government agencies circumvent protesters' demands and sometimes counter or accuse protesters of having third parties to support and fund them to achieve their aspirations, as well as the influential role played by these protest movements in communicating people's demands and needs to the political decision maker.

Research Hypothesis:

The research is based on the premise that (The wave of protests that Iraq witnessed from 2003-2019 managed to bring about some changes in the Iraqi political system, and that Iraqi society has moved from searching for democracy to searching for an effective state that meets its needs, except for its belief in the effectiveness of its influence on state decisions through demonstrations).

Research Methodology

The researcher used the historical method to understand the past events of the Iraqi demonstrations and link them to the present so that we can understand the future. The researcher also used descriptive and analytical methods, which helps the researcher to know the causes of the demonstrations and discover solutions to them.

Research structure

The research is divided into an introduction, two chapters, and a conclusion

Chapter One: The historical roots and causes of Iraq's protests

First requirement: Social mobility in the interim government.

The second requirement: social mobility during the permanent governments from (2011-2014).

Chapter two: The October mobility of 2019: Causes and Outcomes

The first requirement: the reasons for the October mobility in 2019

The second requirement: the outcomes of social mobility.

Chapter One

The historical roots and causes of Iraq's protests

When people suffer from injustice, poverty, and corruption, they seek to reform what can be fixed by organizing themselves, forming their demands in the form of press writings, objections, or slogans rejecting the living reality. They may develop into vigils, strikes, or sit-ins. Iraq has witnessed all the legitimate images of demands after 2003.

First requirement: Social mobility in the interim government.

After the Coalition Provisional Authority issued Order No. 19 of 2003, it was called (Freedom of Assembly), which organizes events starting with sections (3-4-5-6), and with an emphasis in section 7 that the person violating the instructions prescribed in the aforementioned sections will be imprisoned.¹ The first protest came in the city of Fallujah for their refusal to the presence of the occupying forces that were stationed in one of the schools in the (Nazal neighborhood), which angered the people who were protecting the area from any attack, there was no case of murder or robbery, but they were subjected to violence despite their peaceful demonstrations, as the occupation forces started shooting at them, killing 20 people and wounding 70 others². Also, on August 15, 2003, thousands of Iraqis gathered in Sadr City (a neighborhood of the capital, Baghdad) in Friday prayers to protest the killing of an Iraqi in demonstrations that took place on August 14, 2003, to remove one of the religious flags from the top of a communications tower in Sadr City, and then the American forces opened fire on the demonstrators³. After that, demonstrations took place in Najaf to prevent the entry of foreign forces, especially the shrine of Imam Ali (peace be upon him), as a holy place for Muslims, especially Shiites, which resulted in clashes between them and the demonstrators, after which the leader of the Sadrist movement (Muqtada al-Sadr) and his

¹ L. Paul Bremer, Order No. 19 (Freedom of Assembly), Coalition Provisional Authority, July 9, 2003.

² The most important demonstrations that Iraq witnessed, the Iraqi National Charter, published on May 23, 2022, at the link: <https://iraqcharter.org/>

³ Protests against US forces in Baghdad, BBC Arabic, published on 15/8/2003, at the link: http://news.bbc.co.uk/hi/arabic/news/newsid_3154000/3154197.stm

supporters intervened against the deliberate killing and destruction.⁴

At the end of January 2003, the Council issued Resolution No. 137, according to which it abolished the Personal Status Law issued in 1959, and stipulated that all personal status procedures should be according to their sect. The council faced strong criticism from the civil forces after it assassinated the freedom of Iraqi women and deprived them of many of their rights. As a result, the Council retracted this decision two months after its issuance and decided to implement the old law in late February 2003.⁵

Arguably, the main feature of the protests in the transitional period is the anger of the Iraqi street over the occupation and its practice of deliberate killing in addition to their lack of knowledge of Iraqi traditions, including the inviolability of entering religious places because it is a violation of their beliefs, besides, the people's demand for the return of sovereignty. After all, the idea of occupation is insulting to the people and makes them feel weak.

The second requirement: social mobility during the permanent governments from (2011-2014)

The period that followed and after the occupation witnessed many popular protests that were generally focused on mismanagement, insecurity, deteriorating economic and service conditions, corruption, marginalization of certain components, manifestations of demographic change, enforced absence, quotas, and electoral fraud, but they differ with the October movement in terms of quantity, quality, and organization. There are several challenges that the demonstrators demanded to be addressed:

First: the political challenge

Balances with the quota system remained an essential component of the political system after 2003, to the extent that it became a threat to the national identity, and the interest of subsidiary identities and their nervous, sectarian, or national alliances over the public interest, regardless of academic or practical qualifications, which negatively affected the progress of the political, security and economic process.⁶

Recognizing the inability of many Iraqi politicians to ignore this occupying legacy, which is the biggest reason for the delayed formation of the successive Iraqi Government, especially since every coalition in Parliament seeks to have a certain

⁴ Al-Sadr is preparing to leave Najaf and prevent protesters from entering, Elaph website, published on September 27, 2004, at the link: <https://elaph.com/Politics/2004/8/4612.html>, as well as: Jassem Muhammad Sohrab, The political role of social movements in Iraq for the period 2003-2015, unpublished doctoral thesis, University of Baghdad - College of Political Science, 2016, p. 170.

⁵ The Transitional Governing Council.. Reality and future scenarios, Al Jazeera Net, published on 3/10/2004, at the link: <https://www.aljazeera.net/2004/10/03/>, as well as: Walid Salem Jamil, Al-Harakat Social and Political Opposition in Asia: A Study of the Iraqi Tishreen Movement 2019, Asian Issues Journal, Issue 6, Arab Democratic Center, Berlin, 2020, p. 77.

⁶ Hisham al-Hashemi, the custom of quotas in Iraq leads to open corruption, Al-Sharq al-Awsat newspaper, issue number (15060), Friday - 27 Jumada al-Akhirah 1441 AH - February 21, 2020.

proportion of the Government being formed. This exacerbates divisions and places the prime minister-designate in front of a sensitive responsibility to fulfill his pledges to form a non-sectarian Iraqi government; That is why some politicians use the expression "Iraqi components" to cover up sectarian and ethnic formations, which the occupation wanted to make it a State of ripped and murdered components, without mentioning or explicitly speaking the name of that component in the Constitution, and to replace openly with a pun expressed in terms of balance between components, not equality between citizens.⁷

Because most political blocs have their militias, can no longer be concealed or circumvented, and are no longer confined to halls where divergent views stand, they have moved to the street, following which clashes cannot be ignored in more than one governorate. It is not necessarily in the interest of the Iraqi people, as it is not a competition to provide the best for them, as much as it is a struggle for the survival of some leaders in the political arena to enjoy more privileges that they have been addicted to obtaining on the one hand, and to ensure protection from judicial responsibilities on many issues, if other parties ascend to decision-making positions, on the other hand.⁸

Second: corruption

This scourge is considered a major obstacle in building the Iraqi state, which has spread horizontally and vertically in its various sectors⁹ and has reached the point of holding the minor spoilers accountable and leaving the whales of corruption, and if they are arrested, the prison and the services provided to him are as if he is in his home and for a while, and he comes out on bail. Thus, Therefore, deterrent laws have been disrupted, and if investigative committees are formed, they are not competent, except for the outrageous wealth of some members of society (from where did you get this?) in a limited time, and the spread of nepotism excluding efficiency in employment because of weak control over them.¹⁰

Third: the economic challenge

Unemployment in particular, which a large proportion of Iraqi citizens suffer from due to the damages of the private sector and their promise to promote it in a manner appropriate to the increase in population, especially since the large numbers of graduates cannot be accommodated by the government sector, which the majority of its employees got their jobs by nepotism and bribery. Even investors whose presence reduces the

⁷ Amjad Arar, Sectarian quotas, the problem or the solution in Iraq, Al-Bayan, October 16, 2018, at the link: <https://www.albayan.ae/one-world/political-issues/2018-10-16-1.3384134>

⁸ Muhammad Akef Jamal, The Struggle for Power in Iraq, Al-Bayan, published on March 4, 2017, at the link: <https://www.albayan.ae/opinions/articles/2017-03-04-1.2875547>

⁹ Khaled Hefzy and Muayyad Jabbar, Investment Case Study in Iraq after 2003 (Problem and Solutions), Journal of Economic Studies, Issue 41, Algeria, 2019, p. 128.

¹⁰ Ayman Ahmed, Corruption and Accountability in Iraq, Policy Paper, Friedrich Ebert Foundation, Baghdad, 2013, p. 4.

unemployment rate have been subjected to extortion and deliberate persecution by gangs that are difficult for the state to eradicate.

Fourth: The Security Challenge

Since the beginning of the American campaign to occupy Iraq, Baghdad has become under the control of the American army, and the coalition forces have established the Office of Reconstruction and Humanitarian Assistance under the supervision of retired General (J. Karner), and former US President (George W. Bush) announced from the deck of the US aircraft carrier "Abraham Lincoln" an end to major combat operations on May 11, 2003, but the Office of Reconstruction and Humanitarian Assistance was quickly dissolved in mid-May and replaced by Ambassador (Paul Bremer) to administer the Coalition Provisional Authority after the issuance of the UN Security Council Resolution 1483, which considers the US forces to be occupying forces and they must bear their responsibility in managing Iraq¹¹. Thus, it made Iraq transformed from a post-war field into a theater of terrorist operations and contributed to launching a new wave of terrorism across the world, with the recognition of the American academic and research institutions, which was recognized by the United States itself, as it recognized in the National Intelligence Estimates in September 2006 under the title (Trends in Global Terrorism: Implications for the United States).¹²

Given the increase in armed violence as a result of deteriorating security conditions and infiltration of external elements, as well as the outbreak of sectarian violence, thus, to confront them, the Iraqi constitution issued provisions prohibiting terrorism. The Coalition Provisional Authority issued orders to confront the various violent operations, and the Iraqi project adopted the trend in favor of issuing a special and independent law, as the National Assembly issued Anti-Terror Law No. (13) on November 7, 2005.¹³

One of the basic principles in the Constitution of the Republic of Iraq for the year 2005 in the fight against terrorism is contained in the first chapter in Article (7) in its paragraph, as it stipulates (First: It is prohibited for any entity or approach that adopts terrorist racism, infidels, or sectarian cleansing. Second: The state is obligated to fight terrorism in all its forms). Likewise, Article Nine, first, (prescribes the formation of military militias outside the framework of the armed forces). After the US withdrawal in 2011, Iraq was put in the face of a set of challenges on the economic and social level: ¹⁴

¹¹ Star Jabbar Allawi, Iraqi elections and their impact on stability and development, *Journal of International Studies*, No. 54, University of Baghdad, 2012, p. 104.

¹² Clinton watts, beyond Iraq and Afghanistan what foreign fighter data reveals about the future of terrorism: www.small_wars_journal.com

¹³ Sarah Khamis Mengele and Sabah Sami Daoud, Means of Combating the Crime of Terrorism Internationally, *Journal of Legal Sciences*, Special Issue, University of Baghdad, 2020, pp. 141-142.

¹⁴ Hamid Obaid Haddad, The Economic Challenges of Iraq after the American Withdrawal, *Journal of International Studies*, No. 52, University of Baghdad, 2012, pp. 79-81.

1. Weak foreign investment.
2. Keeping Iraq under Chapter VII of the United Nations Charter.
3. The problem of external and internal debt.
4. Exacerbation of the phenomenon of unemployment and poverty, the spread of the phenomenon of financial and administrative corruption.
5. In addition to the many problems caused by the occupation in education, health, housing, public utilities, continuous displacement, as well as more sensitive issues such as citizenship, identity, and belonging.

As happened in Afghanistan in Iraq, after the American occupier came out, a corrupt force entered their land with killing, displacement, and rape on religious pretexts, and Islam is innocent as if they are being told that after the American occupier leaves, they will ask for their support to protect them. Thus, the terrorist organization ISIS entered the western regions, taking advantage of the demonstrations spread there. ISIS began to spread and had it not been for the strong resistance it met from the popular crowd and the army, Baghdad would have fallen into his hands and spread throughout Iraq, as happened in Afghanistan with the Taliban's control over Afghanistan.

In addition to the well-known terrorist elements, there is another threat that kills many people (uncontrolled weapons), whether in the hands of clans or armed factions (Outlaw factions), which the state was unable to reduce, which made them rebel against the law by highlighting its power sometimes. Even the state was not spared from it through the so-called (tribal squawking) that occurred at some police stations and sometimes threatens those in charge of it, in addition to the dominant external influence on the internal affairs, which made the people resentful because this endangers their lives by waging a proxy war against their land, and their country's loss of its sovereignty.¹⁵

As for the protests in the Sunni areas, after the wave of protests called (the Arab Spring revolutions), this component felt oppressed as a result of being persecuted by the government of Nuri al-Maliki, so they organized themselves with demonstrations calling for the release of detainees and detainees, the abolition of Article 4 of terrorism and allowing their deputies to work without deliberate exclusion, such as (Rafea Al-Issawi). Therefore, the authority used force to deter them because their demonstrations are political and they aim to restore the rule and not legitimate demands (justifying the negligence on sectarian-political grounds), which worsened the situation and continued the demonstrations until the end of 2013 AD and called them the sit-in squares of various names in the six uprising governorates (Anbar - Salah al-Din - Nineveh - Kirkuk - Sunni neighborhoods in Baghdad governorate), then these demonstrations were accompanied by the entry into Iraq of a security crisis (the entry of the terrorist organization ISIS), which claimed the lives of thousands, dead and wounded, and

¹⁵ Iraq: We Want a Home "The main results of qualitative public opinion research in five governorates in Iraq: Baghdad, Basra, Diyala, Erbil and Nasiriyah", National Democratic Institute, December 2019 - February 20 20, p. 17.

helped the internal mass displacement of these provinces.¹⁶

Then a series of protests erupted in Iraq, starting in mid-2015 in the center and south of Iraq, and then in April 2016 led by the Sadrist movement, and popular anger reached its climax to the storming of Parliament, as well as the beginning of July 2018 in southern Iraq and continued for a month, especially in (Basra - Maysan - Nasiriyah - Najaf - Karbala - Wasit-Diwaniyah-Al-Muthanna-Babylon), all of which are slogans that raise the grievance against the lack of services, corruption, and quotas.¹⁷

Chapter two

The October mobility of 2019: Causes and Outcomes

In early October, some Iraqi cities witnessed a wave of protests, in an unprecedented manner nationwide since the US occupation in 2003, but it was not an exceptional event, as the period following and after the occupation witnessed many popular protests.

The first requirement: the reasons for the October mobility in 2019

There are several reasons why the October demonstrations differ from others, including:

First: Community Awareness

The protests were not a new event, but rather a cumulative experience for a wide audience and in the various Iraqi governorates and even the governorates in the north of Iraq*, as well as the social and political structure in Iraq is prepared for such a resurgence of protest¹⁸. It is noted that young people are looking for a new way to express their demands, not like the previous demonstrations because traditional actors are no longer able to treat the rampant corruption practiced by some ruling groups, therefore, the first spark for the expansion of the demonstrations was from the unemployed youth who do not belong to a particular party or party group, using different methods represented by graduate sit-ins,

¹⁶ Yahya al-Kubaisi, Iraq: protests and the crisis of the political system, the Arab Center for Research and Policy Studies, Doha, 2013, p. 2. Also: Iraq a decade of violations, a report issued by Amnesty International, 2013, p. 18. Also: Iraq's protests, causes and consequences, Strategic Thought Center for Studies, Turkey, 2018, p. 2.

¹⁷ Mustafa Jaber Al-Alwani, Popular protests in Baghdad and the south, and their impact on determining Iraq's political future, an assessment of the position, a vision for research and studies, August 8, 2018, at the link: <http://ruyaa.cc/Page/8613/>, also: Rang Alaa Al-Din, Sectarianism, Governance, and the Future of Iraq, Brookings Center, Doha, 2018, p. 13.

The protest of employees in December 2017, as a result of the delay in their salaries by the regional government, and the failure to pay them in full and keeping some of them as savings for them, looks at Anas Gerges, the explosion of the salary crisis: mobile anger in "Kurdistan", Al-Akhbar newspaper, published on Wednesday 9 December 2020, at the link: <https://al-akhbar.com/Iraq/297447>

¹⁸ Ali Taher Al-Hamoud, The Iraqi Protests 2019 A sociological look at what happened and its possible outcomes, Al-Mada Foundation for Media, Culture and Arts, Baghdad, 2020, p. 63.

marches, and vigils¹⁹. Social media has been of great importance in the demonstrations, due to its role in mobilizing public opinion in record time, which made it distinguished from traditional media, due to the reason for its liberation from the political pressures of the ruling regimes²⁰.

Through it, the protesters managed in October 2019 to mobilize more than a thousand people to the calls of activists in Baghdad and cities in the southern governorates to protest against corruption, unemployment, and poor public services. Most participants were young people from marginalized, predominantly Shia poor areas, and they were spontaneous demonstrations that had nothing to do with political parties and blocs, with the northern and western governorates not contributing. This is due to the circumstances that those governorates experienced during the control of what is known as the Islamic State (ISIS), and to avoid accusations leveled against them²¹, and there are several groups or social forces that participated in the October demonstrations that can be distributed as follows²²:

1. The majority of the toiling and poor groups consist of the unemployed and the socially marginalized.
2. A youth majority characterized by revolutionary enthusiasm, mass activism, and the ability to benefit from social media, as they make up 90% of the protesters with the first group.
3. Other groups are dominated by religious, formal, behavioral, non-politicized, or ideological tendencies.
4. Small groups belonging to opposition Shiite Islamic parties (the Al-Hikma Movement, the Victory Bloc, and the Sadrists) may have come out individually, unplanned, without the party's direction to achieve personal interests.
5. Small groups belonging to traditional parties, including the left, liberal and nationalist, see the harmony of their slogans with the spontaneity of the youth movement against the quota policies and the lack of social justice in the division of wealth and power by the parties supporting the government.

Second: the economic reality

The reasons for the demonstrations are the absence of social justice, the increasing class inequality, and the state's inability to meet basic needs besides its failure to achieve development, and this motive plays an influential role when

¹⁹ Kamal Hussein Al-Obeidi, Graduate Studies Demonstrators. What they have and what they owe, Al-Ibaa website, September 29, 2019, at the link: <https://www.alebaa.tv/2019/09/29/183357>

²⁰ Raafat Muhannad Abdul Razzaq, The role of social networking sites in shaping political awareness, "A field study of the state of the popular movement in Iraq on a sample of students from the universities of Mosul, Anbar and Tikrit for the period from 1-3-2013 until 1-6-2013, Master's thesis, University of Petra, Jordan, College of Arts and Sciences - Department of Press and Media, 2014, p. 143.

²¹ Mustafa Kazem, Iraq's demonstrations: What are their causes and why did they expand?, BBC, published on October 7, 2019, at the link: <https://www.bbc.com/arabic/middleeast-49962859>

²² Hisham al-Hashimi, Iraq's Demonstrations: A Social Behavior to Change the Regime's Behavior, Al Jazeera Center for International and Strategic Studies, Istanbul, October 15, 2019, pg 4.

economic conditions are difficult²³. Iraq is the second largest oil producer in OPEC after Saudi Arabia, and despite its high revenues, it did not contribute to alleviating poverty or improving infrastructure, despite the Iraqi government launching 2010 a national strategy to reduce poverty, which extended until 2014, to reduce it from 23 to 16%. However, ISIS's occupation of large areas of the country had significant repercussions that contributed to the increase in poverty rates, which prompted it to work on another strategy that extends between 2018 and 2033, especially as it declined in previous years from 22.5% in 2017 to 20% in 2019²⁴. As Iraq is a unilateral rentier economy, it only serves to enrich the ruling elites and their allied groups at the expense of the rest of society. It also helps them to consolidate their power to distribute resources and earn sufficient funds to prevent the formation of any independent groups that may claim their political rights or exercise the role of opposition and subsequently resort to political violence²⁵ as well as the number of unemployed university graduates, many of whom were unable to continue their studies due to poverty and the low level of educational services throughout the country²⁶. The main problem in this rise is not due to the lack of financial resources, but to the real mismanagement that can take the economy to the right path, in addition to the problem of corruption, which does not look at the interest of the citizen, his requirements and basic needs, which negatively impact the reality of the Iraqi youth²⁷. The policy of financial corruption, poverty, and austerity approved by the Al-Abadi government, all of which are predisposing factors for the demonstrations and protests that Iraq witnessed (2018-2019).

It can be said that the intersection of poverty and unemployment factors laid a suitable ground for the demonstrations and protests in Iraq in 2011 and 2018, especially in the southern and central governorates, which suffered from the phenomenon of "double poverty" before and after 2003, and there are reasons behind Iraq's unemployment problem²⁸:

1. Large population and few job opportunities.
2. Administrative and financial corruption.
3. Public sector companies stopped.
4. Opening the way for foreign investment.
5. Dissolution of some ministries and departments.
6. Opening up to imported goods and discouraging local production.
7. The concentration of money in the hands of a few who prefer to invest

²³ Abdullah Jamal Hosni Yousef, *The Impact of the American Occupation on Sectarian Political Violence in Iraq (2003 - 2017)*, Arab Democratic Center, July 15, 2019, p. 20.

²⁴ Muayyad Al-Tarifi, *Poverty rates in Iraq are rising and the government is trying to control it*, Independent Arabia website, published on December 31, 2020, at the link: <https://www.independentarabia.com>

²⁵ Talib Hussein Hafidh, *the State of Oil Rentier and democracy building, Iraq as an example*, International Studies Magazine, Issue (63), International Studies center, Baghdad University, 2015, P. 182.

²⁶ *Popular protests in Iraq: the near and far repercussions*, Al Jazeera Center for Studies, November 7, 2019, p3.

²⁷ Ahmed Mustafa, *Corruption and mismanagement crippling the Iraqi economy*, Independent Arabia website, October 8, 2019, at the link: <https://www.independentarabia.com>

²⁸ Quoted from: Mai Hamoudi Abdullah Al-Shammari, "The Reality and Causes of Unemployment in Iraq in 2003 and Ways to Treat It," *Journal of Baghdad College of Economic Sciences*, Volume 1, No. 37, 2013, p. 147.

outside Iraq

8. The intensification of the military agreement led to the waste of many financial benefits and the deprivation of many economic sectors of financial allocations.

Third: the health reality

Given the importance of the health reality of any country, health services are at the forefront of the State's national action and their impact on development, construction, and social stability²⁹. Iraq, despite its enormous capabilities and resources, is facing a continuous health crisis that extends for 4 decades, as more than 90% of the current hospitals in the country were established during the era of the Iraqi government that preceded the US invasion of the country in 2003. The Central Statistical Organization revealed in its latest data published on its website in 2014, that the number of hospitals in Iraq is 178, except for the Kurdistan region, which includes 79 hospitals, which means that for every 100,000 people in Iraq, 0.7 hospitals. This statistic includes the period before the military operations to liberate Iraqi lands from the control of the Islamic State (ISIS). The data from the World Health Organization (WHO) indicates that the federal government has spent during the last 10 years less than the neighboring countries of Iraq, which are much poorer than Iraq's budgets are not compared with Iraq's. In 2019, the federal government allocated only 2.5% of the state budget of \$105 billion to the Ministry of Health.³⁰

Hospitals suffer from a lack of services, the spread of diseases, a high infant mortality rate, and the lack of health insurance for individuals³¹. In the face of the global crisis due to the coronavirus outbreak, the risks are increasing, as it suffers from a shortage of medicines and inadequate medical equipment, due to the deteriorating health reality in the country.³²

The second requirement: the outcomes of social mobility.

After the fragility of Iraq's political system and popular discontent over its rulers, it resulted in political change promising the aspirations of the people to provide services and eliminate corruption. These include:

1. Changing the electoral system according to the first-past-the-post system, after which the multiple electoral districts were divided in the same governorate.
2. Attention to restoring the State's prestige by highlighting the fight against

²⁹ Mahdi Falih Nasser Al-Safi, "The health crisis and its impact on the power of the state, a comparative study in political geography between Iraq and its neighboring countries," *Al-Ustad magazine*, No. 212, 2015, p. 533.

³⁰ Ahmed al-Dabbagh, *Wars and Corruption.. For these reasons, the health situation in Iraq is witnessing a significant deterioration*, Arab Scientific Society Point website, published on May 2, 2021, at the link: <https://www.nok6a.net>

³¹ Muhammad Hassan Muhammad Al-Shawani and others, "The Social Effects of the Health Reality in the Kurdistan Region of Iraq", *Journal of the College of Arts*, No. 71, 2013, p. 1.

³² Abdul Hakim Al-Nuaimi, *The weapon against Corona in Iraq... in the hands of the community*, *Al-Araby Al-Jadeed*, published on March 23, 2020, at the link: <https://www.alaraby.co.uk>

militias and confining arms to the State.

3. The economic reform paper (the White Paper), as described by the government, is a comprehensive roadmap aimed at reforming the Iraqi economy and addressing the serious challenges it faces, which have accumulated over the past years due to faulty policies, mismanagement, corruption, and lack of planning, in addition to the almost total dependence on oil as the main source of state revenue.³³

Regardless of the political description of the Iraqi event, it shows the extent of the fragility of the political process and its failure to meet the political and social changes. The statements of various religious and political forces are not free from accusations by foreign parties of exploding the situation in southern and central Iraq by employing some political and social currents and forces, to divert the compass of "peaceful" protests towards violence and destabilize security and stability to plunge the country into a state of security chaos. There are several international and regional positions for the Iraqi protests, including:

Section one: regional positions

1. Iran's position: it is considered one of the influential countries in Iraq due to the national and sectarian population overlap³⁴. Iranian Supreme Leader Ali Khamenei accused the United States, Israel, and Western countries of being behind what he described as "riots and insecurity" in Iraq, with financial support from "some reactionary countries," calling on those keen on both countries to confront these attempts. In addition to his boasting that his country had gone through similar protests before (which swept Iranian cities in 2018), the regime's supporters "came in the squares at the right time and thwarted them," and Tehran was able to put them down through a security and mobilization campaign.³⁵
2. The Turkish position: Since the beginning of the events on 1 November, Turkey's Foreign Affairs has only issued a statement urging the Iraqi Government to meet the legitimate demands of the demonstrators and expressed concern about the use of violence against peaceful demonstrators in Tahrir Square³⁶.
3. The Arab position: All Arab countries welcomed the demonstrations and considered them to be popular awareness, except for Yemen, which is loyal to Iran.

³³ To review the economic reform paper in two parts, see: The White Paper, the Final Report of the Emergency Cell for Financial Reform (October 2020), dated 10/10/2020, as well as: The White Paper (Part Two) The Reform Program Implementation Plan - Section One (Governance) - Section Two (Projects) / January 2021, dated 26/1/2021.

³⁴ (1) Baida Mahmoud Ahmed, Normalization of Iraqi Iranian Relations in 1990 until the Present, Al-Mustansiriya Journal of Arab and International Studies, Al-Mustansiriya University, No. 17, 2005, p. 78.

³⁵ Why is Tehran afraid of the protests in Iraq and Lebanon? TRT Arabic, published on October 31, 2019, at the link: <https://www.trtarabi.com/now>.

³⁶ Turkey and the Iraqi demonstrations: the biased position of the aspirations of the people Turkey and the Iraqi demonstrations: the biased position of the aspirations of the people, published on December 25, 2019, at the link: <https://www.trtarabi.com/opinion/>

Section two: the international situation

1. The position of the United States of America: Washington showed only cautious positions until November 11, when the White House issued a statement calling on the Iraqi government to stop violence against demonstrators and hold early parliamentary elections. The United States also expressed concern about the ongoing attacks against demonstrators, civilian activists, and media professionals in Iraq, as well as the restrictions on internet access.³⁷
2. The European position: It did not differ much from the American position, as the European Union mission in Iraq expressed its concern about the excessive use of violence, and stressed that the involvement of "armed entities" in the anti-government protests was "unacceptable", but at the same time, after hundreds of victims and wounded, it praised "With the efforts made by the Iraqi government to implement its commitments to deal with the protests in a peaceful manner."³⁸
3. The United Nations position: The United Nations remains the most present party in the Iraqi scene and has been clearer in condemning the excessive use of force by the Iraqi authorities, but its work as a supportive and auxiliary advisory body remains in many cases deemed inappropriate to the level of loss of life. The United Nations representative in Iraq, "Jenin Plasschaert", was also criticized by the demonstrators because of what was considered a position close to the Iraqi authorities, and the position of the United Nations representative evolved when Plasschaert went to Najaf and met there with the highest Shiite authority, "Ali al-Sistani", after this meeting, Plasschaert quoted in a press conference about al-Sistani as saying that that real reforms must be worked out and that if the three presidencies are not able to achieve the demands of the demonstrators, then another path must be taken.³⁹

Conclusion

It can be argued that the similarities between the 2013 and 2019 protests are their unification in terms of peacefulness and provocation of authority, as the 2013 protests were Sunni and encompassed the predominantly northern and western regions with a Sunni majority, and the 2019 protests were mainly Shiite youth. Thus, the demonstrations demonstrated to the authority the grievances of the Iraqis away from their affiliation, because one of the basics of a just ruler (the

³⁷ Iraq: Washington is "indignant" at the exposure of peaceful demonstrators to "threats and brutal violence" from militias, France 24 / AFP, published on May 28, 2021, at the link: <https://www.france24.com/ar>, as well as : Yahya al-Kubaisi, Iraq: The Protest Movement and International Collusion, Al-Quds Al-Arabi, available at: <https://www.alquds.co.uk>

³⁸ Amer Al-Hassani, European Union: The involvement of armed entities in the Iraq protests is "unacceptable", Anadolu Website Network, published on October 29, 2019, at the link: <https://www.aa.com.tr/ar>

³⁹ Al-Sistani supports reform and the politicians involved are not serious enough, Reuters, posted on the link: <https://fr.reuters.com/article>.

ruler does not distinguish between his components, and that he provides them with a decent livelihood, and that he preserves their dignity by not allowing outside interference in the country's internal affairs and thus loses the sovereignty of his country and exposes it to danger).