

Chapter 14

Reconciliation of Identity Groups in Iraq: Conflict Analysis and Political Means of Ethnic Accommodation

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ABSTRACT

Since the parliamentary elections in 31st April 2014, the political process in Iraq described as a fragile, ethnic tension have mounted and security situation declined tremendously with the rises of Islamic State in Sunni Arab populated areas. Since 10th June 2014, over a million internally displaced people approached Iraqi Kurdistan Region in a two-week time period. More than 300,000 minorities, including Yazidi Kurds and Christians, have fled to Duhok city. Additionally, over 40,000 civilians Yazidis trapped for a week in the mountain of Snjar, running from Islamic State (IS). This text works out measures for accommodating conflicts and claims of Iraqi sectarian groups. In order to explore and assess application of those means in conflict accommodation in Iraq, first, this text analyses the conflict through identifying actors, outlines the structure of the conflict and change in the dynamic of the conflict over the time. Second section of this text, illustrates the means for reconciliation of different identities in the world of politics based on the conflict analysis.

INTRODUCTION

Violence against children and youth in war causes severe damage to individuals, communities and societies. This chapter aims to demonstrate the importance of reparations to children and youth as a peace building mechanism in the context of transitional justice. On one hand, the chapter seeks to address reparations for children and youth understood as a political project, with a transformative

and participatory potential for rebuilding societies and healing the wounds of those who have been affected by armed conflict. On the other hand, the paper attempts to overcome the conception of children and youth as passive victims, providing them with agency to become engaged political members in building peaceful societies. Thus, reparations should position them as subjects of rights, giving them voice as contributors in peace building processes.

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BACKGROUND

Since the parliamentary elections on 31st April 2014, the political process in Iraq described as a fragile. Ethnic tensions have mounted and security situation declined tremendously. Meanwhile, Islamic State in Iraq and Levant (ISIL) occupied most of the Sunni Arab populated areas. By 10th June 2014, over a million internally displaced people moved to the Iraqi Kurdistan Region (IKR). More than 300,000 minorities, including Yazidi Kurds and Christians, have fled to Duhok city. Additionally, over 40,000 civilians Yazidis trapped for a week in the mountain of Snjar, running from Islamic State (IS), without food and water (see UNHCR, UNOCHA and UNPO 2014). Furthermore, UN has declared a “level 3 Emergency” in Iraq due to the humanitarian crisis and gross violations of human rights especially against minority groups (ABC news, 2014).

The current crisis in Iraq was foreseen. This is because of tracking conflicts over the last two decades and comparison process among intra-state and inter-state conflicts; illustrate the fact that intra-state conflicts represent the majority (see Wallensteen 2007; Sisk and Varennes 2003). Additionally, Sisk (2003, p.139) points out that according to the evidences, most of the present-day wars are fought in the name of religion or ethnicity, which applies to the current circumstance in Iraq.

However, what this text works out are measures in the world of politics for accommodating conflicts among Iraqi identity groups. The first section of this text analyses the conflict in Iraq through identifying direct and indirect actors. Also, it outlines the structure of the conflict and change in the dynamic of the conflict over time. Second section of this text, illustrates the means for reconciliation of different identities in the world of politics and applies them to the crisis in Iraq. Initially, this paper stress the fact that eradication of discrimination and human rights violation are essential procedures before coming up with a resolution that meets the needs of various identities.

In world of politics, power-sharing solution is an answer for a reform in the political system after deadly conflict or for a process of forming new government such as in Iraq after 2003, taking into account that there is no territorial claim by one of the conflict parties. Additionally, autonomy is an option that could either bring secessionist towards integration or a step on the ladder towards separation as a last resort (Ghai 2003, p.186). However, there is no comprehensive cure that would be suitable in all cases and situations. Therefore, this paper utilizes the conflict in Iraq as an example of accommodating ethnic conflict.

CONFLICT ANALYSIS

According to the definitions pointed out by UP-PSALA Conflict Data Program (UCDP), the current conflict in Iraq is regarded as an armed conflict¹. However, in order to provide sufficient analysis, this section stresses the social conflict among Iraqi identities. Since, the social conflict occurs when two or more actors work hard simultaneously to obtain an available set of inadequate resources (Wallensteen 2007, p.15).

Concentration of this analysis is on area that has been suffering for more than 50 years and regarded as infamous religious conflict around the world, which is the Middle East (Nye 2007, p.185). More precisely is Iraq, which is located at the heart of this area. Iraq was violently administered by Saddam Hussein and Baath party for three decades. “Forced disappearance, torturing, arbitrary custodies and executions” were used widely. Consequently these practices resulted in eviction of 500,000 Shi’a Arabs from Iraq to Iran. Also, the Iraqi government carried out the well-known notorious genocide campaign “Anfal” against Kurds that led to arresting and group executions of at least 100,000 Kurds in 1988 (ICTJ 2012). In March 2003, Iraq was invaded by US-led coalition forces that continued until 2011. During this period tension and conflict among

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