



Al-Bayan Monitor

2025

JANUARY



مركز البيان للدراسات والتخطيط
Al-Bayan Center for Studies and Planning



About the Center

Al-Bayan Center for Planning and Studies is an independent, nonprofit think tank based in Baghdad, Iraq. In addition to other issues, its primary mission is to offer an authentic perspective on public and foreign policy issues related to Iraq in particular and the Middle East region in general. BCPS pursues its vision by conducting autonomous analysis and proposing workable solutions for complex issues that concern the political and academic fields.

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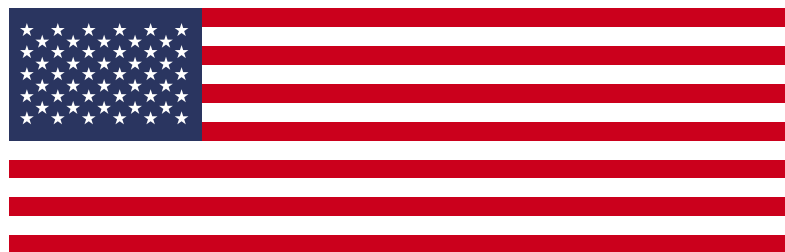
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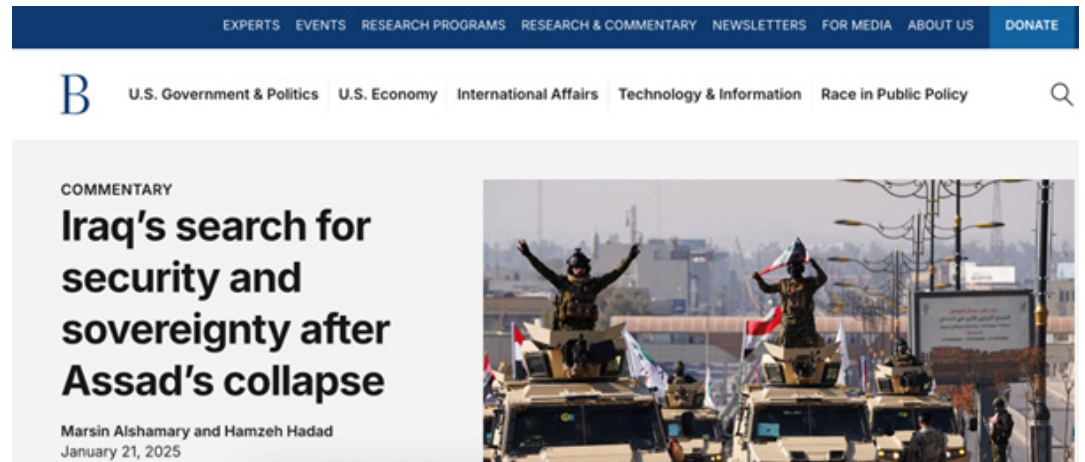
AMERICAN THINK TANKES



Iraq's search for security and sovereignty after Assad's collapse

Marsin Alshamary
and Hamzeh Hadad

Brookings



According to the authors “the collapse of the Assad regime in neighboring Syria has significant political and security implications for Iraq. Of immediate concern is the security vacuum in Syria, which may create spill-over effects across the border reminiscent of 2014, when the Islamic State of Iraq and Syria (ISIS) established control over territory in both countries. In the longer term, the events in Syria are both a cause and consequence of diminished Iranian power in the region, especially after the military defeat of Hezbollah in Lebanon.” In the end, they conclude that “Iraqi policymakers, accustomed to being caught between the countervailing American and Iranian pressures, will have to recalibrate their relationship with a weakened Iran. Moreover, they will have to do this in dialogue with a new American administration, under President Donald Trump, who is likely to renew his maximum-pressure campaign against Iran.”

America Abandoning Iraq Only Helps Iran Michael Rubin

19fortyfive website



Michael Rubin believes that “the Islamic Republic of Iran’s back is to the ropes. Not only is Hamas on the defensive but Israel’s sabotage of Hezbollah beepers quite literally neutered much of Hezbollah’s rank-and-file. The fall of the Assad regime removed a key logistical node upon which the Islamic Republic depended for 45 years. Continued supply to the Houthis is difficult given the vulnerability of Iranian supply lines and the renewed confidence of the anti-Houthi coalition put an expiration date on the Yemeni tribal group’s grip on power. This leaves Iraq as the Islamic Republic’s chief ally and perhaps its only remaining member of the “Axis of Resistance.” In the end he concludes that “Rather than stand down as Iran’s ability to project force beyond its borders declines, it is essential to invest more actively in Iraqi sovereignty and nationalism to help Iraqis maintain the independence they deserve”

<https://www.aei.org/op-eds/america-abandoning-iraq-only-helps-iran/>

The Kurds Will Never Succeed Without Great Leaders

Michael Rubin

19fortyfive website

1945

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THE EMBASSY The Kurds Will Never Succeed Without Great Leaders

By Michael Rubin Published January 6, 2025



U.S. Secretary of State Mike Pompeo meets with Kurdistan Regional Government Prime Minister-designate Masoud Barzani, in Erbil, Iraq, on January 5, 2018. (State Department Photo/ Public Services)

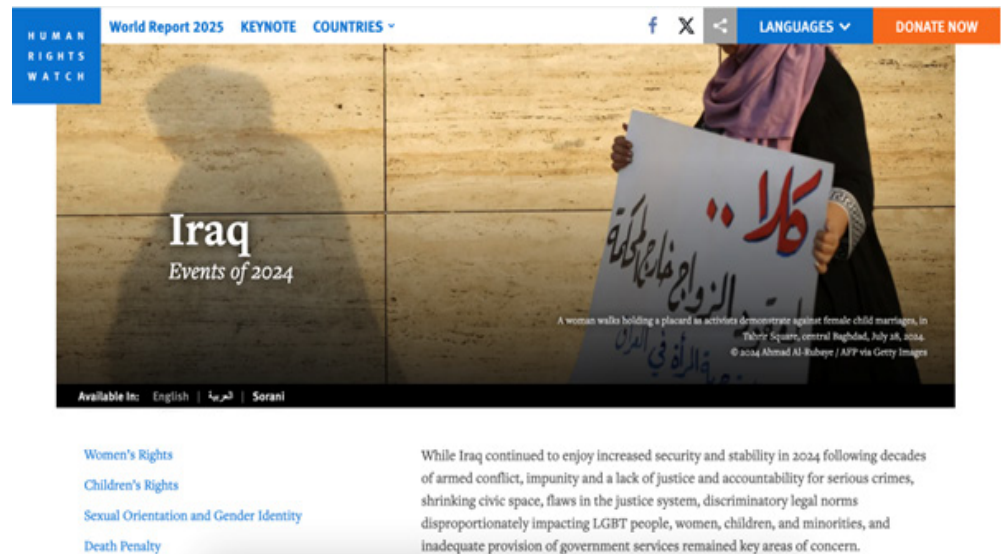


According to the author, “The Kurds often quip that they are the largest people without a nation. That’s true. And they also say they have “no friends but the mountains.” That, too, is true. No one can deny the history of foreign betrayal the Kurds have suffered. As Kurdish writer and intellectual Kamal Chomani has pointed out, if the U.S. State Department can so readily embrace Hay’at Tahrir al-Sham leader Ahmed al-Sharaa (Abu Muhammad al-Jawlani), why should the turn their back on someone who has promoted democracy?” In the end, he concludes that “It is not clear that Öcalan will fit the bill. That said, Öcalan has followers beyond his own borders. He also has the right adversaries, from the terror-sponsoring and racist Erdoğan who hates the idea of Kurdish autonomy to the tribal and corrupt Iraqi Kurdish leaders who fear a society driven more by philosophy and merit than by nepotism.”

<https://www.aei.org/op-eds/the-kurds-will-never-succeed-without-great-leaders/>

Iraq Events of 2024

Human Rights Watch



World Report 2025 KEYNOTE COUNTRIES

HUMAN RIGHTS WATCH

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Iraq
Events of 2024

A woman walks holding a placard as activists demonstrate against female child marriages, in Tahrir Square, central Baghdad, July 28, 2024.
© 2024 Ahmad Al-Rubeay / AFP via Getty Images

Available in: English | العربية | Sorani

- Women's Rights
- Children's Rights
- Sexual Orientation and Gender Identity
- Death Penalty

While Iraq continued to enjoy increased security and stability in 2024 following decades of armed conflict, impunity and a lack of justice and accountability for serious crimes, shrinking civic space, flaws in the justice system, discriminatory legal norms disproportionately impacting LGBT people, women, children, and minorities, and inadequate provision of government services remained key areas of concern.

According to Human Rights Watch, “while Iraq continued to enjoy increased security and stability in 2024 following decades of armed conflict, impunity and a lack of justice and accountability for serious crimes, shrinking civic space, flaws in the justice system, discriminatory legal norms disproportionately impacting women, children, and minorities, and inadequate provision of government services remained key areas of concern. Iraq is among the most vulnerable countries to global warming and faces various environmental crises, including droughts, desertification, increased frequency and severity of sandstorms, pollution, and rising temperatures. Extreme industrial pollution, enabled by weak environmental legislation and poor enforcement, is common. In recent years there is increasing attention to the health harms experienced by communities living near sites of oil and gas production, particularly from gas flaring.”

<https://www.hrw.org/world-report/2025/country-chapters/iraq>

Iraq: Repressive Laws Roll Back Rights Freedoms Under Threat; Executions on the Rise

Human Rights Watch

HUMAN RIGHTS WATCH

العربية 简体中文 繁体中文 English Français Deutsch 日本語 Português Русский Español More

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January 16, 2025 9:00AM EST

Iraq: Repressive Laws Roll Back Rights

Freedoms Under Threat; Executions on the Rise

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A woman walks holding a placard as activists demonstrate against female child marriages, in Tahrir Square, central Baghdad, July

According to the Human Rights Watch, “the Iraqi government ramped up attacks on rights by passing or attempting to pass draconian laws that would restrict Iraqis’ freedoms throughout 2024, Human Rights Watch said today in its World Report 2025. The closure of the United Nations Investigative Team to Promote Accountability for Crimes Committed by Da’esh/ISIL (UNITAD) in September left survivors feeling uncertain about the future of ISIS accountability in Iraq. Outstanding issues include whether evidence collected by UNITAD will be preserved, as well as the need to exhume mass graves, provide for the return of displaced people, and compensate those whose homes and businesses were destroyed during the conflict. The Iraqi authorities should reject the proposed amendment to the Personal Status Law.”

<https://www.hrw.org/news/2025/01/16/iraq-repressive-laws-roll-back-rights>

How Iraq Can Support Post-Assad Syria

Kawa Hassan

Stimson

STIMSON

COMMENTARY

Pivotal Places

Middle East & North
Africa Program

Middle East Perspectives
Project



How Iraq Can Support Post- Assad Syria

Historic social and cultural similarities between the two peoples provide a natural platform for cooperation between Iraqi and Syrian universities, think tanks, intellectuals, artists and civil societies.

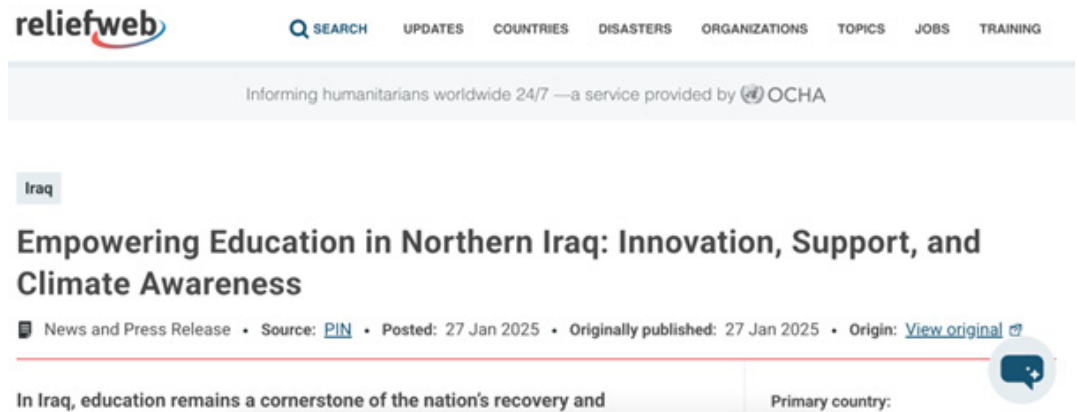
By [Kawa Hassan](#)
[Middle East & North Africa](#)

January 31, 2025

According to the author, “the Kurdistan Region of Iraq could also play an important role in Iraq’s post-Assad strategy. The ruling Kurdish parties have strong relations with Kurdish counterparts in Syria. The biggest concern for Syrian Kurds is how to secure the autonomy of Kurdish areas within a unified Syria and prevent the resurgence of ISIS. Kurdish disunity stands in the way of a unified position towards the new rulers in Damascus but a recent meeting between Kurdish Democratic Party leader Masoud Barzani and SDF commander Mazloun Abdi in Erbil provided hope that they might be willing to form a joint delegation.” In the end, the author concludes that “the seismic shifts in the Middle East have severely weakened the Iran-led Axis of Resistance. As a result, the Iraqi government has a unique opportunity to develop and implement a Syria strategy which goes beyond valid security concerns and defines Syria’s stability and recovery as a top national security priority”.

<https://www.stimson.org/2025/how-iraq-can-support-post-assad-syria/>

Empowering Education in Northern Iraq: Innovation, Support, and Climate Awareness



reliefweb

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Iraq

Empowering Education in Northern Iraq: Innovation, Support, and Climate Awareness

News and Press Release • Source: [PIN](#) • Posted: 27 Jan 2025 • Originally published: 27 Jan 2025 • Origin: [View original](#)

In Iraq, education remains a cornerstone of the nation's recovery and Primary country:

United Nations Office for the
Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs

According to this report “In Iraq, education remains a cornerstone of the nation’s recovery and development. Despite significant daily efforts, there is an ongoing need for robust support to rebuild the educational system, a key driver for progress in the country. To address this critical need with extensive experience in education worldwide and Iraq, People in Need has implemented a transformative project with the generous funding of the Czech Development Agency (CZDA). Teachers, as pivotal figures in the education process, received comprehensive support through tailored training sessions, teaching kits, and the donation of smart screens. These resources have transformed classrooms into interactive learning environments, ensuring sustained student engagement and facilitating effective teaching practices. This project would not have been possible without the generous support of the Czech Development Agency. Their funding has been instrumental in advancing education in Northern Iraq, empowering students, teachers, and the broader community to overcome challenges and build a brighter future.”

<https://reliefweb.int/report/iraq/empowering-education-northern-iraq-innovation-support-and-climate-awareness>

Wildfire analyses in Iraqi Kurdistan

United Nations Office for the
Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs

According to this letter, “the Kurdistan Region of Iraq has faced a concerning rise in wildfires in recent years. These fires pose both acute and long-term threats to communities, livelihoods, and the region’s unique biodiversity. The fires are primarily caused by a combination of natural and human-made factors, including hot and dry weather conditions, accidents, and increasingly military activities: fighting between the Turkish Armed Forces and the Kurdistan Workers Party (PKK) insurgent group. Beyond direct environmental degradation, this fighting has also led to the displacement of communities and the destruction of infrastructure. There are also indications that these developments are compounded by larger concerns over climate change in the KRI that are impacting weather patterns and environmental conditions. The rapid increase in temperatures, winds and dry vegetation all make the region more prone to wildfires, which in turn affects livelihoods and engenders displacement.”



The Kurdistan Region of Iraq (KRI) has faced a concerning rise in wildfires in recent years. These fires pose both acute and long-term threats to communities, livelihoods, and the region’s unique biodiversity. The fires are primarily caused by a combination of natural and human-made factors, including hot and dry weather conditions, accidents, and increasingly military activities: fighting between the Turkish Armed Forces and the Kurdistan Workers Party (PKK) insurgent group. Beyond direct environmental degradation, this fighting has also led to the displacement of communities and the destruction of infrastructure. There are also indications that these developments are compounded by larger concerns over climate change in the KRI that are impacting weather patterns and environmental conditions. The rapid increase in temperatures, winds and dry vegetation all make the region more prone to wildfires, which in turn affects livelihoods and engenders displacement.

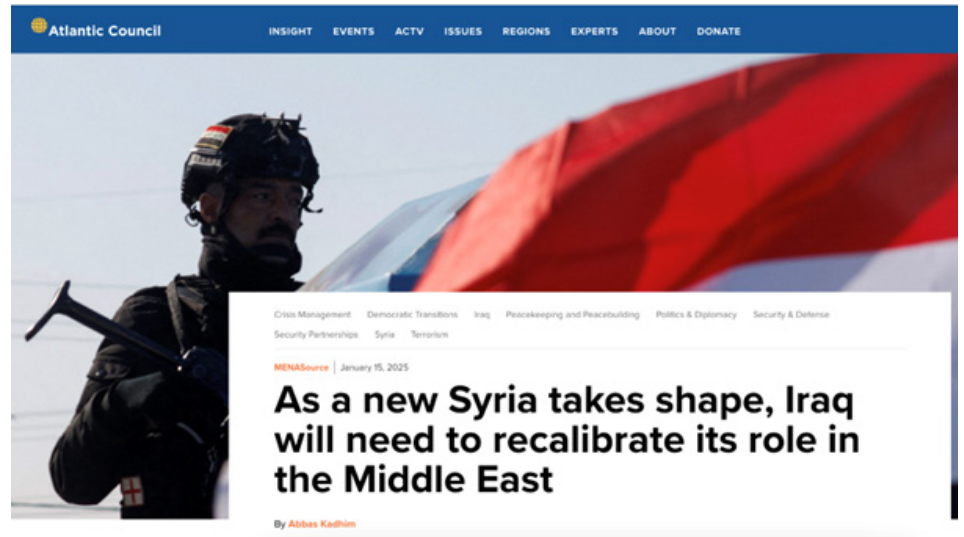
As part of PAX’s work on [Climate and Environment Action](#) in Iraq, this Environmental Action Alert presents a brief analysis of fires in KRI during the period of May to August 2024, building on remote sensing analysis, open-source data collection and collaboration with partners. Satellite analysis of burned territory is conducted using European Space Agency (ESA) Sentinel-2 and Planet satellite imagery to visualize and identify land that has been damaged by the fires, while wider NASA MODIS data is used to quantify the total area of fire damage. The open-source information used in the report is drawn from various sources, including local news reports, social media posts, official statements, and interviews with local civil society

<https://reliefweb.int/report/iraq/wildfire-analyses-iraqi-kurdistan>

As a new Syria takes shape, Iraq will need to recalibrate its role in the Middle East

Abbas Kadhim

Atlantic Council



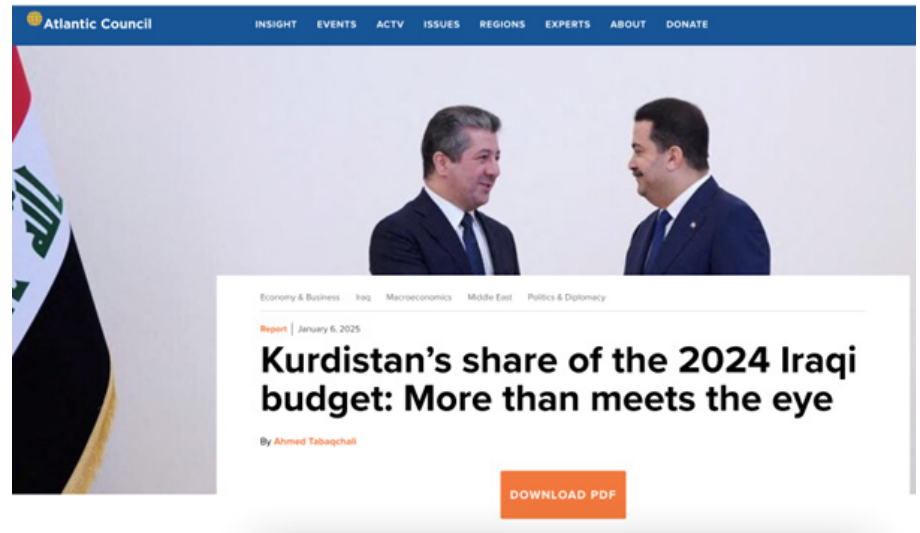
According to Abbas Kadhim, “the fall of Assad’s regime in Syria has broken the corridor stretching from Iran through Syria and to Lebanon. Iraq (sandwiched between Iran and Syria) now has an opportunity to shift its focus toward securing its borders and minimizing domestic security threats. But to succeed in this effort, the Iraqi government must navigate several challenges, recalibrate its role in the region, and balance its foreign relations—including with the United States—in response to Iraq’s national security needs and Syria’s recent developments.” In the end, he concludes that “It is now up to the government of Iraq to balance its regional policies with full consideration of the opportunities and the challenges the fall of Assad has put forward. At the same time, it will have to be mindful not only of the new Syrian political order but also the change of posture that major regional and international actors will make in the post-Assad era.”

<https://www.atlanticcouncil.org/blogs/menasource/syria-iraq-need-to-recalibrate/>

Kurdistan's share of the 2024 Iraqi budget: More than meets the eye

Ahmed Tabaqchali

Atlantic Council

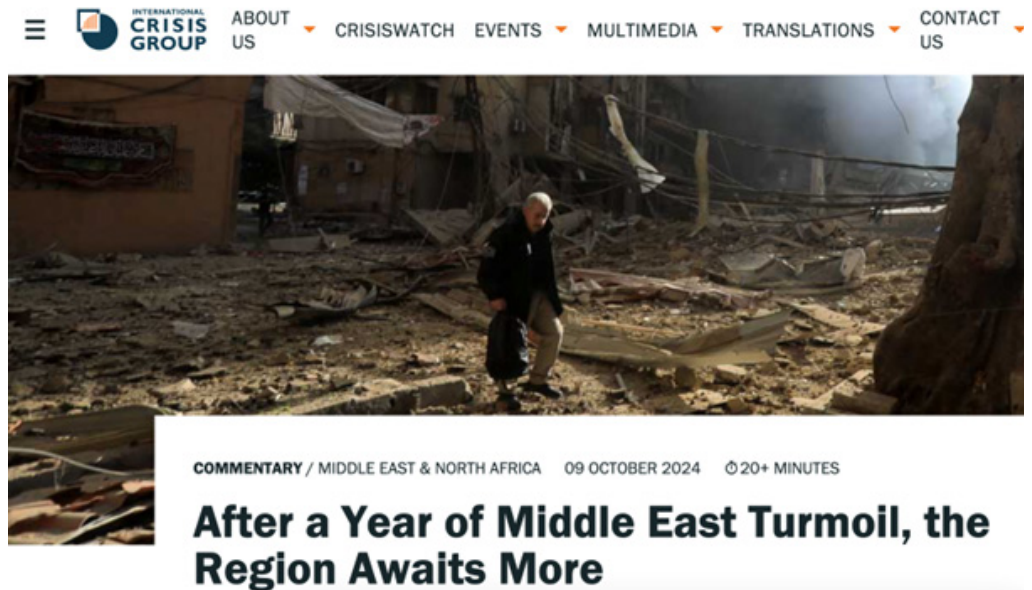


Ahmed Tabaqchali believes that “Iraq’s 2023-25 federal budget proposal, as initially proposed by the Council of Ministers, included three major departures from prior budgets in terms of its unprecedented spending plans, its three-year period instead of the usual one, and in how it dealt with the Kurdistan region of Iraq (KRI)’s share of the budget.” For him, “the KRI’s share of the budget has always been more than meets the eye, a share that increased meaningfully in the 2023-25 budget and increased further still in the updated 2024 budget tables, as this report will unpack.” He concludes that “the first part of this report reviews how this share is calculated, the details of the direct and indirect allocations making up this share, and the KRI’s contributions to the federal budget. The second part revisits the significant departures introduced to the KRI’s share by the 2023-25 budget and the 2024 updated tables. Finally, the third part looks at the reset of the relationship between the Kurdistan regional government and the government of Iraq”

<https://www.atlanticcouncil.org/in-depth-research-reports/report/kurdistan-iraq-2024-budget-not-what-it-appears-when-it-first-meets-the-eye/>

After a Year of Middle East Turmoil, the Region Awaits More

Crisis Group



According to the report, “as the Gaza war grinds on, and Israel invades Lebanon, a heightened direct confrontation between Iran and Israel also looms. Crisis Group experts offer a 360-degree view of how these events have affected countries across the region and what a still wider conflict could bring”. In the end, it concludes that “coordination with other parts of the “axis of resistance” has brought no significant shift in the Iraqi groups’ military actions. For a brief period, from 6 June to 15 July, the Houthis and Iraqi groups were announcing that they had launched joint attacks on Israel. On roughly a dozen occasions, it appears, they fired drones and missiles simultaneously from their respective countries in an effort to draw Israeli air defences in several directions. It is also possible that Iraqi groups will send fighters to Hizbollah’s aid in Lebanon, as they have previously stated their readiness to do so.”

<https://www.crisisgroup.org/middle-east-north-africa/east-mediterranean-mena/after-year-middle-east-turmoil-region-awaits-more>

EUROPEAN THINK TANKS

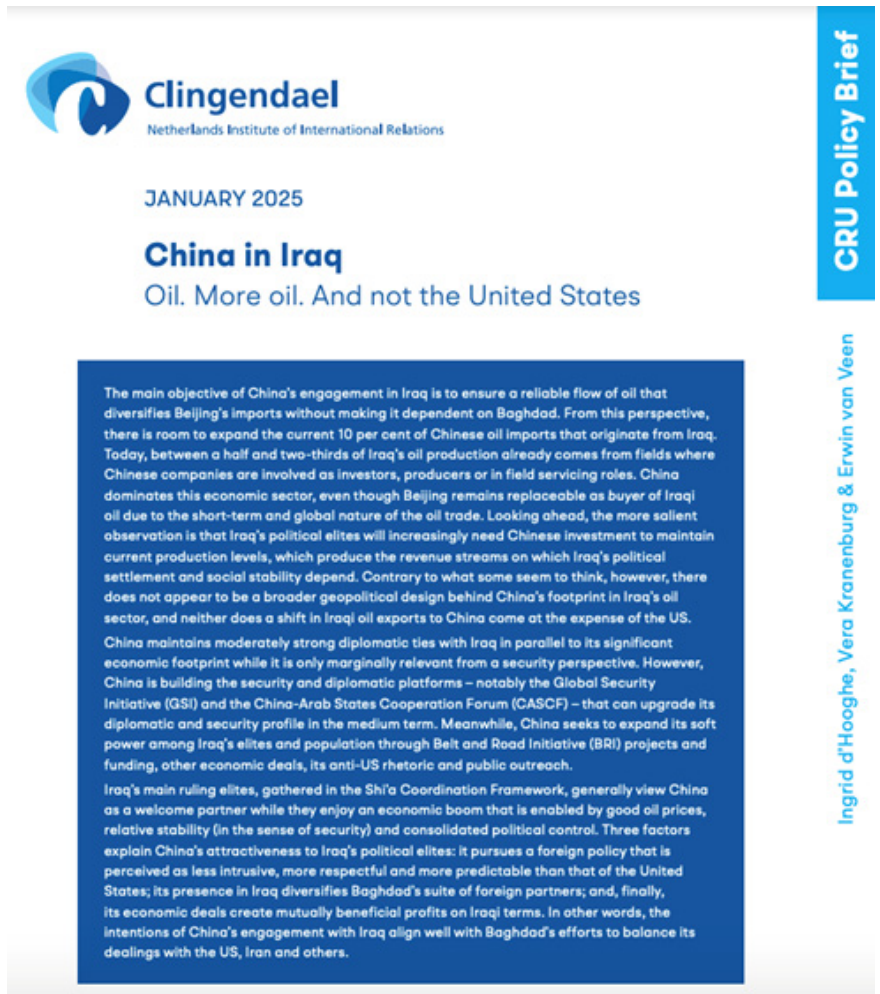


China in Iraq: Oil, More oil, And not the United States

Clingendael International Affairs
Think Tank and Academy

According to this report, “the main objective of China’s engagement in Iraq is to ensure a reliable flow of oil that diversifies Beijing’s imports without making it dependent on Baghdad.” In the end, it concludes that “Iraq’s main ruling elites, gathered in the Shi’a Coordination Framework, generally view China as a welcome partner while they enjoy an economic boom that is enabled by good oil prices, relative stability (in the sense of security) and consolidated political control. Three factors explain China’s attractiveness to Iraq’s political elites: it pursues a foreign policy that is perceived as less intrusive, more respectful and more predictable than that of the United States; its presence in Iraq diversifies Baghdad’s suite of foreign partners; and, finally, its economic deals create mutually beneficial profits on Iraqi terms. In other words, the intentions of China’s engagement with Iraq align well with Baghdad’s efforts to balance its dealings with the US, Iran and others.”

<https://www.clingendael.org/publication/china-iraq>



Clingendael
Netherlands Institute of International Relations

JANUARY 2025

China in Iraq
Oil. More oil. And not the United States

CRU Policy Brief

Ingrid d'Hooghe, Vera Kranenburg & Erwin van Veen

The main objective of China's engagement in Iraq is to ensure a reliable flow of oil that diversifies Beijing's imports without making it dependent on Baghdad. From this perspective, there is room to expand the current 10 per cent of Chinese oil imports that originate from Iraq. Today, between a half and two-thirds of Iraq's oil production already comes from fields where Chinese companies are involved as investors, producers or in field servicing roles. China dominates this economic sector, even though Beijing remains replaceable as buyer of Iraqi oil due to the short-term and global nature of the oil trade. Looking ahead, the more salient observation is that Iraq's political elites will increasingly need Chinese investment to maintain current production levels, which produce the revenue streams on which Iraq's political settlement and social stability depend. Contrary to what some seem to think, however, there does not appear to be a broader geopolitical design behind China's footprint in Iraq's oil sector, and neither does a shift in Iraqi oil exports to China come at the expense of the US. China maintains moderately strong diplomatic ties with Iraq in parallel to its significant economic footprint while it is only marginally relevant from a security perspective. However, China is building the security and diplomatic platforms – notably the Global Security Initiative (GSI) and the China-Arab States Cooperation Forum (CASCF) – that can upgrade its diplomatic and security profile in the medium term. Meanwhile, China seeks to expand its soft power among Iraq's elites and population through Belt and Road Initiative (BRI) projects and funding, other economic deals, its anti-US rhetoric and public outreach. Iraq's main ruling elites, gathered in the Shi'a Coordination Framework, generally view China as a welcome partner while they enjoy an economic boom that is enabled by good oil prices, relative stability (in the sense of security) and consolidated political control. Three factors explain China's attractiveness to Iraq's political elites: it pursues a foreign policy that is perceived as less intrusive, more respectful and more predictable than that of the United States; its presence in Iraq diversifies Baghdad's suite of foreign partners; and, finally, its economic deals create mutually beneficial profits on Iraqi terms. In other words, the intentions of China's engagement with Iraq align well with Baghdad's efforts to balance its dealings with the US, Iran and others.

Iraq faces multiple risks from post-Assad Syria

Oxford Analytica



EXPERT BRIEFINGS
Presented by
Oxford Analytica

Iraq faces multiple risks from post-Assad Syria

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military policy regional security terrorism war

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Significance

The meeting was a cautious first step from Baghdad towards the new authorities in Damascus, despite Sharaa facing arrest in Iraq in connection with terrorism charges. Perceiving multiple threats from Syria, Iranian-backed groups in Iraq are fortifying the border and look set to show greater factional unity ahead of the October parliamentary elections.

Impacts

Syria could compete with Iraq as a logistical and energy corridor between the Gulf and Eurasia.

Donald Trump's re-election in the United States and Israel's weakening of Hezbollah and Hamas will set back Iranian foreign policy.

Turkey will likely pressure Iraq's Kurds not to support Kurds in Syria.

IRANIAN THINK TANKS



US Sanctions and the Future of Energy in Iraq

What is Tehran's Role in the Iraq-Turkmenistan Gas Deal?

Seyyed Reza Qazvini Ghorabi

Iranian Diplomacy Website

The screenshot shows the website's header with navigation links for 'خاورمیانه', 'پرونده هسته ای', 'اروپا', 'آمریکا', 'آسیا و آفریقا', and 'ENGLISH'. The main article title is 'نقش تهران در قرارداد گازی عراق و ترکمنستان چیست؟'. Below the title, there is a sub-header 'تحریم های آمریکا و آینده انرژی در عراق'. The article text begins with 'بدرضا قزوینی غرابی در یادداشتی برای دیپلماسی ایرانی می نویسد: عراق قراردادهای متعددی برای افزایش تولید گاز داخلی خود با...'. A 'Calendar' widget is visible at the bottom of the article snippet.

According to the author, “Iraq has made several contracts to increase its domestic gas production with foreign companies, including the French, Chinese, and Emirati. Although some of these contracts were not implemented due to the emergence of ISIS in Iraq, Iraqis are thinking about securing other contracts for self-sufficiency and also due to external pressures. However, creating an alternative to Iranian gas is still not an easy and accessible option for Baghdad for various reasons.” In the end, he concludes that “the Iraqi Ministry of Electricity has denied this and also denied paying money to Ashgabat, and has described the matter as finding an intermediary company and contractor. We must wait and see where the fate of the aforementioned contract will lead.”

Iraqi Prime Minister Comes to Iran with Sensitive Files From Syria and Regime Change to Security Developments, the Focus of Al Sudani Talks in Tehran

Seyyed Ali Mousavi Khalkhali

Iranian Diplomacy Website

The screenshot shows the homepage of the Iranian Diplomacy Website. At the top, there is a navigation bar with the website's logo and the text "خاورمیانه پرونده هسته ای اروپا آمریکا آسیا و آفریقا". Below this is a search bar and a language selector set to "ENGLISH". The main content area features a large headline in Persian: "نخست وزیر عراق با پرونده‌های حساس به ایران می‌آید" (Iraqi Prime Minister comes to Iran with sensitive files). Below the headline is a sub-headline: "از سوریه و تغییر رژیم تا تحولات امنیتی، محور گفت‌وگوهای السودانی در تهران" (From Syria and regime change to security developments, the focus of Al Sudani talks in Tehran). The article is dated "۱۹ دی ۱۴۰۳" (December 19, 2024) and has a view count of "۲۰۳۰۲۷۷". The website footer includes a "Privacy - Terms" link and a "سردبیر" (Editor) field.

According to the author, “Before this trip, Baghdad had initiated extensive diplomatic movements at the regional and international levels. On the other hand, the French government’s contacts with Baghdad emphasized the holding of the Baghdad meeting in the near future, and it was said that the new Syrian government officials would also participate in this meeting.” The authors concludes that “although his trip is for one day, Sudani expects to leave our country with full hands. After Tehran, he is scheduled to travel to Doha and meet with Qatari officials. His trip will take place less than two weeks after the Trump administration took office, and it is also important in this regard that the necessary coordination is expected to be made between Baghdad, Tehran, and other Arab capitals so that the new American government will not be accompanied by severe pressures. With these sensitive files, Al-Sudani plans to travel to Tehran and have detailed negotiations with our country’s officials.

<https://tinyurl.com/4k8srxuu>

With Trump's arrival, Baghdad is also reconsidering its policies Sudani's trip to London and the beginning of Iraq's new inter actions with the West

Seyyed Ali Mousavi Khalkhali

Iranian Diplomacy Website

خاورمیانه | پرونده هسته ای | اروپا | آمریکا | آسیا و آفریقا

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صفحه اصلی / اخبار / اقتصاد و انرژی / سفر السوداني به لندن و آغاز تعاملات تازه عراق با غرب

با آمدن ترامپ بغداد هم در سیاست های خود تجدید نظر می کند

سفر السوداني به لندن و آغاز تعاملات تازه عراق با غرب

۲۰ بهمن ۱۴۰۳ | کد: ۲۰۳۰۷۲۱ | اقتصاد و انرژی

خاورمیانه | انتخاب سرتیتر

نویسنده: سید علی موسوی خلخالی

موسوی، خلخالی، می، نویسنده: بسیاری از تحلیلگران بر این باورند که سفر مهم السوداني به لندن آغاز دور تازه ای از روابط بین

Ali Mousavi Khalkhali writes “Many analysts believe that Sudani’s important trip to London is the beginning of a new round of Iraq’s international relations, especially with the Western world, and in this way Iraq is going to take a big leap in expanding its relations with Western countries” In the end, he concludes that “with Donald Trump coming to the White House and changing America’s policy against Iran and the possibility of moving towards a hostile approach towards any country that has friendly relations with Iran, it has prompted countries to reconsider their relations and conduct a new type of interaction to overcome potential crises or tensions. Iraq is no exception to this rule. It seems that the beginning of a new type of interaction between Iraq and the West, which began with England and will include other European countries, including the United States, in the not too distant future, is the beginning of a new type of international interaction for Iraq.”

<https://tinyurl.com/28tcnshm>

What are Baghdad's concerns? Iraq's goals in Syria today

Sajjad Moradi Kalardeh

Iranian Diplomacy Website



خاورمیانه | پرونده هسته ای | اروپا | آمریکا | آسیا و آفریقا

ENGLISH | صفحه نخست | درباره ما | عضویت | پیوند ها | تماس با ما | RSS

صفحه اصلی / اخبار / اخبار اصلی / اهداف عراق در سوریه کنونی

دغدغه‌های بغداد چیستند؟

اهداف عراق در سوریه کنونی

۱۴۰۳ دی ۱۷ | ۱۶:۰۰ | کد: ۲۰۳۰۴۵۷ | اخبار اصلی

خاورمیانه

ساجد مرادی کلارده در یادداشتی برای دیپلماسی ایرانی می نویسد: همان گونه که ترکیه عملاً به میانجی بسیاری از کشورها برای میانجیگری با سوریه تبدیل شده، عراق نیز درصدد است با پذیرش وضع موجود در سوریه، همین نقش را ایفا کند. سفر السودانی

According to the author, “just as Turkey has effectively become a mediator for many countries in their relations with Syria, Iraq is also seeking to play the same role by accepting the current situation in Syria. Iraqi Prime Minister Al-Sudani’s visit to Iran this week could be an effective step in this direction.” He argues that, “Accordingly, it seems that the more the situation in Syria moves towards stability, the better for stability in Iraq. Similarly, the continuation of the power vacuum, along with sectarian rivalries, and the uncertainty over the status of the Kurds in northern Syria, will have negative effects on Iraqi stability. In fact, the Iraqi rulers are well aware of the importance of the current transitional phase that Syria is in and the need for support from actors such as Iraq.” In the end, he concludes that “Iraq’s priorities in Syria are: countering sectarianism; border security; increasing power of influencing”.

TURKISH THINK TANKS



Understanding Iraq's New Policy Towards Syria

Feyzullah Tuna Aygün

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According to the author, in the post-Asad era in Syria, “Iraq’s policy towards Syria is being re-shaped within the framework of both historical ties and current regional and international conditions. Iraq aims to adopt a new policy by taking into account the impact of developments in neighboring Syria on its own internal security, political stability and economic interests.” Adding that “the basis of this new policy of Iraq is the principle of neutrality and the approach of non-interference in internal affairs. However, this policy includes multidimensional goals not only at the political and diplomatic level but also such as economic cooperation, border security and coordination with the international community.” He concludes that “Iraq’s policy towards Syria has the potential to affect not only the relations between the two countries but also regional stability and the international balance of power. In this context, the capacity to implement Iraq’s new policy also emerges as a question mark.”



BAKİŞ 259
DÜNYA GÖZÜ



IRAK'IN SURIYE'YE YÖNELİK
YENİ POLİTİKASINI ANLAMAK

FEYZULLAH TUNA AYGÜN

Understanding the Changing Dynamics of Iraq with Syria

Bilgay Duman

Can Acun and Hüseyin
Ali Saeed Himmetli

Center for Middle Eastern Studies

According to the author, “Iraq is one of the countries that will be most affected by the post-Assad process. Iraq shares a border of approximately 600 kilometers with Syria and also has a social and political permeability.” He concludes that “it can be said that Iraq under Al Sudani rule, which has achieved relative stability and prestige in domestic and foreign policy compared to previous periods, does not want this process to be disrupted. For this reason, Iran’s pressure has caused discomfort in the country. On the other hand, the activity of militia forces close to Iran brings with it the pressure that Israel and the US put on Iraq through these militia forces, creating a double pressure on the country. For this reason, it would not be wrong to say that Iraq is trying to maintain the momentum it has gained.”



Baghdad-Erbil Relations: Trends from 2024 to 2025

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Studies



According to the author, “2024 has been a critical year in Baghdad-Erbil relations, both politically and financially. In addition, deepening disagreements over oil exports and budget sharing have fundamentally affected the balance of power between the parties. In particular, Baghdad’s efforts to increase political and financial control over the KRG have reshaped Erbil’s strategies to counter this pressure.” In the end, the author concludes that “2025 may be a year in which many uncertainties and opportunities will take shape in Baghdad-Erbil relations. Baghdad’s efforts to increase its political and financial control may limit the KRG’s autonomy. In return, Erbil’s efforts to consolidate its domestic politics and seek cooperation with international actors may enable it to develop strategies to balance this pressure. However, if these problems are not resolved, social unrest in the KRG and deepening governance crises may inevitably increase. The moves and strategies developed by the parties in this process will determine the future of Baghdad-Erbil relations.”

<https://orsam.org.tr/tr/bagdat-erbil-iliskileri-2024ten-2025e-trendler/>

ARAB THINK TANKS



Al-Sudani's Visit to Iran: The Popular Mobilization and the Syrian Situation... What's Next?

Safinaz Muhammad Ahmad

Al-Ahram Center for Political and Strategic Studies



According to Safinaz Mohammed Ahmed, the visit of Iraqi Prime Minister Mohammed Shia' Al-Sudani to Tehran on January 8, 2025, carries significant implications for the future trajectory of Iraqi-Iranian relations amid evolving regional dynamics. This diplomatic move comes just one month after a landmark event—the fall of Bashar Al-Assad's regime in Syria on December 8, 2024—which is poised to reshape international and regional interactions throughout the Arab Levant. During his visit, Al-Sudani's agenda included discussions on several issues of mutual interest, notably gas and economic cooperation. Given Iraq's role as an economic outlet for Iran—one that helps mitigate the impact of international sanctions—the talks underscore

Why China is Reluctant to Support Iraq's Development Road Project

China Research Unit

Emirates Policy Center

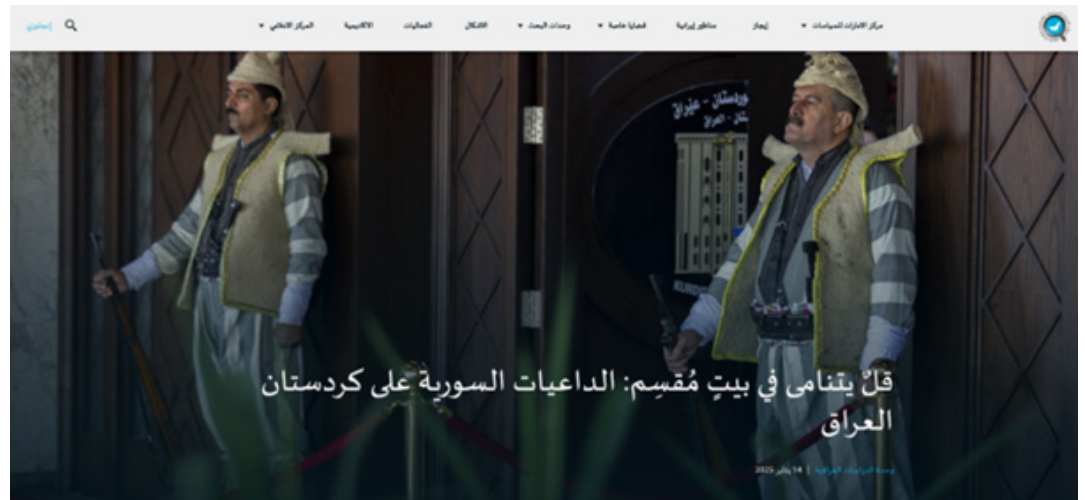


The Iraqi government seeks broad participation from Chinese companies in the Development Road Project (DRP), which encompasses rail lines, highways and ports extending from Iraq and Turkey to Europe. However, China has shown limited enthusiasm for backing the project despite assurances from the Chinese ambassador in Baghdad that his country thinks that the DRP “complements” Beijing’s Belt and Road Initiative (BRI). This paper examines China’s stance toward the DRP, the challenges that may deter Beijing from participating and the potential for future Chinese support.

Growing Concern in a Divided Home: Syrian Consequences on the Kurdistan Region of Iraq

Iraq Studies Unit

Emirates Policy Center



This paper asserts that Erbil, has moved beyond the initial shock of the dramatic collapse of Bashar al-Assad's regime in Syria. However, it remains entangled in zero-sum dynamics of a rapidly shifting regional conflict. The reverberations of this conflict continue to impact the security, stability and future of the already divided Iraqi Kurdistan Region. A key front in this turmoil is the ongoing confrontation between Syrian Kurds, represented by the SDF, and pro-Turkiye armed factions operating under the banner of the Syrian National Army (SNA). This confrontation risks escalating into a war which the Turkish army is threatening to wage against Kurdish strongholds in Syria. These developments further complicate the position of Iraqi Kurds, who now face mounting concerns over potential Turkish military incursions or Iranian reactions that might turn the Kurdish landscape into a battlefield in an open regional war.