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Iraq

For a Revolutionary Secular Democratic Sovereign and Independent Iraq

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This statement by revolutionary Marxist and socialist organizations in the region was issued on 28 June 2014.

Once again, Iraq is undergoing serious political and security developments. Whole sectors of the Iraqi army have withdrawn from confrontations with the Islamic State in Iraq and Syria/Levant (ISIS) and other militias. The cities of Mosul and Tikrit were captured, in addition to several provinces and regions in the western and northern governorates – home to the Sunni majority and the militias are currently advancing towards the capital, Baghdad.

A large-scale security void was created and war, chaos, and terror began to spread. Hundreds of thousands of families fled to safer areas, especially to Erbil and Dohuk in the Kurdistan Region.

The battles continue, inspite of the resistance of some armed clans, the Iraqi army, and the Peshmerga forces of Kurdistan Region, especially in Kirkuk, Diyala, and nearby suburbs and regions. Hit and run operations continue between ISIS and its adversaries. In Sunni-majority western governorates, security and military institutions have all but collapsed.

However, ISIS could not have launched this dangerous advance or taken on this influential size if not for two main factors, among others. The US occupation, on one hand, and the sectarian-confessional state it contributed to producing, on the other, had been critical in giving rise to ISIS.

Yet the most flagrant transgressions in the context of this campaign were the sectarian massacres committed by ISIS. There are stories about mass executions, with unparalleled brutality, of hundreds of prisoners, out of the thousands who had surrendered. This is in addition to all sorts of acts of repression, deportation, and persecution for religious and ethnic reasons, not to mention the use of rape against women and girls or forcing them to marry fighters from the armed group.

ISIS control culminated in the imposition of strict Sharia rules after the announcement of the "city paper" in Mosul – a 16-article document dictating the lives of citizens. One of the articles indicate that the Islamic State will be the sole authority in control of the city's resources, and that it will punish anyone who steal from public funds.

On the other hand, ISIS seized the equivalent of hundreds of millions of US dollars from banks, government facilities, and municipalities, and confiscated countless quantities of weapons left behind by fleeing soldiers and officers.

The document advises all men to participate in collective prayers and prohibits the sale and consumption of alcohol, drugs, and tobacco, among other Sharia restrictions. It also bans all councils, assemblies, and banners, under any name, in addition to carrying weapons, considering these acts as divisive and deserving of the death sentence.

The document reveals the position adopted by ISIS concerning statues and shrines, which it threatens to demolish, in addition to destroying the graves of saints. It calls on women to remain at home except in emergency situations. In summary, ISIS' rule has left people fearful for their lives, including the armed militias "allied" to them (information indicates around 23 groups who joined the campaign).

The reaction of [Iraqi prime minister Nouri] al-Maliki's government to the security and military developments was no

less hazardous. It called for the adoption of a comprehensive military response, imposing a state of emergency, and declaring a state of high alert. Maliki's government also asked the US, Iran, and other powers to intervene in Iraq and assist in defeating the ISIS invasion.

However, as this situation unravels, the country could be pushed into the throes of a confessional war, destroying everything in its path, with deadly consequences to the Arab region as a whole. This impending threat is backed by the Shia authority in Iraq represented by al-Sistani, who issued a fatwa declaring jihad against ISIS and calling people to join the army.

Expectedly, these events took on an unmistakable regional and global dimension. Iraq is one of the world's largest crude oil producers and has been the center of more than a decade of political, sectarian, confessional, and ethnic conflicts. The country's situation is tightly linked to Syria and the events in that country, as well as to sectarian and confessional balances in the region as a whole.

The blatant interference of neighboring countries – Qatar, Saudi Arabia, Iran, Turkey, and others – will produce more complications and add impetus to confessional and sectarian strife like in Syria today. This interference will hinder (and even threaten to abort) the efforts and aspirations of Iraqis, from all over the spectrum, to revive a revolutionary process aiming to establish a democratic, free, and prosperous society.

Such aspirations were apparent in massive demonstrations held in the past and throughout 2013, which were violently and bloodily repressed by Maliki. Furthermore, the growth of ISIS influence in Iraq will have particularly direct and dangerous repercussions on the conflict in Syria, undermining attempts against the Syrian regime.

As usual, the US will exploit the events on multiple levels, in an effort to compensate for losses incurred during its occupation of Iraq. The security agreement signed between the two countries three years ago did not permit the US to keep a permanent military base in Iraq. Today, however, the US seeks to exploit this opportunity to intervene in the situation militarily, on multiple fronts, through sending troops to protect its monstrous embassy and hundreds of consultants, as well as warplanes to conduct sustained flights in Iraqi airspace and positioning warships in the Gulf.

It is also likely that the US will conduct airstrikes to save the regime headed by Maliki from collapse, even if at the expense of asking for the prime minister's resignation and favoring the inclusion of confessional forces in decision-making positions. Ultimately, these steps merely aim to protect US interests, which have always been and still remain inconsistent with the interest of Iraqis of all sorts and types.

There is no doubt that these are serious outcomes of "the political process" whose roadmap was set by the US occupation. After the fall of the Baathist dictatorship, the Iraqi state was rebuilt according to sectarian and ethnic power-sharing, in the context of the shift in decades-old power balances and the sharp decline in the capacity of the old army, which was disbanded by the occupation. The US administration, which occupied the country, and neighboring Iran, which benefited the most from the occupation, had both contributed to deep transformations in social, political, and economic balances in Iraq.

The most blatant example of this transformation underlies the military campaign spearheaded by ISIS, which aims to become the actual leader of a fragile coalition of several nationalist forces and clans, including remnants of the Baath party and officers and soldiers from the old disbanded army. But this convergence is temporary in essence and risks disintegration, due to ISIS' relentless pursuit for the monopolization of power and control over spoils. Within the "coalition" itself, serious signs are beginning to appear on several fronts about the likelihood of bloody confrontations.

There are those who pretend that an important section of these forces are involved in a real uprising against Maliki's

repressive, subservient, and profoundly corrupt authority, and that they are attempting to dismiss the confessional and sectarian mobilization, calling for a truly national struggle against Maliki and confessional forces linked to Iranian aims.

However, those who claim this fail to see that even this section of forces suffers from blatant flaws in its behaviour and political positions, the risks of which must be exposed. These flaws appear in these factions' commitment to the alliance headed by ISIS, and their constant push towards silencing criticism and condemnations of the heinous crimes committed by ISIS, and its suspect plans, and also in their flagrant lack of opposition, by force of arms, against the crimes of ISIS, in order to avoid breaking the "unity" of the forces fighting the regime and Maliki's forces.

Everyday, Iraqis pay the price of the former US war and occupation, in blood and tragedy. They also bear the burden of sectarian divisions and unbridled, extremist Islamist movements, which coincide with imperialist interventions and the regressive rule of sectarian and confessional regimes in the area. Iraqis are hostages of reactionary, traditional forces, which have built the state in their image. In the event of its failure, Iraq might break up into various mini-states and sectarian and confessional emirates. The country's fate is open to all possible and frightening scenarios.

A radical popular leftist movement in Iraq must be created. It could benefit from the actual resentment felt by the majority of people living in areas facing marginalization, exclusion, and deprivation of the majority of social and economic rights. This is in addition to the discontent of the great majority of Iraqis, regardless of their sect or confession, in every corner of the country.

This movement should strive to organize this discontent and orient the resentment and readiness to rise up in a truly revolutionary direction, against the sectarian, capitalist, and corrupt regime established by the US occupation. It should carry the responsibility to defeat obscurantist and terrorist plans prepared by ISIS and similar groups, regressive and imperialist nations, the government of Maliki, and the rabid sectarian forces on which it leans.

The situation in Syria and the assault on the revolutionary mobilization, attempting to crush it by all means, must be avoided. This should be based on severing links with movements and forces that are sectarian/confessional, nationalist/chauvinist, or that seek to prevail and control.

Based on the conviction that the sectarian and confessional calamity looming over Iraq must be avoided and the unity of its people must be regained on democratic, secular, and revolutionary foundations, the following points should be emphasized:

1. All types of intervention in Iraqi affairs by the US, Iran, Saudi Arabia, Qatar, Turkey, and others must be rejected, as they are not only completely incompatible with the interests of the people of Iraq, but also fuel the fire of a terrible confessional war. We call on the UN General Assembly, in particular, to hold all countries accountable for their intervention in this situation and subject them to sanctions, according to the Uniting for Peace mechanism.
2. All political disputes in Iraq must be solved by appealing to the opinion, will, and interests of Iraqis themselves. This should be through an advanced non-sectarian democratic system, and that ensures active political participation of all citizens, without any type of discrimination, whether in building their new state structure or through local government in all the cities and governorates.
3. The Iraqi people and emancipatory factions must be at the forefront of confronting the bloody terrorism of ISIS and the counter-terrorism against it. This necessitates the self-organization of people in cities, slums, and villages in armed popular committees and councils, to counter the attacks of obscurantist terrorist organizations and all the opposing confessional militias. These groups should be incapacitated, defeated, and their presence eliminated from

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Iraq. However, this contains also an international task, a mobilization for the widest global campaign to support Iraqis in their efforts to confront the hostile forces and militias, on one hand, and the existing dictatorial sectarian capitalist regime, on the other, aiming for its overthrow. This would advance the aspirations of Iraqis for a future based on justice, freedom, and human dignity, and prevent the disintegration of the country or its partition.

4. In the above context, the revolutionary left and democratic, feminist, and progressive groups in the Arab region should work together to confront the sectarian and confessional setup and policies of Arab regimes, on one hand, and obscurantist and reactionary right-wing groups, on the other. This is in order to defeat the sectarian/confessional threat, which is the main weapon used by the counter-revolution to attack the revolutionary space that could unite the peoples of the region.

5. Finally, there is urgent need to provide the necessary aid to refugees and the displaced, through all sorts of international organizations, to reduce and control the impact of the current humanitarian crisis.

The regional and international conspiracy against the Iraqi people must be defeated.

Down with all imperialist interventions in Iraq.

Defeat the obscurantist assault by ISIS and its brethren.

Victory to the Iraqi people against their internal and external enemies.

For a democratic, secular, revolutionary, sovereign, and independent Iraq.

Long live international people's solidarity.

Signatories:

Revolutionary Socialists (Egypt)

Union of Iraqi Communists (Iraq)

al-Munadhil-a (Morocco)

Revolutionary Left Current (Syria)

Leftist Workers League (Tunisia)

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Source [Al Manshour](#).