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1. Recent developments

COMMON ANALYSIS
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Iraq's recent history has been characterised by a series of conflicts with political, ethnic and sectarian dimensions.

Since the end of 2022, the Government of Iraq is led by Prime Minister Mohammed Shia' Al-Sudani. The Iraqi Parliament is dominated by a coalition of political parties backed by Iran.

The political landscape in the Kurdistan Region of Iraq (KRI) has continued to witness the long-standing rivalries between the Kurdistan Democratic Party (KDP) and the Patriotic Union of Kurdistan (PUK). At the time of writing, elections, initially scheduled for October 2022, were still pending with a new envisaged date on the 20th of October 2024.

Kirkuk governorate as well as parts of Ninewa, Erbil, and Diyala governorates are disputed between the central government in Baghdad and the KRG. The situation of the so-called 'disputed territories' between the Government of Iraq and the KRG remains unresolved.

For most of 2023, Iraq experienced a phase of relative calm and stability. However, since October 2023, the country started experiencing the indirect effects of the Israel-Hamas conflict due to rising US-Iran tensions. The lack of cohesion between various security groups constitutes a persistent problem for the Iraqi government. The Iraqi government continued its battle against ISIL; however, large-scale military operations against the group have ceased.

International involvement in Iraq has been also reported. Türkiye's military operation against the PKK in northern Iraq has continued. In March 2024, the Iraqi National Security Council officially banned the PKK. In April, Turkish President Erdogan also met with the President and Prime Minister of Iraq and, among others, discussed greater cooperation on Türkiye's fight against the PKK. During what was deemed as 'a historic visit', Erdogan also met with Kurdish President

Nechirvan Barzani and Prime Minister Masrour Barzani in Erbil.

Iran has significantly influenced Iraqi politics and has supported affiliated paramilitary groups in the country. Iran-backed militias have continued their attacks against US forces in Iraq. Furthermore, in March 2023, the Iranian and Iraqi governments signed a border security agreement, part of which was to disarm Iranian Kurdish opposition groups and move their camps further away from the border region.

The United States still maintain troops in Iraq, however, in July 2024, talks between the Iraqi and US administration about the continuance of their presence in the country, have resumed.

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