

EDITORIAL

Issue 179 – October 8th, 2009

Maliki and the "State of Law": The end of sectarianism in politics?

The Iraqi Prime Minister Nouri al-Maliki announced the coalition that he will lead for the crucial January elections on Thursday 8th of October. He finally decided not to join the Iraqi National Alliance, composed of his former allies, Hakim and other Shia parties.

Some commentators would say that Maliki refused the alliance with Hakim and Sadr because no agreement was reached on the issue of power sharing (he wanted the majority of the seats in the Parliament and to hold on to his post). Others claim that he gained a lot of confidence after his strong showing in the last election where Shia parties (especially Hakim's ISCI) were defeated in the South, thought to be their unshakeable base. This would explain his apparent self-assurance in playing the role of nationalist strongman. The latter group, perhaps the more optimistic of the two, would probably defend the idea that Iraq is progressing and that Maliki's list represents considerable progress from a sectarian to an issue-based kind of politics.

It is undeniable that Iraq is moving forward and trying to bury its sectarian past, and it is clear that Maliki's list, even if it's not as broad a coalition as some had hoped for, is definitively less sectarian than the Iraqi National Alliance. His coalition, "The State of Law Alliance" (the same name which worked so well for him in the last election) includes 40 different parties and political movements and members from nearly all the different communities of Iraq; " We hereby announce the State of Law coalition, which will participate in the general election to be held on January 16th ", stated Al-Maliki during a ceremony in the green zone.

Among the list's members are several ministers including Hussein Chahristani (Oil), Abdelsamad Rahmane Sultan (MoDM) and Qahtan Abbas Naaman (Tourism). Maliki has managed to gather important Sunni tribal leaders, such as one of the leaders of Anbar's Doulaïm tribe, Ali Hathem al Sulaiman, and Ahmed Abou Richa, leader of the Sahwa movement in Anbar, in the coalition. Several other prominent personalities, known for their liberal views and political independence, will join him.

The main question now is whether Maliki is capable of convincing the population, and other secularist/nationalist parties, and obtaining a majority in parliament. If he does not secure the majority, he'll be obliged to share power with one of the stronger blocks. This could be with a secular alliance, or a strong Shia alliance such as the Iraqi National Alliance. This would mean creating a national unity government with people, especially ISCI, who are still talking about de-centralization and federalism ([cf. an interview with Iraqi Television where Hakim still envisages the creation of a south region](#)) in contrast to Maliki who has a vision of a strongly centralised state.



Whatever the outcome of the January election, Maliki's coalition should be considered a bold contribution towards extricating Iraq from the politics of sectarianism.

Salaam,
NCCI Team

The pick of the weeks articles on the Iraq context:

[Iraq Crisis Report](#)

Centre of Excellence on Disaster Management and Humanitarian Assistance, 24th September 2009

After US forces withdraw from Iraq, they plan to help Iraqis financially struggling government acquire military equipment by leaving some used American equipment behind, and by helping it finance new purchases, Reuters reported commander of US forces, Gen. Ray Odierno saying on September 30. Due to Iraqis oil prices plummeting from last years all-time high of US\$150 per barrel, the government was forced to slash spending plans, causing some Iraqi politicians to warn of a "financial catastrophe" in 2010 if oil prices did not improve. Budget cuts have stalled large equipment sales that could strengthen Iraq's military and police forces ability to take over security as US troops exit. Odierno addressed the US House Armed Services Committee and said that Iraqi ministries of defence and interior have insufficient discretionary spending left to buy equipment after paying salaries and other fixed expenses.

[Joint Patrols and Power-Sharing in Mosul: Unbalanced Proposals from the International Crisis Group](#)

Iraq and Gulf Analysis, 05th October 2009

In the one corner, a steadily increasing group of Iraqi politicians of all sectarian backgrounds who reject the idea of joint patrols between the forces of the Iraqi central government, the Kurdish federal authorities and the United States in what the Kurds refer to as "disputed territories" in northern Iraq, including Nineveh. The latest addition to this camp is Abbas al-Bayati, a key ally of Prime Minister Nuri al-Maliki in his revamped State of Law coalition. In a statement to the press on 1 October, the day of the re-launch of the Maliki alliance, Bayati made his position on this crystal clear: the governorates of Kirkuk and Nineveh fall within the exclusive sovereignty of the central government, whose responsibility it is to protect the population of these areas with its security forces.

[Diyala confronts new al-qaeda threat](#)

Niqash, 05th October 2009

New security warnings in Diyala are increasing fears that al-Qaeda and other armed groups may be seeking to re-establish themselves in the province. The fears come as al-Qaeda announced in September the recreation of the 'Islamic State of Iraq' in the province. The group, first created in 2006 and later defeated by tribal and governmental forces, could suggests that extremists are preparing for a new offensive.

"Security investigation with Arab detainees who were recently arrested, confirmed the intentions of al-Qaeda to destabilize the security situation in the province," warned police commander General Abdulul-Hussein al-Shammari recently.

[The Mujahedin-e Khalq in Iraq](#)

RAND – National Defence Research Institute, 2009

During Operation Iraqi Freedom (OIF), coalition forces faced an unusual detainee issue centering on the Mujahedin-e Khalq (MeK), an exiled Iranian cult dissident group that Saddam Hussein had invited into Iraq to fight on his behalf during the Iran-Iraq War. The United States designated the MeK a foreign terrorist organization in 1997 and a belligerent enemy force in OIF in 2003.

[Kurdish Leaders Defiant Over Constitution Vote](#)

Institute of War and Peace Reporting, 07th October 2009

Kurdish officials are planning a January referendum on a controversial draft constitution for the region, despite protests that it flouts Iraqi law, could heighten tensions with Baghdad and even lead to a dictatorship.

The proposed constitution, which was overwhelmingly approved by Iraqi Kurdistan's parliament in June, gives sweeping powers to the presidency and declares disputed territories – including the oil-rich province of Kirkuk – part of the Kurdish region. Before it can be placed on the statute book, the planned basic law needs to be ratified in a referendum in Iraqi Kurdistan.

[Kurdish opposition splinters](#)

Niqash, 07th October 2009

The Services and Reform list, a political coalition that competed in recent parliamentary elections in the Kurdistan Region, is on the verge of collapse. The alliance, which was only created five months ago and won 13 seats in parliament, is witnessing serious internal rifts between the leadership of the four Kurdish parties that make up the list over whether or not to ally with the new government.

[Camp Ashraf groups vow to fight on](#)

BBC News, 08th October 2009

On Wednesday, dozens of supporters around the world ended a 72-day hunger strike after one of their main demands was met - the release of 36 Camp Ashraf inmates detained by the Iraqi authorities for the past two-and-a-half months. They were seized during a raid on 28 and 29 July. Video filmed by people in Camp Ashraf appears to show Iraqi police and soldiers shooting and beating camp residents. Up to 11 inmates are reported to have been killed and hundreds wounded.

[Humanitarian space:](#)

[Iraq food prices analysis, Aug 2009](#)

IAU (Reliefweb), 31st August 2009

Food prices in the local Iraqi markets have risen at a steeper rate than global food prices. Iraqi food prices doubled between 2004 and 2008, while global food prices rose by 73%. The steeper rise in domestic prices was influenced by the rise in international food prices and an 800% rise in domestic fuel and light prices during the same period. It is possible that a future decrease in fuel costs would not lead to a proportionate decline in food prices.

[Review of the engagement of NGOs with the humanitarian reform process: Synthesis report](#)

ICVA (Reliefweb), 07th October 2009

This report analyses the current state of global humanitarian reform efforts from an NGO perspective by synthesising a series of mapping studies carried out between November 2008 and February 2009 that looked at humanitarian reform in five different countries: Afghanistan, the Democratic Republic of Congo, Ethiopia, Sudan and Zimbabwe. Lessons from other contexts are also brought in to strengthen the analysis and provide an overview of humanitarian reform.

Inauguration of “the Union of Arab Human Rights Defenders”

A group of leaderships and activists of Arab human rights organizations from six countries announced the formation of the founding committee that would work to inaugurate the Arab Human Rights Defenders Union (AHRDU). And today, 1th-October-2009, the founding committee unveiled the founding charter of AHRDU or “Union of Arab Defenders”. It aims actually to create a democratic and regulatory entity that includes all human rights defenders of relevant organizations and individuals as well as protecting them and enhancing their abilities in the domain of human rights. The union also gropes for drawing a framework for dialog, coordination, joint work and solidarity between NGOs and defenders, whether individuals or organizations.

Please find attached document for your further information.

1 October 2009 IOM Displacement Assessment and Statistics

This month, IDP priority needs and types of IDP property left behind are included in the report. Identified returnee populations by governorate are also provided.

Please find attached the IOM report.

Iraq Census Newsletter- Issue VI-October 2009

You will find in this issue an update on the following subjects:

- o Launching the Field stage of Numbering and Listing
- o Re-scheduling third fieldwork stage to 2010
- o Iraq census at the international agenda
- o Census in Progress by working sector
- o Other issues and news

Please find attached the document for your information.

Research to Improve the Effectiveness of INGO Activities and Future Humanitarian Coordination in Iraq

The study Research to Improve the Effectiveness of INGO Activities and Future Humanitarian Coordination in Iraq was undertaken by the Norwegian Refugee Council (NRC) between January and July 2009, in collaboration with the United Nations Office for Coordination of Humanitarian Action (OCHA) and with funding from the Norwegian Ministry of Foreign Affairs (NMFA). The objectives of the study were to:

- o Provide strategic direction to future humanitarian INGO operations in Iraq;
- o Support future coordination between humanitarian actors, in Iraq and elsewhere.

For further information please visit: <http://www.nrc.no/?did=9428583>

Schedule Updates

- Sunday 18th, ERDSOT, UNDP-Hamza Building, 11.00am
- Saturday 17th, IHAP (Iraq Humanitarian Action Plan), UNAMI Amman/Bagdad, 10.00am

Upcoming important dates

- None

Updates & Announcements

If you have an announcement, if you are aware of meetings, events, humanitarian update or if you would like to make known some information, please send details to webmanager@ncciraq.org

NCCI would like to apologize for the current problems with its website. We are working to rectify these as soon as possible.

- A number of NGOs have vacancies for positions in Iraq. Further information can be found [here](#).
- CVs can be uploaded [here](#)
- CVs can be checked [here](#)
- Employment opportunities can be examined [here](#)