

Abstract

The Yemeni and Iraqi Crises

The first chapter of this book discusses the backgrounds, manifestations and repercussions of the Yemeni crisis, in addition to the stands of different parties and possible scenarios. In a bid to solve it and prevent further escalations, recommendations are made to internal and external relevant parties through specific mechanisms.

The current dilemma is basically attributed to the year 2011, when protests broke out calling for the departure of former president Ali Abdullah Saleh. As the government opted for oppressing these acts and ignoring the public demands, a long-term bloody civil war was feared. There are other causes, such as the following:

- absence of powerful political institutions
- weak accord between politicians
- scarce and ill-managed economic resources
- public bodies' corruption and submission to separate political powers, and
- lack of foreign parties' seriousness in rebuilding the country on the basis of a national, Arab and Islamic identity inclusive to all Yemenis.

The main forms of the crisis can be set as follows:

- Failure of peaceful political settlement under the auspices of the UN since the 2011 political shift
- Diminishing actual control of official institutions on major parts of the state, in favour of armed militias, extremist groups and local tribal powers
- Increasing foreign intervention
- Growing local and public debt, and
- Sharp decline of economic resources.

Among the threats to the country and the region if the crisis continues are the following:

- Halt of political course
- Spread of violence and instability
- Rising power of radical armed groups, especially Al-Qaeda and the Houthis
- Escalating Saudi-Iranian conflict in Yemen, and
- Deteriorating living conditions of all Yemenis.

There are two main scenarios. The first is the persistence of the Houthis' control on the states' major pillars as well as the expansion of the cycle of violence. The second is a political resolution, return to the democratic course and

the execution of the transitional stage programme. The latter would restore stability and prevent the sliding into an extremely serious situation.

In spite of the difficulties facing their implementation, a number of solutions are proposed to solve the issue from a strategic perspective, which respects the higher interests of the Arab nation, in general, and the Yemeni people, in particular. Among these are the following:

- Conducting a genuine dialogue between the disputing parties under regional and international auspices
- Holding a referendum on the draft constitution, to be followed by presidential and general elections
- Rehabilitating, rebuilding and unifying the army and security forces
- State's restoration of all institutions and territories, and
- Postponing the consideration of the form of the state on the basis of a federation or the separation of some areas until the state recovers from the crisis.

The chapter also presents procedural steps aimed at containing the serious repercussions, mainly:

- Paying due attention to the true size of the dilemma by the neighbouring countries, especially Saudi Arabia and the other Gulf states
- Taking political and media actions to put an end to the Iranian intervention in Yemen, which could include imposing – or threatening to impose – sanctions by the countries of the region and Arab countries, supported by the Islamic Conference Organization and the UN
- Appointing an envoy from the Arab League to Yemen, and
- Creating a specialized unit of experts in the Arab League to investigate the Yemeni case in order to present consultations to the Arab League Secretary General and envoy.

Finally, due to the conventional acceptance and respect by all the Yemeni parties to the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan, it is recommended that Amman play the role of a mediator in this regard. Furthermore, other Arab think tanks are urged to focus on the issue as well as involve Yemeni experts and politicians in seminars or policy sheets to assist in overcoming the crisis and prevent its regional escalation.

However, **the second chapter** explores Iraq's crisis, with its possible courses. It begins with a vision to approach the dilemma in light of the complications of the scene and its multiple players. It elaborates on the nature of the issue as well as the players' identity and behaviour, referring to regional and international attitudes. It also focuses on the tendencies of the problem development, establishing a picture of the repercussions, possible and most likely scenarios and parties' options.

Finally, recommendations are made to the relevant parties at the national and regional levels.

It turns that what has happened in the country is not surprising for many experts for a number of reasons. One of them is the failure of the basics of the political process since the US occupation in 2003. A second is the sectarian quota system, which led to extreme tension between the Sunnis and Shi'a, blessed by Washington. A third is a feeling of marginalization by most of the Arab Sunnis in light of their weak political participation. A fourth is the disagreement between the central government and the Kurdistan Region. A fifth is the dispute between governorates over their borders. A last one is the intervention by neighbouring countries, like Iran.

With reference to the development of the crisis, four possible scenarios are proposed: escalation, persistence of the status quo, decline and a political solution. Until the preparation of the report, the realities indicate that the second (persistence of the status quo) is the most likely for this year (2015). However, if it goes out of the current context, it is more likely to head for further escalation for a number of factors. Among the most significant of these are:

- the absence of a comprehensive political solution
- the inability of each party to end the battle in military terms
- the lack of an international and regional will to put an end to the issue
- the continuous state of sectarian division
- the government's insistence to carry on with its policies and attitudes
- Public Mobilization's continuous violations against the Arab Sunnis
- Iran's persistence in deep intervention in Iraqi affairs, refusing to abandon its expansive theory in the region, and
- Islamic State's growing influence and expansion in new territories.

The following recommendations are made to find a way out the crisis:

- calling on all the Iraqi political powers to abandon sectarianism as well as promote moderation and national partnership among all powers, sects and ethnicities
- calling on these powers to maintain the sovereignty of the people and the land
- initiating the political reform process
- putting an end to the exclusionary policies against any of the components of the society
- building a participatory, democratic system on fair foundations to achieve stability and development and fight corruption
- calling for cross-national dialogue aimed at restoring balance to the Iraqi political scene

- stopping all forms of external negative and exploitative interventions, and giving the chance for the Iraqis to manage their affairs away from the attempts of submission and hegemony, and with full Arab support, and
- calling on the international community and neighbouring countries - especially the Gulf states, Iran and Jordan - to contribute to a peaceful political solution.

Finally, this chapter underlines the significance of unifying the Arab vision and stand on dealing with the issue in its both serious sectarian and security dimensions. Otherwise, the Arab role will not be decisive in solving the problem or bringing back the course to the actual questions, rather than being engaged in a war against terror as a beginning to solve the issue. The essence of the crisis is that the regime has been excluding the Arab Sunnis since the US occupation in 2003, instead of combining the sectarian variety - a distinguished feature of the country - in a cross-national framework.