



RSGC Webinar: The 2019 Iraqi Protests, One Year On: facts, aims, and prospects

Date: September 29, 2020 (10 am New York Time, 5 pm Baghdad Time)

Languages: English and Arabic (presentations will either be given in both languages, or followed by a summary in the other language)

On 1 October 2019, a number of Iraqi civil activists launched a mass protest movement at Tahrir Square in Baghdad, denouncing the regime's corruption and its inability to provide basic social services. Protest movements quickly spread to various governorates, mainly in the south, and were faced with brutal oppression from the regime's security forces. Militialization of the regime evoked strong anger among the ordinary Iraqi people who had believed that it was they themselves who have elected this government; more and more youth joined the protests, despite the increasing numbers of protestors suffering repercussions as a result of their activism.

Although the protest movements started out with demands for socio-economic reforms in Iraq, they gradually shifted towards aiming for complete overhaul and regime change, putting an end to the *muhasasa* system. In other words, protestors declare that the post-2003 coalition of the political elite, and their system of negotiation, is no longer useful or functional.

Protesters have opened the door to a new future for Iraqi society, showing their power to establish the autonomy of civil society. Activists have created new public spaces in Tahrir Square and other "liberated" areas, encouraging the youth, women, and the poor to participate in these commune-like spaces. Despite the violent intervention of the ruling militia, and lockdown under the pandemic, protests have not ceased yet. The Al-Kadhimi administration seems to have decided to restrict the arbitrary power of pro-Iran militias. How do these political changes affect the protest movements? What are the actual conditions they face now? What is their purpose, and where are headed?

Speakers:

Zahra Ali (Assistant Professor, Department of Sociology & Anthropology and Women's & Gender Studies Program, Rutgers University, Newark)

Ali Taher Al-hammood (Assistant professor of Political Sociology at Baghdad University, researching Shiite political Islam, ethnicities and minorities)

Alaa Hamed Adrees (Researcher of Anthropology, Editor at Iraqi Media Network (IMN), Al-Shabaka Magazine, Head of the Department of Research & Study at Rewaq Baghdad Research Centre for Public Policy)

Moderators:

Keiko Sakai (Professor, Faculty of Law, Politics and Economics, Chiba University; Dean of the Center for Relational Studies on Global Crises)

Khaled al-Hilli (Graduate Center, City University of New York)



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We will send you the webinar's information when it comes close to the date of the webinar.

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