

**Committee: Special Political and Decolonization Committee (GA4)**

**Issue: The Case of Iraq**

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## INTRODUCTION

Iraq is a country located in the heart of the Middle East and bordering with Jordan, Saudi Arabia, Syria, Turkey, Kuwait and Iran. Iraq has one of the richest histories in the world since the territories of modern day. The state of Iraq that we know today was created in the post World War I era, when it was one of the parts of the Ottoman empire that was given to the British Empire after the end of the war. Political instability and lack of peace have always been relevant in Iraq, since it has been one



figure 1: Map of Iraq in relation to countries in the Middle East

of the most unstable and war torn nations in the world with the first major armed conflict taking place in 1920 (Iraqi Revolution). Armed conflicts involving Iraq are still taking place to this day with the Iraqi Civil War being an excellent illustration; It first begun in 2014 and has world wide implications, such as the contribution to the refugee crisis, as well as the threat to public safety that is posed by the number of terrorist groups that are operating with Iraq as their basis. That is not a coincidence since Iraq's location, a hotspot of terrorist activity, and its wealth in natural resources, primarily oil, has made Iraq a primary "target" of many nations and thus characterizing most of the wars that have and are taking place in the region as proxy wars. It comes with no surprise that the multiple and severe military and political crises have erupted a huge humanitarian emergency in the region, as seen in the refugee crisis, the targeting of civilian populations and minorities, as well as the constant

and relentless violations of human rights in the region. Another component that adds to the instability in the region is the presence of an array of terrorist groups, like the Islamic State (IS), acting in the region and attempting to establish their idea of a caliphate, causing a significant amount of unrest in the area. Lately, when talking about the modern day Iraqi Civil War, it is important to keep in mind the Arab Spring. Following the Tunisian revolution, violent uprisings took place in Iraq and other countries in Africa and the Middle East that led to the toppling of the undemocratic regimes of multiple nations and in the case of Iraq, for some, contributing to the emergence of the ongoing Iraqi Civil War.

The importance of Iraq's current and past political state has been clearly illustrated by the aforementioned ideas and facts, with its geopolitical location and experiences affecting the policies of many countries and organizations and the way, in which nations, governments, organizations and people perceive the current issue of war, democracy, as well as what it takes to preserve it.

## **DEFINITION OF KEY TERMS**

### **Terrorism**

"The use of violence and threats to intimidate or coerce, especially for political purposes". [1]

### **Proxy War**

"A war instigated by a major power which does not itself become involved." [2]

In other words, proxy wars are orchestrated by larger powers that are indirectly involved in the conflict, in order to protect their own (geopolitical, economic) interests in the area. An example of a Proxy War would be the Vietnam War, and the role of the US and the Soviet Union; The former supported the Southern Vietnamese as a means of halting communism, whereas the latter supported the Northern Vietnamese so as to further spread their political ideologies.

### **Invasion**

"An act or instance of invading or entering as an enemy, especially by an army." [1]

In this case we will be looking at the invasion of Iraq by the United States in 2003, an event

that is seen by many as the starting point of the significant political instability in Iraq in the 21st century.

### **Sanctions**

“Measures taken by a state to coerce another to conform to an international agreement or norms of conduct, typically in the form of restrictions on trade or official sporting participation.” [2]

Within the context of this guide, sanctions are mostly relevant with regard to the Mostly the sanctions imposed by the UN on Iraq during and after the Saddam Hussein era.

### **Insurgency**

“An active revolt or uprising.” [2]

This term is highly relevant for this guide due to the heavy insurgence that Iraq witnessed in the aftermath of 2013, further intensifying political instability in the country.

### **Total War**

“A war which is unrestricted in terms of the weapons used, the territory or combatants involved, or the objectives pursued, especially one in which the accepted rules of war are disregarded.” [2]

### **Coup d'état**

A change in the political state of a government after a violent and illegal overthrow of the current government by another smaller and often military group.

### **Ceasefire**

“A temporary suspension of fighting;” *Oxford Dictionaries*

A ceasefire is an agreement signed by the parties involved in the armed conflict, usually facilitated by a third party such as the UN, that puts an end to hostile acts between the parties involved.

### **Weapons of Mass Destruction**

“A nuclear, biological, or chemical weapon able to cause widespread devastation and loss of life.” [2]

**Guerilla Warfare**

“Engagement in or the activities involved in a war fought by small groups of irregular soldiers against typically larger regular forces.”[2]

**Mandate**

In the context of Iraq’s history, the term refers to “A commission from the League of Nations to a member state to administer a territory.”[2]

**Hashemite Monarchy**

A Jordan based royal family of monarchs that ruled many regions of the Middle East lasting up to 1958.<sup>1</sup>

**BACKGROUND INFORMATION**

**Post World War I Iraq, The pre Saddam Hussein era**

After the end of the First World War, the division of the fallen Ottoman Empire among the victors of the War was a key priority. European powerhouses, such as the United Kingdom were keen to add territories that were occupied by the Ottoman Empire under their sphere of influence mostly due to their geographical significance and wealth in natural resources. Finally the League of Nations, the predecessor of the United Nations, approved a British mandate of modern day Iraq. The

British established and supported a Hashemite monarchy that ruled Iraq for the 17 years it was under the British influence. In 1932, Britain’s mandate ended, with Iraq gaining its independence. Even though the British had no formal association with the Iraqi government, the two nations continued having close economic and military relations. The close relations that the two nations maintained led to multiple uprisings and revolts that climaxed with a pro-Axis power



figure 2: Map of influence of the Axis and Ally powers

<sup>1</sup> Dictionary.com

<sup>2</sup>Oxford Dictionaries

coup taking place as an attempt to overthrow the pro-British government. In the fear of the Axis powers gaining influence in the area, the British proceeded to launch a military intervention and regained control of Iraq after the end of the Anglo-Iraqi War. In this way, Iraq was made a part of the Ally War Effort, meaning that Iraq was now a part of the Ally Powers and thus would contribute with the production of weapons, deployment of troops etc.

### **Kurdish separatism in Iraq**

Kurdish separatism in Iraq dates back to the 20th century and the fall of the Ottoman Empire. Specifically, in 1918, after the decline of the Ottoman Empire, Iraqi Kurds were burdened by British colonial rule. The Kurds, in their timely struggle towards independence organized a number of revolutions in opposition to British as well as Iraqi power. With this as a backdrop, after a broken promise of autonomy through the Treaty of Sevres in 1920 and an inability to discuss the option of Kurdish autonomy in the late 1950s, the first Kurdish-Iraqi war erupts in 1961. Kurdish rebels were fighting for an independent Kurdish region in northern Iraq. With 80% of the Iraqi ground forces involved in the conflict and an approximate number of 105,000 casualties, the conflict ended in a stalemate in 1970. After the end of the first Kurdish-Iraqi war, the two opposing sides reached a peacekeeping agreement in 1970. Specifically, the agreement was one of the first and most important attempts to resolve the Kurdish-Iraqi conflict promising Kurds a number of autonomous results. It promised the establishment of three Kurdish governorates, as well as other measures, including place in local government bodies and institutions, and was expected to be enforced within four years after the signing of the agreement. However, due to the ratification of a plan of Arabization Iraq engaged into, the peace agreement failed and thus, more conflict emerged, leading to the second Kurdish-Iraqi war between 1974 and 1975. That being said, the worst of all conflicts occurred when Saddam Hussein was in power during the Iran-Iraq war. More specifically, in 1983 the Kurdish militias in northern Iraq rebelled against Saddam Hussein in a quest for autonomy. As a response, Saddam Hussein launched a massive attack in Kurdish inhabited regions through the use of armed forces. Additionally, he launched several chemical attacks against civilians. All in all, conflict was ongoing and intensified until 1991, when the international community declared a no fly zone over northern Iraq, as well as ensuring the provision of humanitarian assistance to the

Kurds. The subsequent agreement that followed in late October 1991 left space for Kurdish forces to establish their power in northern Iraq and thus, initiate reconstruction of the region. Infrastructures were rebuilt and a Kurdish administration was created, which both helped in the recovery of the Kurdish displaced community. The reconstruction lasted up until the beginning of the 2nd millennium when a parliamentary democracy was put into place in 2003 and the economy started growing. Lastly, in 2005 the Iraqi constitution acknowledged an independent Kurdish region in northern Iraq. Today, this region is run by the local Kurdish government and is the only current fully autonomous Kurdish region.

### **The Saddam Hussein Era**

On the 16th of July, 1979 Iraq entered one of its darkest times as a nation. Saddam Hussein replaced his cousin Ahmed Hassan al-Bakr as President and became the most powerful man in Iraq. He achieved complete power and influence over the government by appointing close relatives to key government positions. Hussein used his power and influence to expand his territory by first invading Iran, in the Iran-Iraq War and later Kuwait. During the conflict, chemical weapons especially poison gas, were often used, making the amounts of casualties rise exponentially. The Iran-Iraq War ended in 1988 with no clear winner drawn. A few years later, in 1991 specifically, later Saddam attempted to annex Kuwait, marking the start of the Gulf War. His brief annexation of Kuwait proved to be unsuccessful, since a coalition led by the United States and Great Britain pushed Iraqi forces out of Kuwait. Despite his defeat, Saddam Hussein remained in power and continued to develop his arsenal of chemical, biological, and nuclear weapons. Saddam Hussein also exploited UN policies and programmes to gain more money and military power, while letting his people live in inhumane conditions. For instance, during the embargo the UN had imposed on Iraq, blocking Iraqi oil exports which were Iraq's primary source of income, the UN created a programme called "Oil for Food". During the program Iraq would supposedly sell just enough Oil, in order to get food for its starving citizens. Instead of using the money generated for their intended use, Saddam Hussein exploited the programmes, earning as much as \$ 1.7 billion.. This led to the continuous suffering of starving civilian populations, while strengthening the Hussein regime. During this time, several sanctions were imposed on Iraq by the UN Security Council for failing to abide by resolutions that were passed. Furthermore, Iraq became a hotspot of terrorist activity, which had the United States as its primary target and became the birthplace of terrorist organizations like Al-Qaeda. It was

because of the terrorist activity in Iraq, the nationalization of its oil reserves, and the constant violation of human rights by Saddam Hussein's government that led to the invasion of Iraq in 2003 by the United States.

### **The Iraq War**

The Iraq War, that started in 2003 and ended in 2011, consisted of two main phases. The first phases included the American and British invasion of Iraq that led to the fall of Saddam Hussein's government. The Second, and longest phase of the Iraq War, that erupted with the fall of the Saddam Hussein regime, led to a massive wave of looting and chaos taking place. The aforementioned actions could not be stopped since no formal government, police force, and army had been established after the fall of the Saddam Hussein regime. The lack of order gave birth to the Iraqi insurgency and a wave of sectarian violence that would last for years to come. The occupying forces had the task of reestablishing law and order in the area. Multiple guerilla groups, like the Free Iraqi Army, Al-Qaeda, Ansar Al Islam and many more, occupied Iraqi territories forming the Iraqi Insurgency. The lack of a constant and recognized opponent in occupied Iraq made it especially difficult for the coalition forces to restore order, since they had to fight against multiple, fluid, and often unknown insurgent groups. Minority groups, especially the Christians and Sunni Muslims were targeted, with suicide and car bombings in mosques and churches being very common occurrences. Casualties during the Iraqi insurgency were very high, with some estimates having casualties on the Iraqi side going as far as 650,000 and casualties on the coalition side going as far as 50,000. Rebuilding the Iraqi government was also especially difficult due to the fact that the 35 years of sanctions imposed by the UN had left the Iraqi economy shattered. The Second Phase of the Iraqi War finally ended in 2011 after the Iraqi insurgency was defeated, leading to the establishment of a democratically elected government, and the departure of US troops by the end of 2011.

### **The Iraqi Civil War**

Following the overthrow of Saddam Hussein after the aforementioned US invasion of Iraq, a Shia government was elected causing the direction of the oppression to shift, this time targeting the Sunni minority. After a prolonged suppression the Sunni population revolted and the chaos that was caused led to the rise of the Iraqi insurgency and attracted

major terrorist organizations like Al-Qaeda to Iraq. Those terrorist and insurgent groups fought the Iraqi government and the US troops in Iraq. The widespread chaos and hate crimes committed against members of different religions in the area (especially in the Shia and Sunni populations) caused the crisis to further escalate. The situation got even worse when US troops departed from Iraq leaving a very corrupt, unpopular and incapable Shia government in charge, that would discriminate Sunnis on a constant basis. When US troops left Syria, IS quickly spread to Iraq in an attempt to create a unified Islamic State, while cleansing Shia Muslims in the process.

The US did help Iraq create an army of approximately 300,000 troops, but their training was inferior to the one the IS soldiers had received. In addition to their inferior training, Iraqi soldiers were not extremely loyal to their government, mainly due to the signs of corruption and incapability it had consistently show, causing them to often flee and letting IS troops march freely through Iraq. The resistance was

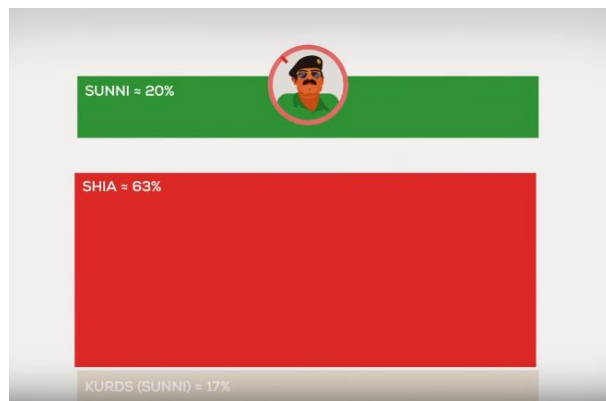


figure 3: Graph indicating Shia suppression during the Saddam Hussein Era

so little that by 2014 IS had seized control of big parts of Iraq, including the nation’s second biggest city, Mosul. In the fear of IS spreading to even more countries in the Middle East, the Iranian government authorized a military intervention to take place in Iraq. An American intervention was also authorized by President Barack Obama in the same year.

The ongoing Civil War in Iraq, in addition to the religious cleansing unleashed by IS, have created one of the worst humanitarian and refugee crises we have ever witnessed. With violations of human rights, mass massacres of civilians, shocking executions, kidnappings of women and children and innumerable suicide bombings, millions of people have been displaced in the fear of IS’s religious cleansing; this has made the Iraqi Civil War one of the most relevant and talked about issues in our world today. It is important to mention at this point, that in recent months Iraqi forces have made significant progress in claiming back former IS territory, improving the current situation. That is not to say however that all possible sources of tension have been addressed; In late September 2017, the



Kurdistan leaders organized a referendum on the question of their independence in Northern Iraq. 92% of the ones voting supported independence and in spite of the non-binding nature of the referendum, tension has again prevailed between the different parties involved within Iraq.

## **MAJOR COUNTRIES AND ORGANISATIONS INVOLVED**

### **United States of America (USA)**

The United States of America have been one of the countries that was blamed for the creation of the conflict and instability in the country. The United States have participated in most wars in Iraq's modern history, with its involvement often heavily criticized. The United States of America played a massive role in the Iraq War per se, as well as its aftermath that led to the Iraqi Civil War and is often blamed for the situation it left Iraq in 2011, both politically and financially.

### **Saudi Arabia**

Saudi Arabia is the biggest and most powerful Arab country with a Sunni majority. Thus, the constant conflict between the Shia and Sunni have prompted countries like Saudi Arabia to support and fund organizations that can support the often suppressed Sunni faith in Shia governed countries like Iraq. Multiple allegations of Saudi Arabia funding organizations, such as IS, have been made, making Saudi Arabia a major player in the Middle East as whole, and in Iraq more specifically.

### **Iran**

Iran has been a country that has been having tense relations with Iraq over the years, ranging from the 1980 war to their stronger relations in the post Saddam Hussein era. As mentioned previously, Iraq has led a military intervention in Iraq in 2014 and has been cooperation with the Iraqi government in the fight against IS.

### **Islamic State (IS)**

The Islamic State is a Jihadist Islamic group, that supposedly supports the Sunni Muslim faith. It seeks the unification of the entire Middle East under one common and

united Islamic State, while cleansing the “inferior” (as they believe) Shia Muslim populations. IS was brought in the international spotlight, after it used the political instability in Iraq and Syria to conquer significant parts of the aforementioned regions. IS has also been closely linked to terrorist attacks both in Iraq and abroad, as well as numerous other atrocities. IS is one of the richest terrorist organizations in the world and has a very well trained and equipped army of fanatics, as well as massive influence over other Muslim radical groups around the world. The Iraqi government has requested assistance in fight against IS and a coalition of states ,like the US and Great Britain, has been created with the goal of defeating IS.

### TIMELINE OF EVENTS

Date	Description of Event
1920	League of Nations reaffirms British control in Iraq causing a full scale revolution to take place
1932	British rule over Iraq ends, as it becomes an independent state even though the British keep their military bases in the area
1941	Anglo-Iraqi war begins when a pro-Nazi coup takes place in Iraq
1943	A second revolt of the Barzani Kurds is crushed by the Iraqi government
1958	A left-wing oriented military coup takes control of Iraq, no longer supporting the pro-British approach the previous government had adopted
1959	The Mosul Uprising takes place, the Arab nationalists are defeated and thus Iraq does not join the United Arab Republic (UAR)
1961	The first Iraqi-Kurdish War begins with the two sides ultimately agreeing to create an autonomous Kurdish region in the area
1974	The second Iraqi-Kurdish War takes place ending with the granting of limited autonomy to a Kurdish province
1979	Saddam Hussein becomes president of Iraq

1980	The Iran-Iraq War begins
1988	Iran-Iraq War ends with no clear winner indicated
1990	The Gulf War begins as Iraq invades Kuwait, the War ends with a defeat of the Iraqi forces and severe destruction of the infrastructure of both Kuwait and Iraq
1995	The Iraqi-Kurdish Civil War takes place ending with the the withdrawal of Iraqi forces from Kurdish Iraq
1995	The Oil for Food program is launched by the UN
1995	Saddam Hussein wins referendum allowing him to stay in power
1998	Saddam Hussein expels UN weapons inspectors
1998	Operation Desert Fox is launched by the US and Britain as an attempt to destroy the Iraqi nuclear, biological, and chemical weapons programs through aerial bombings
2003	The first Phase of the Iraqi War begins as a US-led invasion overthrows Saddam Hussein
2006	Saddam Hussein is charged with crimes against humanity and is executed
2006	The second phase of the Iraqi War begins as a coalition of Iraq and other Western powers like the US defeat the Iraqi insurgency
2008	The Iraqi government signs a Security Pact with the United States, which foresees the departure of American Troops from Iraq by the end of 2011
2011	Oil exports from Iraq resume
2013	Insurgency intensifies, as Iraq finds itself once again in a sectarian war
2014	The Iraqi Civil War begins, as the Iraqi government -along with a coalition of countries including the United States and Great Britain fight terrorist groups like the Free Iraqi Army and the Islamic State-

	that are occupying the area
2015	Larges offensive is launched to recapture Islamic State-occupied areas
2016	The Iraqi government regains control of key areas in Iraq, including Fallujah and Mosul
2017	The government announces further areas captured back from IS
September 2017	Non-binding referendum on Kurdish independence

### UN INVOLVEMENT: RELEVANT RESOLUTIONS, TREATIES AND EVENTS

- [S/RES/707 \(1991\)](#), The situation between Iraq and Kuwait
- [S/RES/687 \(1991\)](#), Calling for Saddam Hussein to destroy all of his long range ballistic missiles
- [S/RES/692 \(1991\)](#), Calling for Saddam Hussein to repay for the damages he caused during the Gulf War
- [S/RES/1269 \(1999\)](#), Calling for Saddam Hussein to stop allowing terrorist groups to freely operate within Iraq in the name of international security
- [S/RES/1483 \(2003\)](#), The situation between Iraq and Kuwait
- [S/RES/2335 \(2016\)](#), The situation of Iraq

### PREVIOUS ATTEMPTS TO SOLVE THE ISSUE

Many attempts by multiple parties have been carried out, in the effort of improving Iraq's political stability. However, most, if not all, of those efforts have seemed to fail. The UN has passed multiple resolutions regarding the case of Iraq (some of which can be seen in the previous section), that have discussed numerous issues such as the Gulf War, the Iran-Iraq War, the Iraq War, the Iraqi Civil War and many more. However, most of them seem to have a very passive role; They have rarely gone further than implementing economic sanctions or embargoes on Iraq ( In the case of the Gulf and Iran-Iraq War), whilst others are simply reaffirming measures that have not had a significant effect on the crisis.

The North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) has also made significant attempts to resolve the crisis in Iraq. Some of NATO'S attempts go as far back as Saddam Hussein's Iraq

in the early 2000s. At this point, their efforts mainly revolve around providing support and knowledge to Iraqi security forces.

The United States of America, along with other coalitions of different states have also been attempting to solve the issue of Iraq. However, through the country's modern history, their attempts have been deemed unsuccessful, and at times counterproductive. As mentioned above, the US invasion of Iraq, which is the most recent attempt the United States made to restore order and political stability in the area, left the country of Iraq in a dismal financial situation and with a government that was recognized as both corrupt and incapable. The invasion of Iraq by the United States is seen by many as an attempt to avenge the 9/11 attacks and have been criticized by citizens from all around the world. As suggested previously, the void of power that the US created when overthrowing Saddam Hussein, wasn't filled completely by the elected government. After the departure of US troops, it eventually became filled by terrorist organizations, such as IS.

The Arab Leagues' lack of presence in the post Saddam Iraq has been a well acknowledged fact. However, the Arab League has made some attempts to specifically relief the humanitarian crisis and refugee crisis that the conflicts in Iraq have caused. For instance, many Arab countries such as Saudi Arabia have opened refugee camps for people fleeing Iraq and Syria. These have, however, not been very popular to refugees due to their fear of further religious and political prosecution, as well as the comparatively higher attractivity of Europe.

## **POSSIBLE SOLUTIONS**

Finding solutions on the case of Iraq has been a priority for many bodies and governments all around the world mainly due to its relevance, magnitude and importance as an issue. There are so many issues and problems that arise with the current situation Iraq finds itself in, amongst others financial instability, ongoing conflicts, relentless violations of human rights, mass religious cleansings and massacres, and terrorist attacks within and outside of Iraq. None of these issues can be successfully addressed without the presence of political stability and an enforced, legitimate government. Within this context, the defeat of IS is of paramount importance.

Principles that can be key in such processes and –if implemented- could resolve the

situation in Iraq, include: should put us a step closer to a peaceful Iraq and hence a peaceful Middle East (please keep in mind that many different approaches can be adopted when attempting to solve the issue so some of the ideas might contradict each other to some degree) :

- Coordination and establishment of a transparent militant coalition of member states that will share expertise, intelligence, and military equipment with the goal of defeating IS and other terrorist affiliated groups in the region,
- Withdrawal of all foreign troops from Iraq in order to cease the conflict of interests in the area and thus no longer characterize the Iraqi Civil War as a proxy war,
- Calling for new, UN supervised, elections to take place in Iraq, in order to democratically elect a leader that is supported by the majority of the population and thus getting one step closer to achieving political stability in the region,
- Raising awareness about the humanitarian and refugee crisis that the conflict has created, in order to get funds for organizations helping displaced people or refugees, and to get people to volunteer, actively participate and help the causes of the aforementioned organizations,
- Creating a long term financial plan for the Iraqi government with the assistance of International Monetary Fund (IMF), in order for the country to eventually prosper financially,
- Establishing new trade deals, in order to improve oil revenues (Iraq's best source of income) and thus pave the path to a prosperous and stable economy.

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