

HISAR SCHOOL

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**“Combating Polarization in Times of Global Crisis”**

# **The United Nations Security Council**

*The Situation in Iraq*

Ata Gvendi



RESEARCH  
REPORT



**Forum:** United Nations Security Council (SC)

**Issue:** The Situation in Iraq

**Student Officer:** Ata Güvendi - President

## Introduction

On 20 March 2003, the U.S.-led Coalition forced bombed government buildings in Iraq of Saddam Hussain, marking the start of the Iraq War. Ever since, Iraq has been experiencing political and military turmoil, amplified by the lack of a stable government and the presence of militia fighters.

Within a month, the Coalition forces had taken control of Iraq and had relieved the Ba'ath party of power, eventually leading to the trial and execution of Saddam Hussain, who had previously fallen against the world in its invasion of Kuwait. In 2003, suspicions had been growing that Iraq had been developing weapons of mass destruction, leading to the intervention beginning 20 March of that year. This intervention had followed many international attempts to inspect for a potential weapons programme and UNSC resolutions, alongside an ultimatum issued on 18 March, demanding Saddam's withdrawal from power.

## Definition of Key Terms

**Al-Qaeda:** Al-Qaeda is a terrorist organization that was founded by Osama Bin Laden, infamous for the attacks of 9-11, the organization displayed presence in a lot of geographies, ranging from Afghanistan to the Levant to Africa.

**ISIS/ISIL:** ISIS/ISIL: ISIS, or simply the Islamic State, (ISIL referring to the Islamic state in the Levant, the geography encasing much of Iraq, Iran, Syria, and some of Northern Africa) is a terrorist organization that holds the more prominent presence in Iraq today. The Islamic State was formed out of Al-Qaeda, the aforementioned terrorist group.

**Shia and Sunni:** Shia and Sunni are the two sects of Islam, meaning although both groups are under the Islamic religion, their beliefs differ in the interpretation of the same Holy Book, the Qur'an. The Middle East is divided by these sects, with Iran being the most notable Shia state. Iraq is split between a Shia and Sunni population, the government being under the Shia sect in recent history, making way for sectarian violence.

**Ba'athism:** Ba'athism is a political and ideological movement that has been influencing the Arab world since recent history. Saddam Hussain, leader or dictator of Iraq depending on the policy, a notable member of the Ba'ath Party, which is primarily a Shia populated organization, was executed after the

invasion of Iraq. The supporters of Saddam and thus the Ba'ath Party still remain in Iraq and are a party to the conflict.

**Sectarian Violence:** Simply refers to tensions and often armed conflict between sects of a religion, Sunnism and Shiism in this topic.

**De Facto:** The French-derived term refers to the situation in its current place. A de facto government would be in power, meaning they'd control everything in the territories they were the de facto rulers of, but would not be the *De Jure* governments, which have the legal rights to rule that land. Most de facto regimes are due to breakaways or occupations that aren't recognized internationally.

## General Overview

Following the toppling of Saddam Hussain, a failure to consolidate control over the Iraqi lands by the Coalition forces gave way to many insurgencies with objectives of their own, underpinning the issues faced in Iraq today. Following the Coalition victory in Iraq, the U.S. had been returning government control to the Iraqis, with a fully working government being established within two years.

However, the rise of the new Iraqi government came with insurgent violence. During these two years, instances of terrorism in Iraq were on a sharp rise, a trend that would continue to haunt Iraq. During these years, the terrorist organization of Al-Qaeda was incubating, and the world would start to pay attention when they bombed a major site for the Shia sect of Islam, the Samarra Shrine.

To counter terrorism and stabilize the political climate in Iraq, the then President of the United States, Mr. Bush, deployed more troops in Iraq to root out insurgents. The American presence was set to be temporary, with the U.S. army withdrawing all troops by 2011 and returning its controlled territories to the Iraqi government.

The Iraqi government, belonging to the Shia sect itself, during the years of American presence, fought a power struggle with the Sunni insurgents of Al-Qaeda, the eventual parent of ISIL. During 2006-8, Al Qaeda had a firm grasp on Sunni majority sections of Iraq and exercised its rule there in the absence of the government's executive power. In an event called the Anbar Uprising, the other insurgents belonging to the Sunni sect turned on the Al-Qaeda de facto state, cooperating with the Iraqi and U.S. forces, resulting in a massive decline in the controlled territories of Al-Qaeda.

Today's landscape is more dominated by the presence of ISIL rather than the Al-Qaeda group. Since 2015, the government's security forces have been focusing on recapturing ISIL-controlled territories and have been, for the most part, successful. ISIL's control over Iraq has been declining, alongside pro-Kurdish independence insurgent groups, another interested party in the conflict. The factions to the conflict are therefore split by sects, ethnicity, and ideology due to the presence of Ba'athist loyalist groups as well. In 2018, the United States once again ended its bid to assist Iraq to fight the Islamic State.

## Major Parties Involved and Their Views

**USA:** Following its years-long occupation, the United States has withdrawn its occupation once again in 2018 and is now backing the government of Iraq to continue its fight against terrorism. The U.S. has been helping to renovate the Iraqi military and has also been granting humanitarian aid to vulnerable groups.

**Iraq:** Iraq currently faces political challenges from its population due to the consequences of the war, and protests about corruption and unemployment can turn violent, like the one in 2019, where 400 people lost their lives. Alongside its internal struggles, Iraq also is now waging war on militia and independence fighters on its own, with backing from major international powers.

**Russian Federation:** The Russian Federation advocates for a more balanced and diplomatic solution between the Iraqi government and Kurdish independence fighters, a prominent militia group in Iraq. Moscow had iterated that they remain committed to both relationships, both with the Iraqi Kurds and the Iraqi government, underlining its economic partnerships and ties with the government.

## Timeline of Events

<b>12 September 2002</b>	<i>George W. Bush, the President of the United States, threatens military action against Iraq in the United Nations chambers following speculation that Iraq is developing weapons of mass destruction.</i>
<b>20 March 2003</b>	<i>Bombings in Baghdad began the attack on Iraq, following noncompliance with international demands.</i>
<b>1 May 2003</b>	<i>Coalition forces take full control of Baghdad.</i>
<b>2003-today</b>	<i>Militant groups start to form following a lack of government, some still active today.</i>
<b>30 December 2006</b>	<i>Saddam Hussain is hanged.</i>
<b>2006</b>	<i>The Anbar Uprising begins to challenge the Al-Qaeda state, leading to mass decline in Al-Qaeda controlled territories.</i>
<b>2008</b>	<i>Iraqi parliament votes to pass the Security Pact with the US.</i>
<b>2009</b>	<i>The UK ends its military operations in Iraq.</i>
<b>2018</b>	<i>The U.S. once again ends direct involvement with Iraq, opting to instead offer assistance to the Iraqi government and security forces.</i>

<b>Early Autumn 2019</b>	<i>Massive protests take place in Baghdad against unemployment and resignation, demanding the resignation of Adel Abdul Madhi, a Kurdish politician and President of Iraq. Hundreds die.</i>
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**Treaties and Events**

- *UNSC S/RES/411*

This resolution was the final warning issued to Iraq before the invasion took place. Iraq chose not to comply with the disarmament measures demanded by the UN, thus beginning the start of Saddam’s fall from power and decades of political turbulence.

- *The Security Pact*

This pact was between the U.S. and Iraq, signifying the withdrawal of the United States following years of occupations since the end of the Saddam regime. The withdrawal left the Iraqi security forces solely responsible for combat operations against militant groups.

**Evaluation of Previous Attempts to Resolve the Issue**

The UNSC has passed two resolutions (S/RES/2576 and S/RES/2597) in 2021, adopted by the current members of the Security Council, relating to “Threats to international peace and security.” At this point in time, the international community observes the conflict and holds ISIL to account for their actions and crimes against humanity in Iraq, but nothing more, either underlining confidence in Iraq’s security forces and high regard for Iraq’s sovereignty or a desire to stay distant to Iraq. In either case, the commitment places a lot of burden on Iraq and its people, who are left in economically and politically unstable shape due to years of fighting in Iraq and political uncertainty. The SC recently voted to extend the mandate of UNAMI (United Nations Assistance Mission for Iraq) to grant foreign aid in the pursuit of alleviating some of these issues, but recovery seems a long way off.

**Possible Solutions**

It goes without saying that restoring Iraq into a politically and economically sustainable state will be an uphill battle, requiring international cooperation and, more importantly, funding. However, the more important factor to consider is the presence of armed militias that threaten peace both locally and internationally. Since these groups, although are relatively small for the most part, and if not in decline (such as ISIL), the eradication of these cells will be a more daunting task. One ambitious project would be to build a comprehensive framework to utilize intelligence sharing with the government of Iraq and other notable security services in order to cripple fiduciary supply lines to these cells alongside identifying and apprehending their international supporters.

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