

Colorful Ethnoreligious Map of Iraq and the Current Situation of Minorities in the Country

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Abstract : The aim of the study is to introduce the minority groups living in Iraq and to shed light on their current situation. The Middle East is a rather heterogeneous region in ethnic terms. It includes many ethnic, national, religious, linguistic, or ethnoreligious groups. The relationship between the majority and minority is the main cause of various conflicts in the region. It seems that most of the post-Ottoman states have not yet developed a unified national identity capable of integrating their multi-ethnic societies. The issue of minorities living in the Middle East is highly politicized and controversial, as the various Arab states consider the treatment of minorities as their internal affair, do not recognize discrimination or even deny the existence of any kind of minorities on their territory. This attitude of the Middle Eastern states may also be due to the fact that the minority issue can be abused and can serve as a reference point for the intervention policies of Western countries at any time. Methodologically, the challenges of these groups are perceived through the manifestos of prominent individuals and organizations belonging to minorities. The basic aim is to present the minorities' own history in dealing with the issue. It also introduces the different ethnic and religious minorities in Iraq and analyzes their situation during the operation of the terrorist organization „Islamic State” and in the aftermath. It is clear that the situation of these communities deteriorated significantly with the advance of ISIS, but it is also clear that even after the expulsion of the militant group, we cannot necessarily report an improvement in this area, especially in terms of the ability of minorities to assert their interests and physical security. The emergence of armed militias involved in the expulsion of ISIS sometimes has extremely negative effects on them. Until the interests of non-Muslims are adequately represented at the local level and in the legislature, most experts and advocates believe that little will change in their situation. When conflicts flare, many Iraqi citizens usually leave Iraq, but because of the poor public security situation (threats from terrorist organizations, interventions by other countries), emigration causes serious problems not only outside the country's borders but also within the country. Another ominous implication for minorities is that their communities are very slow if ever, to return to their homes after fleeing their own settlements. An important finding of the study is that this phenomenon is changing the face of traditional Iraqi settlements and threatens to plunge groups that have lived there for thousands of years into the abyss of history. Therefore, we not only present the current situation of minorities living in Iraq but also discuss their future possibilities.

Keywords : Middle East, Iraq, Islamic State, minorities

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