

A message from from the Iraqi people: War leads to destruction, displacement, and a lost future for millions of children

A letter from Iraqi social movements



On Saturday, January 25 – people across the the globe gathered in 200+ cities for a “Global Day of Protest” against a new war in the Middle East. The day of protest was born following the recent escalation of tensions between the U.S. and Iran.

In this month’s “Voices from the South,” we present a letter from activists on the ground in Baghdad, where the military tensions between the U.S. and Iran are putting Iraq and Iraqis at immense risk. The letter was prepared by Iraqi social movements in Tahrir square, for the Global Day of Protest. Here, the Iraqi movements call for a stop to the escalation , a stop to ALL new wars, and a stop to any further militarization of the region. And they call for solidarity with those working to build a future that is secure and peaceful, democratic and just.

A message from the Iraqi people to our friends all over the world: To the demonstrators against war, the advocates of peace, democracy, and justice

Baghdad, 23. January 2020

Years ago, a small group of world leaders, most living far from Iraq, made a promise that they would maintain global peace and security and bring democracy and freedom to the Iraqi people — through war! In response, many others throughout the world stood together in defense of world peace; they rejected the war in and on Iraq by joining in massive demonstrations that spread to cities across the globe. These protests alerted the public about the repercussions of war and warned of its catastrophic consequences. Hundreds of thousands of people called for the rights of Iraqi people to be respected. Iraqis themselves should decide their

own destiny, without regional or international military intervention. The signs of these protestors bore the slogan “No to war ... No to dictatorship!”.

Of course, as they always do, the world’s top leaders ignored these global protests, and opened the door to a disaster of monstrous proportion and leading to unspeakable suffering. The war of 2003, contrary to what those who so recklessly started it promised, has contributed to the disruption of world peace, to the advent of a large military force in Iraq, and has caused the eastern Mediterranean to fall into a continuous cycle of violence. And the violence has spread, its impact continues to be felt by the whole world in the form of an ever increasing tendency for violent extremism.

Today in Iraq, as we write this letter to you, we are living in revolutionary times; they started last October and — despite the killing, despite ongoing brutal and authoritarian violence — they are still going on now. This revolution is not an anomaly, it is not occurring in isolation from history, nor is it a break from what happened seventeen years ago, This revolution is the inevitable result of a relentless and ever-expanding accumulation of anger and pain caused by the imposition of a deliberately corrupt regime. The backbone of the post-2003 regime in Iraq was a system of sectarian-ethnic quotas, allowing self-interested mafias to plunder our resources and impoverish our country for present and future generations to come. The Iraqis have revolted in direct response to this grave injustice. They demand a homeland that respects all its people as human beings, a homeland in which they enjoy peace and security, a homeland in which they benefit from principles of freedom and justice, where they live in a world of true democracy and social rights, a homeland in which they decide their own destiny, away from the interventions of international powers, especially American and Iranian.

We, the Iraqi people, who have had bitter experiences with wars and military interventions, stand with all humanity against war — ALL war. We stand in solidarity with our neighbor, the Iranian people, against the war and the advocates of war! We stand together, firmly convinced that this war is only a means of political polarization, one intended to distract the public, driving them away from the reality of the revolutionary movement currently taking place in Iraq, Iran, Lebanon and the rest of the world! This present moment is crucial and we cannot lose sight of its force: people are standing up and demanding their



legitimate right to self-determination, independence, freedom, democracy, and social justice ... These are the same demands that sparked the peaceful protests several months ago, and we are writing this now to implore you to keep your eyes on the hope for transformation that fuels these demonstrations — do not turn them back to senseless violence and futile war!

War threatens to undermine all the gains of this great mass movement in Iraq and neighboring countries. It threatens to destroy the unity that holds the people in the region together. War will be used shamelessly, by a malevolent but powerful few, as an excuse to circumvent the people’s calls for justice. War will result in grave violations against human rights and will put the lives of the human rights defenders continuously under threat.

Join us now in active support for the revolutionary people of the world! Stand in solidarity with us, with them, and all our calls for what is right and fair. Together we can open a window to a future free from devastations of war. We can have a future that is secure and peaceful, democratic and just!