

# Political Instability and the Protest Movement: President of Iraq - The Decision Is Mine

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*Iraqi **President Barham Salih** has shown that he is in control of the country and has made a show of his contempt for the Iraqi constitution. In a dramatic gesture, Salih made a play for public support by declaring his willingness to resign. He then departed for Suleimaniya, after rejecting the decision of the largest Parliamentary coalition, in accordance with article 76 of the constitution, to nominate their chosen candidate. Only he will decide who can be nominated as the future Prime Minister of the country, notwithstanding the constitution's provisions for respecting the will of the parliamentary majority.*

The resignation of caretaker **Prime Minister Adil Abdel Mahdi** and the struggle to nominate a new Prime Minister have shown the divisions between political parties and above all among the Shia majority in Parliament. It has also shown Iran's handicap in attempting to unite these groups and bring them together to agree on a single Shia Iraqi personality! The limits of Iran's influence in Iraq are evident. What does the future hold for Iraq?

The Iraqi constitution gives the largest parliamentary coalition the right to choose its candidate for prime minister, and then forward the name to the President, who announces it publicly. However, in this case, the constitution was not followed: President Barham Salih tried to delay the nomination of the largest coalition, Al-Bina', asking the Parliament to confirm the identity of this coalition. He managed to gain some time by responding to al-Bina' that "he would rather wait until the Friday sermon of the Marjaiya in Najaf, to make the announcement later".

Salih was aware that the Marjaiya had taken a clear decision not to intervene in favour of or against any candidate or parliamentary coalition. The Grand Ayatollah Sayyed Sistani has set the road map for any future candidate: an end to corruption, early elections with a new law, an independent judiciary system, together with the creation of job opportunities, listening to people's requests, protecting protestors, and ending foreign intervention in the country's internal affairs.

All politicians and heads of political coalitions have interpreted the Marjaiya's guidelines according to their own lights.

Hadi al-Ameri, the head of al-Bina' coalition told others in Baghdad that "the Marjaiya rejected Qusey al-Suheil as future Prime Minister". But sources in Najaf described all politicians as "liars who are avid for power, and unwilling to listen to protestors' requests". Hadi al-Ameri did propose himself as a candidate but the offer was spurned by his allies, who saw his candidacy as a provocation for the protestors.

President Barham Salih delayed the announcement of al-Suheil in the hope that protestors would reject him. Saleh saw in al-Suheil a threat to his own candidate, Mustafa al-Kazemi, and to his political agenda. Any candidate can be timed out in Iraq by letting the clock run since it is nearly impossible to select a candidate agreeable to all political parties, the Sunni, the Shia and the Kurds.

Qusey al-Suheil, told political party leaders, as al Suheil told me, that he “rejected the distribution of power and ministerial positions among the political parties who had made this a pre-condition to supporting him”. His ploy is to claim, “I shall offer my resignation and leave with dignity. Political parties want to hold on to their corrupt style of governance, and that is unsuitable for me. I refuse to divide the cake among those who are unwilling to reconstruct the country”, as a rationalization for defying the constitution.

**جمهورية العراق**  
**تحالف البناء**

**تحالف البناء**

العدد : ٣٣١٦  
التاريخ : ٢٦ / ١٢ / ٢٠١٩

بسم الله الرحمن الرحيم

(( ومنهم من يقول انذن لي ولا تفتني الا في الفتنة سقطوا وان جهنم لحيطه بالكافرين ))

لقد حرصنا منذ اليوم الاول لاعلان نتائج الانتخابات البرلمانية عام ٢٠١٨ على التوافق حفاظا على السلم الأهلي وتحاشيا لحدوث أزمات ومشاكل تعكر فرحة العراقيين الكبرى بالانتصار على تنظيم داعش الإرهابي. ودعما لهذا التوافق آثرنا السكوت عن أستحقاقنا في الكتلة النيابية الأكثر عدداً والذي ثبتناه وسجلناه في الجلسة الأولى لمجلس النواب بتاريخ ١٦-٩-٢٠١٨ وذهبنا الى ترشيح السيد عادل عبد المهدي مع كتلة سائرون وبموافقة الكتل الأخرى لتولي منصب رئيس الوزراء ، وبعد أستقالة السيد رئيس الوزراء كنا حريصين على أتباع ذات الألية في اختيار مرشح بديل لمنصب رئيس الوزراء.

ولكن لجوء السيد رئيس الجمهورية الى سياسة قتل الوقت وتوجيه الرسائل الى هذه الجهة وتلك وعدم الالتزام بالمهل الدستورية دفعنا الى تقديم الأدلة الثبوتية التي لا تقبل الشك باعتبارنا الكتلة النيابية الأكثر عددا والتي اعتمدناها في تقديم مرشحنا لرئيس الجمهورية الذي كان قد تعهد بتكليفه بتشكيل الحكومة

ولكننا فوجئنا بأصرار رئيس الجمهورية على مخالفة الدستور وعدم تكليف مرشح الكتلة الأكبر بحجة رفض المرشح من بعض الأطراف السياسية.

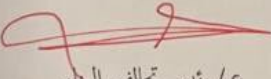
أننا في تحالف البناء واذ نجدد التزامنا التام بالسياقات الدستورية التي تؤكد عليها المرجعية الدينية العليا نرفض بشكل قاطع أي تبريرات او عملية التفاف على الدستور ، وان انتهاك الدستور من الجهة التي يفترض أن تكون حامية له يعني دفع البلاد الى الفوضى التي لا تخدم سوى الجهات الأجنبية التي تترص الشر بالعراق وشعبه الذي يرفض بقوة الإملاءات من أية جهة كانت وفرض سياسة الأمر الواقع ولي الأذرع وتجاوز المؤسسات الدستورية.

ان مخالفة الدستور ورفض تكليف رئيس الوزراء وفق السياقات الدستورية سيؤدي الى نتائج تتنافى مع مطالب المتظاهرين وعموم الجماهير في تحقيق الامن والاستقرار لتبدأ عملية تنفيذ مطالب المتظاهرين السلميين.

وعلى مجلس النواب اتخاذ الإجراءات القانونية بحق رئيس الجمهورية لحنته باليمين وخرقه للدستور.

ونؤكد اننا سنكون دائماً حريصين على مصالح شعبنا ولا يزايد علينا احد في خدمة هذا الشعب العظيم وتحقيق مصالحه الرحمة والخلود لشهداء العراق جميعا.

والسلام عليكم ورحمة الله وبركاته

  
ع/ رئيس تحالف البناء  
٢٠١٩/١٢/٢٦

Well-informed sources in Baghdad told me that “President Salih repeatedly asked why Adel Abdil Mahdi doesn’t remain in power like Nouri al-Maliki who was a caretaker for 7 months? The country can wait”.

After Qusey al-Suheil withdrew his candidacy, the dominant al-Bina’ coalition decided to back the governor of Basra Asaad al-Idani as Prime Minister. However, President Salih wanted to wait for the Marjaiya’s Friday Sermon to decide but was told that Sayyed Sistani would take no position. Salih then again rejected the most significant parliamentary coalition’s choice and, in a letter to the Parliament, expressed his readiness to resign (but without resigning, of course).

President Salih has delayed announcing a new Prime Minister; this temporizing has led protestors on the street to rejecting any candidate offered by the largest coalition. He is taking his time to announce the name of the new Prime Minister. The constitution seems irrelevant and each politician expounds on its articles as he sees fit. Each coalition is asking for its share of power using the terms “agreement”, “balance”, “understanding” - and each is ignoring constitutional procedures. Even within the same coalition, great differences have been manifested. The impotence of the Iraqi judiciary to impose respect for the constitution is evident.

Another important aspect is the position of Sayyed Moqtada al-Sadr, the leader of the largest single parliamentary group, which does not belong to the larger Parliamentary coalition. Moqtada said he was not willing to intervene and pulled out from the consultation to form a new Prime Minister. In reality, he reminded candidates and political leaders of the power of his share. He tweeted his refusal to Mohammad al-Sudani and to al-Suheil and reminded the Basra governor of his share in the new cabinet, and General Directors’ positions. Moqtada has not only the largest number of MPs but also the largest number of Ministers and General Directors.

Moqtada offered three names as candidates: Mustafa al-Kadhemi, Raheel al Ukeili and Fair al-Sheikh Ali. In reality, according to sources within Moqtada’s office, he supports the head of the intelligence service Mustafa al-Kadhemi. President Barham Salih followed Moqtada’s wish and supported al-Kadhemi.



## القوى السياسية مطالبة بالتصدي لتصرفات رئيس الجمهورية غير المسؤولة بعد خرقه الدستور

كاف كتائب حزب الله

'Hezbollah Iraq' harshly criticises the President Barham Salih 'irresponsible behaviour violating the constitution'.

Iran failed to unite all coalitions or even the largest number of political groups under one candidate. Iraqi politicians showed how divided they really are, and that Iran's effort to support a chosen Iraqi candidate was doomed to failure. The current impasse recalls 2017 when Hadi al-Ameri opposed the Lebanese-Syrian decision to remove ISIS militants from Iraq's common borders with Deir-Ezzour. On another occasion, al-Ameri rejected Qassem Soleimani's suggestion that he combine forces with those of Prime Minister Haidar al-Abadi before the parliamentary elections.

Today al-Ameri wants to become Prime Minister again; he rejected Qusey al-Suheil secretly after initially promoting him, signed the document approving al-Suheil and now supports al-Idani.

The US has been somewhat distant from the political dynamic of choosing a Prime Minister for the first time since 2003 and did not intervene. This is an indication that President Donald Trump is not deeply engaged with events in the Lebanon, Syria and Iraq. He seems preoccupied with domestic affairs and the Chinese-Russian economic threat. Trump is busy imposing sanctions on his enemies and allies alike and seems unconcerned with Iraq.

Iraq is now in the hands of President Salih, who is using the demonstrations as a pretext for expanding his power: He openly tells Parliament "the decision is mine or I resign." President Salih has abused the constitution while hiding behind the protestors. His offer to resign is a ruse to ask for the support of the protestors; he means to show the public that he stands

against the political parties. Salih is aware that the Iraqi population is very emotional and may well stand behind him.

The people can and will reject any political candidate for the position of Prime Minister. It is likely that Adil Abdel Mahdi will remain as the caretaker for some time, perhaps until a new military personality takes over. Iraq in 2020 is heading towards an uncharted territory and an uncertain future.

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