

# The Withdrawal of US Combat Troops from Iraq does not Signify an End to the Occupation

By [BRussells Tribunal](#)

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The International Anti-Occupation Network  
(IAON)

Region: [Middle East & North Africa](#)

Theme: [US NATO War Agenda](#)

In-depth Report: [IRAQ REPORT](#)

Support Iraqi Protests Against the Second Phase of the Occupation

Urgent Call for International Solidarity with the Iraqi *Thawra* (Revolution)

The International Anti-Occupation Network (IAON)

*The International Anti-Occupation Network (IAON) includes among others the BRussells Tribunal, The Spanish Campaign Against the Occupation and for the Sovereignty of Iraq (CEOSI), The International Action Centre (IAC), Women Solidarity for an Independent and Unified Iraq (WSIUI), the Portuguese Session of the World Tribunal on Iraq and the Iraq Solidarity Association in Stockholm.*

Massive protests have taken place every day in Ramadi since 25 December 2012 when more than 200,000 people demonstrated. These protests have expanded further to cities all over the country, in which hundreds of thousands have participated.

Protests have taken place frequently since the invasion and subsequent occupation of the country. These protests gained momentum during the Arab Spring in January and February 2011. The demands for dignity and justice then were no different than those raised in Egypt and Tunisia.

A key element of the current protests has been the slogan for national unity and an end to sectarianism as well as the denunciation of the Al Maliki regime's inability to meet these popular demands. Change is inevitable!

The protests are supported nationwide. Several Iraqi cities have sent delegations to join the demonstrators in Ramadi. Shiite religious leaders have encouraged the faithful to support the protests and there is a strong presence of Kurdish delegations in Mosul, Tikrit and Anbar. Symbols of political parties are avoided as much as possible to reinforce the spirit of national unity. The Iraqi anti-occupation movements have all made statements on the legitimacy of the demands of the protesters whose actions they define as a step forward in their resistance against the US occupation and the Iranian domination.

The withdrawal of US combat troops from Iraq did not signify an end to occupation. The US footprint is still heavy. Accordingly, the Iraqi anti-occupation movements are opposed to what they call, "the second face of the occupation." This implies continued resistance against all structures imposed by the US, including not only the infrastructure and ideologies

of corporate intervention, but also the sectarian government and its divisive Bremer constitution.

Despite the violent repression of the security forces and the militias of the sectarian political parties the Iraqi people have now gone beyond the frontier of fear. There is no turning back.

The International Occupation Network (IAON) warns the international community, including the United Nations and the European Union that there are serious indications that the regime is planning on attacking Anbar. The borders to Syria, Jordan and Saudi Arabia have been closed; two brigades are on the move from Baghdad; checkpoints and snipers have been placed on the roads! The risk of major bloodshed is imminent, a situation for which Al Maliki and the American occupiers have been warned that they will bear full responsibility if the demonstrators are harmed.

In this situation it is of utmost importance that the international community exposes the true nature of the al Maliki dictatorship and stands with this broad movement for human dignity and against repression and violations of human rights. It is therefore of vital importance that all peace-loving forces support what is taking place on the streets of Iraq.

The protesters are justly demanding:

- 1 - the immediate release of detained protesters and dissident prisoners.
- 2 - a stop to the death penalty.
- 3 - the approval of an amnesty law for innocent detainees.
- 4 - the abolition of anti-terrorism laws (especially Clause 4 used to target them).
- 5 - the repeal of unfair rulings against dissidents.
- 6 - fair opportunities for work based on professionalism.
- 7 - the end of the use of all military command based on geographic areas.
- 8 - the provision of essential services to all areas in Iraq neglected by the state.
- 9 - the holding of all members of governmental official, army or security units who have committed crimes against dissidents accountable, especially those who have violated the honour of women in prisons.
- 10 - a UN sponsored population count.
- 11 - an end to marginalization, and a stop to agitating divisions between ethnic and religious groups, and a stop the house raids without legal warrant based on the information of secret informers.
- 12 - a stop to financial, administrative and legal corruption.
- 13 - the combating of sectarianism in all its forms by returning Religious buildings and all religion properties to their rightful owners and the abolishment of law No. 19 of 2005.

The International Anti-Occupation Network (IAON) welcomes the spread of these non-

sectarian protests and supports the efforts of the Iraqi people to regain their full independence and national sovereignty. 10 years of foreign occupation is enough! 10 years of massive human rights violations is enough! 10 years of corruption and depriving the whole population of basic services is enough!

*The International Anti-Occupation Network /IAON*

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