

The Kurdish Case in Iraq 1958-1963¹

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ABSTRACT

The Kurdish case considered one of the most important issues in the modern history of Iraq, and the problem of the Kurds is represented by their demand for rights that guarantee their national and linguistic distinction, and the inclusion of these rights in laws and constitutions, and most Iraqi governments have responded, these demands were rejected, and some of them were rejected, including the annexation of Kirkuk, the oil-rich region, to the Kurdish areas, which sparked a dispute between the two sides and led to bloody clashes.

The research deals with the Kurdish case in Iraq from 1958-1963, which is the period of rule of Abd al-Karim Qasim, the leader of the July 14 revolution in Iraq, which ended the monarchy. The research was divided into three axes. The first axis is the position of the Kurds in support of the revolution and the privileges granted by Abdul Karim Qassem to the Kurds, including the approval of the new Iraqi constitution, some articles that include the national rights of the Kurds. For the Kurds and allowed the return of the exiles to Iraq, including Mustafa Barzani, and the release of Kurdish detainees in Iraqi prisons since the royal era. The second axis included bad relations between Abdul Karim Qasim and the Kurds. The last axis dealt with the armed clash between the two, which lasted from 1960 to 1963, the year in which the rule of Abd al-Karim Qasim ended after his overthrow, and the Kurds allied with the revolutionaries to achieve their demands for autonomy. The study relied on a set of sources, including published American documents, as well as books, including the book Northern Iraq 1985-1975 by the author Ammar Ali Al-Samar. And the book Political Currents in Iraqi Kurdistan, a reading in the files of the Kurdish movements and parties in Iraq 1946-2001, by the author, Salah Al-Khursan, in addition to theses, university theses, and a group of research and studies.

INTRODUCTION

First: The Position of the Kurds on the Revolution of July 14, 1958

The Kurds had a limited role in the revolution of July 14, 1958, and a group of Kurdish officers who had joined the organization of the Free Officers participated in the revolution, and some of them had a role in the process of marching on Baghdad and controlling it. Kurdish people and the Kurdish revolution with enthusiasm and jubilation because they hoped that it would respond to their rights, as the leaders of the July 14 revolution showed sympathy for the Kurdish cause and understanding of Kurdish rights, and the Kurds considered that sympathy for their cause a good gesture from the new regime.

As for the position of the Kurdistan Democratic Party on the revolution, it supported the revolution and worked to put all its capabilities at its disposal in order to install the new regime. Less than an hour after the announcement of the revolution, the party leaders sent a telegram of support from Kirkuk to the leaders of the revolution, and the Democratic Party issued a statement on July 16 In 1958 it was stated:

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The Kurdistan Democratic Party is the vanguard of the Kurdish liberation movement, taking into account its historical tasks and in order to achieve the goals of the Kurdish nation, it declares frankly that the growth of the strength of the Arab people's liberation movement and its victory, the liberation of Iraq from the corrupt and hateful monarchy, the establishment of a liberal republican system and the withdrawal of Iraq from the Baghdad Pact, whose tasks are corrected to the heart of the Kurdish nation, all of this prepares the strongest foundations for building an edifice of life full of happiness, freedom and equality for the Arab and Kurdish peoples. Therefore, the party decided to fight with all its forces and capabilities to defend the Iraqi Republic, and to establish and prosper it. of the Iraqi Republic, and resistance to colonialism, its plots, and its lackeys.

During the monarchy, the Kurds opposed the Baghdad Pact, which was formed in 1955 and included Iraq, Turkey, Pakistan and Iran, in addition to Britain. The Kurdistan Democratic Party stated that the alliance aims mainly to strike at the Kurdish liberation movement in Iraq, Iran and Turkey.

On July 17, 1958, Ibrahim Ahmed, Secretary General of the Central Committee of the Kurdistan Democratic Party, headed a Kurdish delegation and met Abdul Karim Qasim and expressed the Democratic Party's readiness to provide assistance in all fields to support the new rule, in addition to that Mustafa Barzani sent a telegram from his exile in the Soviet Union to Abdul Al-Karim Qassem stated in it his readiness to put all his capabilities to support the new national government, and asked that they allow him to return to Iraq.

The Kurds gained many gains after the revolution of July 14, 1958, as the provisional constitution issued on July 27, 1958 stipulated in Article III of Part One the following: "The Iraqi entity is based on cooperation among all citizens, respecting their rights and preserving their freedoms, and Arabs and Kurds are considered partners in this country, and this constitution recognizes their national rights within Iraqi unity".

The Kurds participated in the new government, where Colonel Khaled al-Naqshbandi represented them in the Sovereignty Council that was formed after the July 14 revolution, which consisted of three members. When the first cabinet of the government was formed, which included ten ministers, the position of Minister of Communications was held by Baba Ali Ibn Sheikh Mahmoud the grandson, in addition to other gains. received by the Kurds, Including the issuance by the government on September 3, 1958, of a general amnesty for all the Kurds who were subjected to arrest and persecution during the royal era, especially those who participated in the Kurdish movement between the years 1943-1945 led by Mustafa Barzani and his companions, and Ahmed Barzani, who spent twelve years in prison, was released.

Abd al-Karim Qasim followed the democratic methods inside Iraq, so he recognized the parties and dealt with them, including the Kurdistan Democratic Party, and he lifted the official ban on the party's activity and allowed him to publicly publish the newspaper Khabat (The Struggle), the first issue of which was published in April 1959 in the Kurdish language, and he allowed fourteen Kurdish publications, including Kurdistan Newspaper, the mouthpiece of the Kurdistan Democratic Party, Hataw Newspaper (Al-Shams), Azadi Newspaper (Freedom), Zain Newspaper (Al-Hayat), and the Iraqi government issued a decision to establish the Directorate of Kurdish Knowledge, and its mission was to supervise teaching in the Kurdish language in the Kurdish regions, in addition to being responsible for printing books in the Kurdish language and supervising the issuance of magazines and newspapers in the Kurdish language. And authorized many associations and unions. Abdul Karim Qassem allowed Mustafa Barzani to return to Iraq, but a large number of officers, including Abdul Salam Aref, opposed Mustafa Barzani's return, warning of its danger. But Abd al-Karim Qasim did not listen to them and insisted on his return, saying, "The Barzanis have suffered enough trouble in their exile under the old regime, and we must be more lenient with them."

After Mustafa Barzani was officially allowed to return to Iraq, Abd al-Salam Aref, in his capacity as Minister of the Interior, handed over passports for him and four of his companions to Ibrahim Ahmed, who accompanied Barzani on his return to Iraq, where he arrived on October 5, 1958 to Iraq, and he and his companions received a great official and popular welcome. Since their arrival at the port of Basra.

Mustafa Barzani visited Prime Minister Abd al-Karim Qasim on October 7, 1958 in his office at the Ministry of Defense, and congratulated him on the success of the revolution. He also thanked him for allowing him to return to Iraq and stated, "I am a soldier of the revolution, and I thank God who has prepared for us a leader like you with this." Wisdom and this faith, and I cannot help but repeat my great thanks to you.

Relations became close between the Kurds and Abd al-Karim Qasim in 1959, when the leader of the Bradost clan, Sheikh Rashid Lulan, rebelled against the Iraqi government and the rebellion concentrated in their rugged areas, which are located in the Iraqi-Iranian-Turkish border triangle in the district of Sidkan and its dependencies, which are located in the northeastern part of the district of Rawanduz and Diana, Sheikh Rashid Lulan had good relations with the royal government and was not inclined to the new republican government. On the other hand, there were bad relations between Rashid Lulan and the Barzanis during the years 1931-1932, as Rashid stood against Mustafa Barzani during his movement against the royal government between 1943 - 1945.

After the internal reforms carried out by the Iraqi government, including the Agrarian Reform Law that was issued on September 30, 1958, which led to the collapse of the interests of the feudal lords, and their harm, and after their failure to stand against this law, many of them took refuge in the neighboring countries of Iraq, including Turkey and Iran, and worked To incite their followers to carry out armed operations against the government of Abd al-Karim Qasim.

One of the first to stand against this law was Sheikh Rashid Lulan, who obtained financial and moral support from the Turkish and Iranian governments hostile to the government of Abd al-Karim, and he also fought the influence of the Barzanis. Among the Barzanis, who confronted Rashid Lulan's followers, Mustafa Barzani formed a large force that managed to eliminate this movement within two days, and Rashid Lulan fled to Iran.

Second: The deterioration of relations between the Kurds and Abdul Karim Qasim:

The strained relations between the Kurds and Abdul Karim Qasim began less than two years after the return of Mustafa Barzani from the Soviet Union to Iraq, when Abdul Karim Qasim was subjected to an assassination attempt on 6 October, 1959. And Mustafa Barzani visited him in the hospital, and during the visit, Qassem knew that it was Barzani's followers who killed Ahmed Al-Zibari (one of the seducers of the Al-Zibar clan) in November 1959 in the city of Mosul. with everyone and transcends clan differences." Mustafa Barzani responded, saying: "I bear responsibility for this work because it was issued by me".

After that interview, Abd al-Karim Qasim realized that Barzani leads an organized political organization, and is clearly capable of threatening his authority, so he pardoned Sheikh Rashid Lulan and his followers, and they were allowed to return from Iran to Iraq without the knowledge or consultation of Mustafa Barzani about that, and this matter angered him.

Then, apathy began to appear in the relationship between the two parties with the beginning of 1960, when the demands of the Kurds became many and the position of the Iraqi government became more rigid, in addition to the emergence and growth of the role of the Kurdistan Democratic Party after the role of the Iraqi Communist Party was diminished by the government after the events of Kirkuk. Abd al-Karim Qasim gave more powers to the police chief of Mosul, Ismail Abbawi, and to the governor of Erbil, Badr al-Din Ali, in order to restore security and order in these two provinces. And Abd al-Karim Qasim established friendly relations with Mustafa Barzani's opponents from the Surgian, Bradostian, Zibari and Rikan tribes, in order to weaken Barzani's position, after he saw his increasing control and authority over the Kurdish region.

And when the new Associations Law No. (1) of 1960 was issued on January 3, which came into force as of January 6, 1960, the Kurdish side submitted on January 9, 1960, an application for a license to approve the Kurdistan Democratic Party to the Minister of Interior, and this was attached. The application for the party program for the year 1959, which was signed by 15 supporters, and the platform of the Democratic Party consisted of twenty-three paragraphs that included goals on equal rights and opportunities for the Kurds in the administrative, economic and cultural fields. As stated in the third paragraph, which confirmed that "the party benefits from the scientific Marxist-Leninist theory in its political struggle and its analysis of society," and the sixth paragraph included, which is working to "expand the national rights of the Kurdish people on the basis of self-rule within the Iraqi unity and its approval in the permanent constitution." **As for the paragraph (21) It says, "Guarantee the rights of national minorities present in Kurdistan"**. As for paragraph (23), it pledged to support the struggle of the Kurdish people in all parts of Kurdistan for their liberation from colonialism and the right to self-determination, but the Minister of Interior requested the deletion of Articles 3 and 23 of the Democratic Party's curriculum before its approval, and indeed these two articles were changed.

On February 21, 1960, the British ambassador to Iraq, Humphrey Trevelyan, visited Mustafa Barzani at his headquarters in Baghdad, and Barzani made a direct response to the visit on February 28, 1960, and this matter raised the suspicions of Abdul Karim Qasim and his government about that visit and led to bad relations between the government and the Kurds. On October 5, 1960, Mustafa Barzani visited the Soviet Union after an invitation was extended to him to participate in the celebrations of the October Revolution, and this led to an increase in the dispute between the Kurds and the government. Government authorities launched a campaign against the leaders of the Democratic Party, On 15 October, 1960, Saleh al-Yousifi, a member of the Central Committee of the party, was arrested. This was the beginning of campaigns of stalking and arresting members of the Democratic Party. Public disputes began between the two sides. Following these arrests, the party sent a letter to the Chief of Staff of the Iraqi Army, Ahmed Saleh al-Abdi, in which he asked to expedite the conduct of fundamentalist investigations. With the detainees who have not been held after a certain period of time has passed since their arrest, the party also demanded the release of the detainees on bail.

When the newspaper (Khe Bat) launched a campaign critical of the government's policy, the differences between Abd al-Karim Qasim and the Kurds intensified, and this campaign reached its climax when Ibrahim Ahmed wrote the editorial in the issue issued on October 19, 1960, in which he mentioned the second article of the constitution, which stipulates that " **Iraq is part of the Arab nation. He explained that this article contradicts Article 3 of the Iraqi constitution, which stipulates that "the Arabs and the Kurds are partners in this homeland." His objection focused on "the need to consider the Arab region in Iraq as part of the Arab homeland, while the Kurdish people in Iraq are part of the Kurdish nation."** Iraqi Kurdistan is part of the mother Kurdistan.

In the same context, Abd al-Karim Qasim took the method of defamation and boycott with the Kurds, especially after his statement that the Kurds do not have an independent national personality, speaking disparagingly about their role in the history of Iraq, as he spoke on December 31, 1960 by saying, "All the revolutions that took place before 1958 It was moved and encouraged by the colonialists, with the exception of the revolutions of 1920, 1936, and 1941, and that he has documents and messages exchanged between those and those who mocked them from the colonialists".

In 1961, Al-Thawra newspaper, the mouthpiece of the Iraqi government, published an article in which it stated, "Everyone who belongs to Iraq as Kurds, Negroes, and Armenians lives in an Arab country, so he is considered an Arab according to what reality dictates." In response, Khabat newspaper wrote, "The Kurdish people are stigmatized." Calls for fusion and integration aimed at eliminating the Kurds and Kurdistan, the Kurds cannot desire a unity that brings them nothing but slavery and deprivation of their national rights, and the denial of the existence of their nation and brings them nothing but iron, fire and the shackles of imprisonment.

In March 1961, Mustafa Barzani returned from the Soviet Union after a visit that lasted more than two months and found the situation worse than before, especially since the government took several steps to weaken his influence and authority, so Barzani visited Abd al-Karim Qasim in March 1961 and Qasim charged him with collaborating and conspiring with Britain. He threatened him by saying, "**The revolution can destroy the destructive elements, and we want everyone to know their limits**".

After these dangerous developments, the political bureau of the Kurdistan Democratic Party saw that the survival of the Kurdish leaders in Baghdad was a danger to them, so Mustafa Barzani left Baghdad for the Barzan region in secret.

The reaction of the Iraqi government to Barzani's departure from Baghdad was that it ordered the launch of a massive campaign of arrests against all members of the Kurdistan Democratic Party, including Ibrahim Ahmed, as well as closing the headquarters of the Democratic Party in Baghdad, and the government closed Kha Bat newspaper on March 22, 1961, and by April there were no Kurds left Any officially licensed newspaper, so the Democratic Party went underground.

Third: Mustafa Barzani's movement in 1961 against the government of Abd al-Karim Qasim:

In the face of these developments and events, the various Kurdish forces took the necessary measures to prevent the continued deterioration of the situation in Kurdistan after they were concerned about the development of these events. In June 1961, the Kurdish forces formed a delegation representing the Kurdish organizations to go to Baghdad

and meet with Prime Minister Abd al-Karim Qasim to discuss political, economic and social issues in Kurdistan, but Abdul Karim Qasim did not receive the delegation.

On July 20, 1961, the Democratic Party and its leaders submitted a memorandum on the situation to the Iraqi government, in which it stated a set of points that prove their demands, interests, and goals, namely:

- 1- Withdrawal of all military forces sent to Kurdistan.
- 2- Withdraw all those responsible for police affairs, administration and security who had a prominent role in the recent events in Kurdistan and bring them to court.
- 3- Returning the deported and transferred Kurdish employees to their places.
- 4- Applying Article 3 of the Iraqi constitution, which stipulates achieving equality between Kurds and Arabs.
- 5- Unleashing all democratic freedoms, ending the transitional period, and electing a parliament by the people through free and direct elections.
- 6- Developing Kurdish culture and implementing the decisions of the teachers' conference in 1960.
- 7- Considering the Kurdish language an official language in all parts of Kurdistan.
- 8- Removing the effects of the policy of racial discrimination and punishing its advocates.
- 9- Allowing the cultivation of tobacco in lands suitable for its cultivation.
- 10- Eliminating price hikes and punishing those who manipulate them.

Abd al-Karim Qasim strongly rejected this memorandum and did not respond to these demands, and the government stated that the privileges demanded by the Kurds are inappropriate with their population size, the land area they occupy in Iraq, and their contribution as a society to national production.

As a result of the Iraqi government's failure to respond to the demands of the Kurds, Mustafa Barzani launched attacks on villages and tribes hostile to him, and these attacks constituted a direct provocation to the government. The most severe of these attacks were those launched by Barzani against the Zibari tribes, which were equipped with all weapons and money from the government, and the fighting between the two sides continued from July 15 to July 19, 1961, and ended with the defeat of the Zibaris and their flight to the borders of Turkey.

At the end of July 1961, the Iraqi government secretly sent a security committee to study the situation in the Kurdish regions. On August 2, the committee presented a detailed report on the causes of tension and unrest in northern Iraq, and accused the Iraqi Communist Party of encouraging this tension and unrest. The report strongly attacked the Kurdish position and Mustafa Barzani in particular, and the committee suggested "**the use of armed force by sending the army and striking the region with missile bombs from the air and the ground, burning Barzan's villages and farms, and arresting and executing him and his followers in the same areas**".

On September 16, 1961, the Kurdistan Democratic Party announced a general strike in Kurdistan and disrupted all life facilities in it. On the same day, Barzani's fighters besieged the city of Amadiya, and occupied the city of Zakho after the betrayal and cooperation of the Zakho police station chief, as he handed over all weapons and government equipment, and then the militants headed to the Zakho Strait and took control of it, after which they took control of the districts of Al-Aas and Samil.

As for the Sulaymaniyah region, the Kurdish militants imposed their control over a number of areas and important transportation routes, including Halabja, Koysanjak, Darbandikhan, Rania, and the Strait of Tasluja. Abbas Mamand, who is one of the Kurdish feudal lords and the strongest allies of Mustafa Barzani, attacked a government military convoy after ambushing it and killing 23 Iraqi soldiers. This event was the spark that erupted because of the fighting.

As for Abd al-Karim Qasim's position, it was characterized by extreme laxity since the beginning of the Kurdish movement. He did not intend to eliminate it completely. At first, he worked to encourage conflict between the Kurdish clans, but this negligent stance created a wave of discontent and dissatisfaction within the ranks of the Iraqi army. This discontent became general for everyone, because most members of the army felt that if their movements were supported by aircraft and artillery, they could easily eliminate the Kurdish movement, and the Iraqi government saw the need to take decisive steps to confront the Kurdish militants, especially after they finished striking the tribes hostile to them, and raising arms against the Iraqi authorities.

Prime Minister Abd al-Karim Qasim was convinced of the security report submitted by the committee and became determined to end the Kurdish opposition to his regime by force, and resorted to using it, refusing dialogue, resolving problems with the Kurds peacefully, and finding solutions to the Kurdish issue as stipulated in the constitution in its third article. On September 9, 1961, Abd al-Karim Qasim issued orders to strike all Kurdish gatherings, and the Iraqi air force planes bombed these gatherings in Wadi Doli Khalkan and Darband Bazian, then the government ordered the second division of the Iraqi army, which was stationed in Kirkuk, to advance towards the Barzan region.

On September 16, 1961, the Iraqi Air Force bombed the village of Barzan and some of its neighboring villages, including the summer resort of Banya in Jabal Shirin and the village of Rezan. Four Mick-15 and 17 planes carried out this mission, and these raids continued on the Barzan region for seven consecutive days. Then the Iraqi government mobilized a large force of the army and regular forces from the Kurds cooperating with the government, and Abdul Karim Qassem named them (Knights of Salah al-Din) to attack the Barzan region from two axes: (Aqra-Sari Akri-Barzan axis, and the second axis is the (Rawanduz) axis. Merke Sur - Barzan).

Abd al-Karim Qasim issued a stern warning to the people of Barzan, in which he said, "The government has tried to rebuild your country and raise your standard of living, but Mustafa Barzani wants to ruin your country, and for this he incites disobedience, seizes government funds, threatens police stations, and forgot all the help we gave him". The government has decided either to remain silent and return to your actions, or the government will burn and destroy your country and will erase your villages, lands and inhabitants from existence. This is the fate that Mustafa Barzani wanted for you.

In the early days of the fighting, Abd al-Karim Qasim tried to conceal his conduct of military operations against the Kurds, but the great deterioration that occurred during the fighting was no longer hidden from the public, as news leaked to the newspapers indicating the existence of acts of violence, turmoil and chaos in the northern regions of Iraq, and the radio station admitted Baghdad, in the presence of armed fighting in northern Iraq, and stated that the Iraqi army was able to put out this fighting.

On September 23, 1961, Abd al-Karim Qasim held a press conference in his office at the Ministry of Defense and announced the beginning of the Kurdish movement in northern Iraq. He said, **"Our victory in eliminating this rebellion is similar to our victory in the July 14 revolution. He said that behind this movement were the British themselves, and that those behind This movement is their lackeys from the Americans, and it has been proven to us that the British are behind this movement"**.

Some attempts were made to solve the Kurdish problem between Abd al-Karim Qasim and Mustafa Barzani by peaceful means, but they failed, as the two sides did not have ideas to solve the problem peacefully. He raised the issue of negotiating with the Iraqi government and ending the fighting in a peaceful manner in exchange for an amnesty for all participants in the armed Kurdish movement. In return, Mustafa Barzani demanded the immediate release of all Kurdish prisoners, the withdrawal of military forces from the Kurdish regions, the establishment of agricultural and industrial projects in the region, the opening of schools, and the consideration of the Kurdish language as an official language in the Kurdish regions.

In the summer of 1962, operations intensified in the regions of northern Iraq, and the Iraqi armed forces suffered several defeats in various places, as Mustafa Barzani was able to expand his control to multiple regions and his influence extended to the Hiran population center in the Khoshnaw Valley after the siege of Rawanduz, then he crawled to the Safeen and Salah mountains Religion, so the Iraqi government imposed an economic blockade on all Kurdish regions.

In the winter of 1962-1963, a period of relative calm prevailed between the two sides, and Abd al-Karim Qasim issued orders to stop attacks on the Kurds, and issued an ultimatum calling on the Kurdish militants to surrender and promising them amnesty, and Ahmed Barzani declared his loyalty to Abd al-Karim Qasim, and urged the Kurdish militants to accept this amnesty Abd al-Karim Qasim extended the amnesty to 1 March, 1963. However, the occurrence of the February 8, 1963 coup led to a temporary cessation of fighting in northern Iraq, due to the existence of a prior agreement between the Kurds and the National Front stipulating the cessation of all military operations in the event of a movement against the government of Abd al-Karim Qasim.

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