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The Protests in Basra, southern Iraq

Zaher Baher

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“Out Iran out out, Basra lives free” this is one of the main chant thousands of the protesters were shouting. The strong protesters back to the streets in the afternoon of Tuesday, 10/09 when the Prime Minister of Iraq, Haider al-Abadi failed to deliver his promises to meet people’s demands of July.

Since the beginning of the protests on Tuesday, 10 protesters killed and over 100 injured. They cut off the road of Umm Qasr on Wednesday, 04/09. Umm Qasr Port is part of the city of Umm Qasr and one of the couple ports in Iraq for entering goods to Basra and the rest of Iraq.

The protests are getting bigger. They are very angry because they are lack of every basic service including clean water electric power. In this very hot weather while the temperature still reaches 50 degree people has no enough power. The concerns of people in Basra mentioned in my initial report of July still have not been taken in to the consideration by the Iraqi government. Please see the link below of my report to see more information about the people’s demand in July:

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[https://libcom.org/library/
protest-basra-s-city-south-iraq-continues](https://libcom.org/library/protest-basra-s-city-south-iraq-continues)

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<https://libcom.org/library/mass-protest-central-southern-iraq>

On Wednesday, 05/09 the protester occupied the building of the governor of Basra and burned down. On Thursday, 06/09, four TV offices and fifteen political parties headquarters and some of the government's building also burned down. On the same day, Wednesday night, the protesters occupied the Iranian Consulate in Basra, the staff managed to flee but the protesters set a fire on the building.

People in Basra have lots of sympathy from Iraqis from South to the North of Iraq. There was a big rally/ protest yesterday, Friday, in Tahrir Square in Baghdad to support the people's demand in Basra.

There are also unconfirmed reports of entering the US forces into the city of Basra watching the situation closely. Other reports are talking about fleeing most of the MPs, the chiefs of the political parties, heads of the companies and the directors of main services in the city. There is other report talks about fleeing government's agents while some of the protesters found their places where they work and live.

While I am not justifying violence from the protesters but the true is the police, securities and the Militias of the political parties have been very violent from the beginning of the protests in the afternoon of 04/09. There is other reason for the people in Basra to get very angry. They are very desperate and frustrated while for the last 15 years whoever came to power locally and centrally failed them. The people in Basra on one hand see themselves have been deprived almost of everything; on the other hand they see a tiny minority of their people have been beneficiary from the situation and living highlife.

The true and the right thing is people in Basra regardless of their differences have been united, fighting back the local and central government for their legitimate and natural demands. It did not last long for them to realize the religion and the nationalism do not worth a single bread, single tablet, free education, free treatment, freedom and the rest of basic rights.

The protests and the demos have not been controlled by any political parties or any other side from the foreigners. They have so far rejected them because they have 15 years of experience with the regime. But they need to organize themselves in non-hierarchical independent groups in wherever possibly they can to coordinate their action against the state and its powers.