

# THE POSITION OF THE TWO IRAQI KURDISH PARTIES (PDK, PUK) ON THE SINJAR AGREEMENT 2020

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## ABSTRACT:

On October 10, 2020, the Sinjar agreement was signed to restore stability and normalise the situation between the federal government in Baghdad and the Kurdistan Regional Government-Iraq after a disagreement and conflict between the two parties on how to manage the district in terms of administration and security. Following the deteriorating situation that the Sinjar district has become after its liberation from the terrorist organisation ISIS in 2016, the agreement the territory. This study aims to indicate the official position of both Kurdish parties on the aforementioned agreement. The analysis also assumes that there is a difference in their positions on the deal based on several reasons. However, this agreement dates back to the situation in the district before the occupation of ISIS and the returning of the Kurdish influence to the region. However, the position of the two Kurdish parties was different regarding the agreement. The Kurdish Democratic Party (KDP) was more interested in the agreement and its implementation compared to the Patriotic Union of Kurdistan (PUK), and this comes because the performance of the agreement will restore the influence of the KDP to the district exclusively and will remove the impact of the allies of the PUK from the militias of the Kurdistan Workers Party PKK and the Popular Mobilization Forces PMF from it.

**KEYWORDS:** Sinjar agreement 2020, Sinjar district, the position of the KDP, position of the PUK, conflict over the district.

## 1. Introduction

The Sinjar agreement to restore stability and normalise the situation came as an attempt to end the ongoing conflict in the Sinjar district between the Kurdistan Regional Government-Iraq and the federal government in Baghdad and a temporary solution until the application of Article (140) of the Constitution, which established the appropriate mechanisms to resolve the situation in the disputed areas between the two governments on the one hand, and the need to put an end to the illegal and legitimate concern that the judicial administration came to after its liberation from the hands of the terrorist organisation "ISIS" on the other. Accordingly, the two parties reached the signing of this agreement on October 10, 2020, and the terms of the deal were published on news sites that discussed how to normalise the situation, restore stability, reconstruct, return the displaced to the district and the appropriate mechanisms to implement them on the ground. Among the news sites that covered the event were the official electronic pages of the KDP and PUK, representing the mouthpiece of the two parties and then the official position of both parties on the agreement. Although this agreement restores, in some way, the situation to the pre-2014, that is, the district remains subordinate to the government in Baghdad and the Joint Security Administration of the two governments in it,

which will lead to the return of the Kurdistan region's influence to the district as it was before. Still, the position of the two parties mentioned came differently from the agreement. In contrast, the position of the KDP was positive and enthusiastic about signing and implementing the contract, while the position of the PUK was less enthusiastic and interested in it, which can be analysed that the agreement and its implementation will not lead to direct gains for the latter party on the ground. Still, on the other hand, the performance of the contract will lead to the removal of its allies from the Popular Mobilization and the branch of the PKK from the said District.

### 1.2. The problem of studying:

Such questions manifest the problem of studying:

What is the official position of both parties on the Sinjar agreement? Is there a difference between the two parties' approach to the said agreement? If there is such a difference, what are the reasons behind it?

### 1.3. The premise of the study:

Sinjar issue was the source of conflict between the Kurdish liberation movement, the Kurdistan region and successive Iraqi governments before 2005, and even after the adoption of the permanent Iraqi constitution in the same year and the liberation of the Sinjar district from the terrorist organisation "ISIS" in 2016, the Sinjar agreement came between the regional and federal governments as part of

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solving the outstanding problems between them. This study assumes that the KDP and the PUK do not adopt the same political position and orientation concerning Sinjar agreement between the Kurdistan Regional Government and the federal government, despite the resolution mechanism specified in the Iraqi constitution by Article (140), which provides in part for the normalisation of the situation in all disputed areas, including the Sinjar district.

#### **1.4. The purpose of the study:**

The study aims to shed light on the position of the two allied Kurdish parties in the Kurdistan Regional Government, Iraq, the KDP and the PUK, on the Sinjar agreement to restore stability and normalise the situation and to indicate whether their position is unified or divergent around it by analysing the coverage of the two official electronic pages of the parties mentioned for the event.

#### **1.5. The importance of the study:**

The two mentioned parties are the main ones in the administration of the affairs of the region and the relationship with the federal government in Baghdad, so the briefing of their positions on the outstanding issues with the federal government and ways to resolve them affects in one way or another the resolution of these issues, and knowing their position on the Sinjar agreement affects the situation in the disputed areas, including the Sinjar district, and in the relationship with the federal government in general.

#### **1.6. Methodology of the study:**

The primary approach we thought to be based on in this study is analysing the news content, which the Dutch researcher "van Dijk" deepened through analysing the news discourse according to the macrostructure and microstructure. The first deals with the objective structure of the news discourse through the headlines and what follows from other significant topics, as well as the news scheme (Schemata) in the second structure, distinguishing between the meaning and its expression in surface structures, such as words, phrases, paragraphs, sentence formulations, and others, such as verbal semantics and the eloquence of the news discourse, as well as assumptions, postulates, and internal coherence of the news content, which in its entirety constitutes analysable material (van Dijk 1985, Van Dijk 1988). In addition, we have taken the historical approach by presenting the historical background of the Sinjar issue and, based on this, trying to understand the position of the two parties mentioned in the Sinjar agreement.

#### **1.7. Structure of the study:**

We decided to divide the study into three sections, as well as an introduction and a conclusion. The first section addresses the historical background of the Sinjar issue and the conflicts among various political parties over it since the sixties of the last century and after the occupation of the Sinjar district by the terrorist organisation "ISIS" in 2014, as well as refers to the content of resolving the situation in Sinjar through the Sinjar agreement to restore stability and normalise the situation. The second topic deals with the coverage of the official KDP NEWS page of the KDP of the Sinjar agreement and deriving the party's position on the agreement, while the third topic was

devoted to the coverage of the official PUK MEDIA page of the PUK of the said agreement and the status of this party on it. The study ended with a conclusion that includes the position of the two parties on the said agreement and the reasons behind this position.

## **2.The Sinjar issue and the conflict over it**

Sinjar district has been among the areas long demanded by the Kurdish liberation movement, as a predominantly Kurdish area and historically part of the territory of Kurdistan, since the outbreak of the September 1961 revolution led by the Kurdish leader "Mustafa Barzani Mustafa Barzani" and in the negotiations on the autonomy agreement for Iraqi Kurdistan in 1970. After the war against Iraq, the fall of Baghdad in 2003, and the ratification of the 2005 constitution, the Kurdistan region could extend its influence and constitutional and legal mechanisms over Sinjar and other disputed areas. However, the fall of the city of Mosul in the hands of the terrorist organisation "ISIS" in 2014 and its attack on the Sinjar district on August 3 of the same year led to the complexity of the situation in the community even after its liberation by the Peshmerga forces of Kurdistan and other Iraqi forces, which made this district the subject of conflict between local and external parties, especially after the September 25 referendum in the Kurdistan region and disputed areas, including Sinjar. Despite the agreement of the regional government with the federal government to normalise the situation in the district on October 10, 2020, it has been implemented thus far.

### **2.1. The Sinjar issues:**

Sinjar district is located in the north-west of Iraq, the majority of its inhabitants are Yazidi Kurds, Muslims and a minority of the Christian component, the residents of this area have been subjected to many sufferings, especially Yazidis Yazidis, they were forced to register as Arabs in the population census that took place in 1977 despite their refusal to do so, not to mention the Arabization campaign that the residents of the region in general were subjected to during the era of the former Baath regime before 2003, in addition to the destruction of many villages after the fall of Saddam Hussein's power in the Third Gulf War in 2003 and the enactment of a new constitution for Iraq in 2005, the Yazidis gained their national and religious rights, and the district became de facto under the Kurdish administration in the Kurdistan Region-Iraq, but its status remained unresolved within Article (140) of the Iraqi constitution as one of the disputed areas, the region continued to suffer from Administrative, Service and security aspects, the result was the takeover of the terrorist organization ISIS in the Kurdistan region of Iraq, the result was the seizure of the national and religious rights of the Yazidis in the Kurdistan Region-Iraq, and the ISIS was attacked in 2014 and its population was subjected to killings and displacement (Toorn, Mathieu and Wilgenburg, 2016).

Sinjar district is one of the (16) administrative units located within the disputed territories between the Kurdistan region and the federal government in Baghdad in accordance with Article (140) of the Iraqi constitution of 2005. This article stipulates that the elected executive authority after the transitional phase in Iraq after 2003, and

according to Article (58) of the law of State Administration of the transitional phase in Iraq, will complete the stages of normalisation, statistics and referendum in the disputed areas to determine the will of its citizens in full no later than the end of 2007, as well as the decision of the Federal Supreme Court in its session (28/7/2019) ruling on the continuation of the entry into force of Article (140) of the Constitution. In addition, the necessity to complete all the stages mentioned by the executive authority, and although this article has established mechanisms and a time period to resolve the status of these areas as mentioned (decision of the Federal Supreme Court, 28/7/2019), successive Iraqi governments are still failing to perform their constitutional tasks in this regard.

The Sinjar issue began to emerge as one of the new crises between the federal government and the Kurdistan Regional Government - Iraq after its liberation from ISIS in 2015 by the Kurdish Peshmerga forces and the Iraqi forces. The release of this area did not lead to the return of the legitimate administration to its pre-ISIS status, but made the area to be ruled by two separate administrations, one of which was appointed by the Kurdistan region and the other by the Iraqi government. In addition, the district was turned into a place of influence by various parties from armed groups, such as the PKK, the Sinjar Resistance Units YBS and the Iraqi protection force, the harbingers of this crisis are still ongoing, and even intensified. After the independence referendum was held by the Kurdistan Region-Iraq on 25/9/2017, as its outcome was the removal of peshmerga forces from the region and then the removal of the legitimate administration from it, after the Iraqi army and the Popular Mobilization launched the war on the Kurdistan region under penalty of imposing the law, but this did not lead to the return of law and legitimate administration to the Sinjar district, and even strengthened the control of the armed groups of the PKK and the Popular Mobilization and their branches in it (Chulov 2017).

Thus, the liberation of Sinjar district from ISIS complicated the security, administrative and service conditions in it, even if this did not lead to the return of the majority of the residents of the region to it, who were displaced and migrated from it after the ISIS attacks. The conflict between the KRG and the federal government before these attacks turned into a battle between them and other Kurdish-Turkish and local Yazidi parties and militias belonging to a foreign state. Here came the agreement to normalise the situation in Sinjar as an attempt to bridge the rift between the main conflicting parties, the government of the region and the federal government, and the removal of other armed groups from the area, as well as organising cases to put an end to the suffering of its displaced people by returning to their lands.

## **2.2. The 2020 Sinjar agreement:**

On October 10<sup>th</sup>, 2020, the minister of the interior of the Kurdistan Region-Iraq, the representative of the regional government, and Hamid Rashid Falih, the deputy head of the Iraqi national security service and the representative of the federal government, in coordination with the United Nations mission to invest in international support for stability and reconstruction, signed the agreement to restore peace and normalise the situation in Sinjar district, after the meeting held by Mustafa al-Kazimi, the Iraqi

Prime Minister on October 9<sup>th</sup>, 2020 with officials in the federal government and the regional government regarding the 2020 agreement, in the presence of Jeanine Plasschaert special representative of the UN secretary-general in Iraq.

The document of the agreement, consisting of a page and an appendix, included the text of the four-point agreement on three axes, namely, administrative, security and reconstruction, and a nine-point schedule for following up the implementation of the terms of the deal, including the tasks assigned to the parties to the agreement and the agencies tasked with implementing these tasks with mentioning some critical notes to determine the form of implementation more accurately.

It is essential here to refer to the text of the agreement signed by representatives of the two governments that was leaked to the Iraqi media; while it was not confirmed or denied by official bodies of the two governments, the statements of officials from both sides about the content of the agreement confirmed the authenticity of the document published on the media (agreement to restore stability and normalise the situation in Sinjar district 2020), which are as follows:

"1. administrative axis:

It selects a new district that enjoys independence, professionalism, integrity and acceptability within the constitutional and legal mechanisms.

Other administrative positions shall be considered by the committee formed jointly by the parties after the nomination of the incumbent, provided that the principles of professionalism, integrity and the social structure of the district are taken into account.

2-the security axis:

The local police and the national security and intelligence services are exclusively responsible for security within the district, and all other armed formations are removed outside the borders of the Sinjar district.

It is enhancing security in the district by appointing (2,500) elements within the internal security forces in Sinjar while ensuring the fair participation of displaced people in the camps from the community.

They are ending the presence of the PKK organisation in the Sinjar district and surrounding areas and that the organisation and its affiliates have no role in the region.

3-Axis of reconstruction:

The formation of a joint committee of the federal government and the KRG for the reconstruction of the district in coordination with the local administration in Nineveh Governorate. Its level and details of its tasks are determined by the Federal prime minister and the prime minister of the Kurdistan region.

4-For the purpose of following up what is stated in the administrative and security axes, a joint field Committee is formed from the concerned parties to follow up on the implementation of the progress of what is stated in the agreement."

The annexe to the agreement contains some remarks that shed light on how to implement some of the terms of the agreement and the parties entrusted explicitly with implementation, in addition to mentioning the tasks

required from the two governments and the executing agencies, including, for example, the assignment of the responsibility for security inside the Sinjar district to the Sinjar Police Directorate and the national security and intelligence services in coordination with the security agencies in the Kurdistan region. Moreover, the assignment of tasks of removing armed groups outside the district borders to the Joint Operations Command and the Popular Mobilization authority and the removal of PKK to the Joint Operations Command, as well as the establishment of a joint committee of representatives of the security agencies in the two governments for follow-up the implementation of the terms of the agreement on the administrative and security cases. (Annex to the agreement on restoring stability and normalisation of conditions in the Sinjar district 2020).

### **3.The official website of the KDP (KDP News) covers the Sinjar agreement**

The official page of the KDP covered the topic of the agreement between the Kurdistan Region-Iraq and the Iraqi Federal government on the Sinjar issue between 6/10/2020 and 12/10/2020 fifteen times through headlines expressing the party's position on the situation in Sinjar. Since the headlines constitute and represent the news topic, the official page of the KDP on the electronic network and the headlines that covered the event adopted the party's clear and explicit position on the agreement.

#### **3.1. News Headlines on the official page of the Kurdistan Democratic Party:**

##### **3.1.1. Headlines indicating the party's interest in the subject in general:**

"Erbil and Baghdad agreed on the Sinjar issue" (6/10/2020)

"The minister of the interior of the region will go tomorrow on a visit to Baghdad" (8/10/2020)

"Statement of the president of the Kurdistan region on the agreement on the normalisation of conditions in Sinjar" (9/10/2020)

"The content of the telephone call between President Barzani and the Prime Minister of Iraq" (9/10/2020)

"Letter from President Barzani" (9/10/2020)

"Statement of the president of the Kurdistan Regional Government on the agreement on the normalisation of conditions in Sinjar" (9/10/2020)

"The Erbil-Baghdad agreement will be implemented this week" (10/10/2020)

"The presidencies of the Kurdistan region and the president of the Republic of Iraq discuss the situation of the country" (12/10/2020)

"The return of the legitimate administration is a condition of the Kurds to normalise the situation in Sinjar" (8/10/2020)

"Rozbayani: other agreements will be made to normalise the Kurdistan regions" (11/10/2020)

Through the titles mentioned above, the official page for the KDP expressed its support for the convention and the normalisation of the situation in Sinjar. The convention is viewed positively as a step towards the right direction

which aims to restore normal life for the Yazidi citizens who were exposed to tragedies and displacement due to ISIS attacks . The KDP hopes that this will be the beginning of addressing the outstanding problems between the two governments, serving as a positive move in the interests of the affected communities. This will lead to the rebuilding and strengthening trust between the two governments and the return of displaced people, which will be followed by further steps towards a solution to all outstanding problems between the governments of the region and the federal government. Both governments agreed on a joint management of Sinjar right from the aspects of security, administrative and service will be the convention to the beginning of the implementation of Article (140) Of the Iraqi constitution. The convention is considered as a reference to what can be achieved by governments through mutual respect, and common goals. The official page indicated that due to the implementation of the convention this week, a joint force of Peshmerge and the Iraqi army will enter Sinjar and the Popular Mobilization Forces will withdraw from Sinjar. This interaction is viewed as a definitive agreement between the parties regarding the situation in Sinjar. and that the company which he put the planets in the negotiations is the return of the management company to the Sinjar district and termination management illegal under the leadership of the popular crowd and the client Kurdistan soil, She noted the page to the welcome party to the agreement affirmation that the agreement expresses the strength of trust between the territorial government and the federal government, and to inform and support the Parliament of Kurdistan-Iraq convention, the coming days will see practical steps to implement the convention.

##### **3.1.2. Headings related to the international position on the convention:**

"The United Nations welcomes the Erbil-Baghdad agreement" (9/10/2020)

"With an internal and global welcome, a new management of Sinjar is on the way" (10/10/2020)

"A section of sensitive cases between the region and Baghdad will be handed over to the United Nations" (12/10/2020)

With regard to the above headings, the official page of the party published the international position in favor of the agreement through the statement of the United Nations mission in Iraq UNAMI, which considered the agreement a new chapter for Sinjar in hope that it will lead to the return of the displaced people, accelerate the pace of reconstruction, improve public services and Sinjar's need for stable security structures and administration. In the analytical report published by the page, it indicated the role of the United Nations mission in Iraq about being the third party that provides advice on the outstanding problems between the region and Baghdad and improved this role after the events of October 16, 2017 and the need to expand this role to include political issues as well. The role should include the page pointed to the information obtained, without mentioning the source, about the monitoring of the United Nations mission in Iraq to implement the agreement for three months to submit its report to the United Nations.

### **3.1.3. Headings related to the position of the components of the agreement:**

"Gohar Ali Beg: the agreement between Erbil and Baghdad is an important step for the Yazidis to overcome adversity" (11/10/2020)

"Aidan Maruf: the Sinjar agreement is a significant and humanitarian step" (12/10/2020)

In the abovementioned headings, as well as in some of the titles mentioned earlier, the page published the opinions of some representatives of the Kurdistan region and the disputed areas of the Yazidi and Turkmen component on the agreement to normalise the situation in Sinjar. This came in support of this agreement and confirmed the need for the return of the displaced people to their areas of residence after their extended stay in the camps.

### **3.2. The opinions of the news parties on the official page of the KDP:**

In this part of the analysis of the news on the official page of the party, we will mention the various parties, government and other parties that dealt with the Sinjar agreement to clarify the party's position on the agreement more clearly and to indicate the human sources from which the page derived its information about the event. In addition to whether these sources include prominent members of the party and the government in the Kurdistan region or the extent of interest of prominent members of the party in the agreement, which indicates the centrality of the event or otherwise, with the need to note that the page has resorted to extracting information about the deal from sources reflecting their interest in the event or not.

The parties quoted by the news page about the agreement were from the top party and government positions of the KDP, foremost among them the former president of the Kurdistan Region-Iraq and the chairperson of the KDP "Masoud Barzani", the president of the Kurdistan Region-Iraq and the vice - chairperson of the KDP "Nechirvan Barzani", the PM of the Kurdistan Regional Government-Iraq and a member of the Political Bureau of the KDP "Masrour Barzani", the interior minister of KRG "Reber Ahmed", chairperson of the Kurdistan areas outside the Kurdistan Region-Iraq administration committee in the Kurdistan parliament "Joan Rojbayani", member of the Kurdistan parliament from the Kurdistan Democratic bloc "Hadiya Murad", Chairperson of the Minorities Committee in the Kurdistan Parliament " Ayden Maruf ", member of the Branch (17) in Sinjar of KDP "Idris Zozani", coordinator of international reports in the KRG "Dindar Zebari" and undersecretary of the Yazidi Mir for relations Affairs "Jawhar Ali bag", in addition to the speaker of the Kurdistan parliament and the president of the Republic of Iraq through their joint statement with both the president of the Kurdistan region and the head of the Regional Government on 12/10/202, also the PM of Iraq "Mustafa al-Kazimi", the former spokesman for the Iraqi government "Ahmed Mullah Talal", the former adviser to the president of Iraq Republic "Abdullah Aliawi" and the head of the United Nations mission in Iraq "Jeanine Plasschaert". The page here listed the opinions and positions of government, party and other sources consistent with the party's ideology and its position on

resolving the Sinjar issue, reflected in the Sinjar agreement.

In his statement regarding the agreement between the two governments on Sinjar, Massoud Barzani expressed his welcome to the deal, which he considered a positive step towards the right direction and a reason to normalise the situation of citizens in that region and reduce the suffering of Yazidis and their return to their areas. He also hoped that this vital step between the parties would be the beginning of solving other outstanding problems between Erbil and Baghdad (letter from President Barzani, 9/10/2020). He stressed that such an agreement indicates the strength of trust between the two governments (the content of the telephone call between President Barzani and the Prime Minister of Iraq, 9/10/2020).

Nechirvan Barzani stated in his statement that they look positively and optimistically at the agreement and that it is the right step and intention for the benefit of the whole country and will lead to building and strengthening trust between the two governments in Baghdad and Erbil. "I hope that this step will be followed by other efforts to solve all the problems between the parties and ensure stability among the components" (statement of the president of the Kurdistan region on the normalisation of the situation in Sinjar, 9/10/2020).

Masrour Barzani, for his part, pointed out that the agreement on the normalization of the situation in Sinjar between the two governments was the result of serious negotiations that lasted for months between the two sides, which will help the return of the displaced people of Sinjar who suffered both things at the hands of ISIS terrorists and will have an essential role in determining the destiny of the people of the region, and that the parties agreed on the joint administration of Sinjar. The agreement is the beginning of the execution of Article (140) of the Constitution, he also stated that the deal is proof that the existence of coordination between the two governments makes it possible to achieve other gains based on common interest. He also thanked the special representative of the Secretary-General of the United Nations in Iraq on her direct role in reaching this agreement (statement by the president of the Kurdistan Regional Government on the normalization of the situation in Sinjar, 9/10/2020).

Reber Ahmed announced that a good agreement had been reached to normalise the security, military and administrative situation of Sinjar in the presence of the United Nations, along with representatives of the region and Baghdad. He also pointed out that their goal is to normalise the situation and return the displaced to their areas (the United Nations welcomes the Erbil-Baghdad agreement, 9/10/2020).

Joan Rujbayani stated that the Kurdistan Regions committee in the Kurdistan parliament has given its recommendations to the Kurdish negotiating delegation and that they look positively at the agreement and the Constitution clarified the legal ways to resolve and normalise the situation of the disputed areas, and that this step will be followed by other agreements on the normalisation of the condition of all Kurdistan areas, and pointed out that it is crucial to normalise the situation of Kirkuk and Sinjar and end the complex situation in the two

regions (rujbayani: other agreements will be made on the normalisation of the Kurdistan regions, 11/10/2020).

Hadiya Murad, for her part, indicated that this agreement was the first step to normalise the conditions of other Kurdistan regions under Article (140) of the Constitution and that this agreement will enter the field of application as soon as possible. The people of Sinjar will approve their self-determination, and the Kurdistan parliament will monitor and follow up on this issue and will coordinate with the Government Committee on this.

Idris Zuzani stated that although they are not fully aware of what the agreement contains, they have decided on the position of Sinjar mayor. Once their leadership in the party chooses to, they will return with the new administration to the Sinjar district (with an internal and global welcome to the new administration of Sinjar on the road, 10/10/2020).

Dindar Zebari pointed out that the attention and follow-up of the United Nations through its mission in Iraq and Kurdistan to the Sinjar file and the agreement between the regional government and the federal government is an extension of the UN advisory role in Iraq by the UN Security Council resolution. The Iraqi government must obey its instructions in this regard because it considers, at the same time, the consultation of the five great countries in the UN Security Council (will hand over a section of sensitive cases between the region and Baghdad to the United Nations, 12/10/2020).

Jawhar Ali Bag expressed their support for the agreement and any step leading to a new administration of Sinjar with the consent of the Yazidis provided that the Yazidis manage it themselves with the help of Erbil and Baghdad. He pointed out the need to expel all illegal forces from Sinjar. The formation of a force of Yazidis would be an excellent step to protect the people of Sinjar (Gohar Ali Bey, the agreement of Erbil and Baghdad is an essential step for the Yazidis to pass the ordeal, 11/10/2020).

At the meeting held between the three presidencies of the Kurdistan Region-Iraq and the president of the Republic of Iraq on 12/10/2020, the parties confirmed their support for the agreement and the return of the displaced (the presidencies of the Kurdistan Region and the president of the Republic of Iraq discuss the situation of the country, 12/10/2020). At the same time, the PM of Iraq welcomed the agreement between the two governments and its indication of the strength of trust between the parties (the content of the telephone call between President Barzani and the Prime Minister of Iraq, 9/10/2020), as noted by Ahmed Mullah Talal the former official spokesman of the PM of Iraq, the Prime Minister is monitoring the agreement and that this agreement strengthens the powers of the federal government in Sinjar (internal and global welcome of the new administration of Sinjar on the road, 10/10/2020).

In a statement of the former adviser to the president of the Republic of Iraq, Abdullah Allawi, he pointed out the importance of the agreement on Sinjar. The need for the Iraqi parties to agree on such issues without the intervention of international parties looking for their interests in the region, the most important aspect is the entry of the UN as a third party guarantor in the agreement and work to circulate this agreement as a bilateral security

agreement to other disputed areas so that the region has suitable authorities in them. The most important thing is to keep the Popular Mobilization away from those areas, as the PKK must take into account the situation of the Kurdistan region, fight outside the region and allow implementation of the agreement that will be in everyone's interest (a section of sensitive cases between the region and Baghdad to the United Nations, 12/10/2020).

Jeanine Plasschaert, for her part, welcomed the agreement and considered it the beginning of an essential step in the right direction, hoping that it would prepare the ground for a better future, and noted what the Yazidis and the Sinjar district suffered from the brutal crime of ISIS in 2014 and their inability to return to their areas, as a result of the lack of services, security stability and unified administration in Sinjar. To normalise the situation, reconstruction and stability, the UN is ready to support any step that achieves this (UNAMI welcomes the agreement between Baghdad and Erbil, 9/10/2020).

### **3.3. Selected words and phrases on the official page of the KDP:**

News sites, especially the official news sites of well-known political entities, often list the political views adopted by those entities on specific political events, and in doing so, they choose the precise and intended words that best express those views.

When looking at the content of the news published from (6-12/10/2020) about the Sinjar agreement on the official website of the KDP, we see that it has focused on words and phrases such as "Agreement", "trust", "two governments", "welcome", "normalisation", "components", "refugees", "stability", "reconstruction", "security", "legitimacy", "Article 140", "disputed areas", "Kurdistan regions", "armed groups", "Popular Mobilization", "PKK", "implementation of the agreement" and "UN".

Through these words, the position was expressed that what happened was an official agreement between the Kurdistan Regional Government-Iraq and the Iraqi government, the aim of which was to normalise the conditions in the Sinjar district before the events of ISIS in 2014, restore stability and security to this region and then create conditions for the return of displaced people from the Yazidi component and the people of the area in general to their homes. This is to assist in the embarkation on the work on reconstruction, providing and improving the necessary services and infrastructure in Sinjar, through the formation of a legitimate administration and the removal of armed groups from the Popular Mobilization and the PKK from the region and the building of a new Security Administration in coordination between the two governments. This administration is agreed to be formed from the people of the area to maintain security and stability in it. On the other hand, this agreement and its implementation will strengthen trust between the two governments and lead to similar arrangements in the other Kurdistan regions mentioned in Article (140) of the Iraqi constitution as disputed areas between the federal government and the Kurdistan Regional Government-Iraq, thus it is essential to have a third international party guarantor and observer for the progress of the said process as agreed, namely, the United Nations through its mission

in Iraq. The components in the region and the United Nations also welcomed the agreement.

#### **4.PUK official page (PUK MEDIA) coverage of the Sinjar agreement**

Concerning the official page of the PUK on the internet and its coverage of the Sinjar issue, it also addressed the headlines that represent the party's apparent position on the Sinjar agreement.

##### **4.1. News Headlines on the official page of the PUK:**

##### **4.1.1. Headlines indicating the party's interest in the subject in general:**

"A high delegation from the region visits Baghdad" (8/10/2020)

"A high delegation from the region visits Baghdad" (9/10/2020)

"The region and Baghdad agreed on Sinjar" (9/10/2020)

"The president of the Republic and the three presidencies of the region discuss the situation of the country" (12/10/2020)

In the above headings, the page published the visit of the regional delegation to Baghdad to agree on the normalisation of the situation and the return of stability to Sinjar district. They also stress that the agreement is on the administrative and security cases of Sinjar district and that the deal will increase the powers of the federal government in the community and will end the activities of armed groups in the region. They will lead to the reconstruction and construction of the district and the return of refugees to their homes. In other news, the page quoted what was stated in the statement of the meeting of the president of the Republic of Iraq and the three presidencies in the region regarding their support for the agreement on the normalisation of conditions in Sinjar and the return of refugees to their homes. In contrast, the page neglected the statement of the Kurdistan region and the regional government's president. It did not offer any analysis of the issue and only covered the news as it was.

##### **4.1.2. Headings related to international positions on the agreement:**

"America announced its position on the Erbil-Baghdad agreement" (9/10/2020)

"UNAMI welcomes the agreement between Baghdad and Erbil" (9/10/2020)

The page published the welcome of the USA and the UNAMI to the agreement between Erbil and Baghdad. America hopes to implement the deal in general and that the agreement will achieve security and stability in the region. Regarding the position of the UN, the page quoted the statement of its mission in Iraq, it's hoped that the agreement will lead to a new start for Sinjar and the return of services to its people, as well as the return of displaced persons to their homes and the need for a stable Security administration and institution. The page pointed out that Sinjar and Yazidi citizens were subjected in 2014 to heinous crimes by the terrorist organisation "ISIS" and that the victims and survivors of that disaster due to the conflict over security stability and the provision of services and the lack of a unified administration in the district, they faced many obstacles, including about the differences between

the KDP and the armed groups of the Popular Mobilization and the PKK regarding the administration of the district, without mentioning the reality of what happened after the cleansing of the community from ISIS and after the events of October 16 after the Popular Mobilization and the PKK seized the district and put obstacles in the way of the return of the legitimate administration of Sinjar, which shows the PUK standing on the side of those groups about Sinjar in its conflict with the KDP.

##### **4.1.3. Headings related to the position of the components of the agreement:**

There was no news on the page about the opinion of the components of the Kurdistan region in general and the components of the Sinjar district on the agreement between the KRG and the federal government on normalising the situation in the community in particular. This indicates the party's lack of interest in the deal to address the event from its multiple aspects, as well as an indication that this party did not want to mention the position of the people of Sinjar in favour of the agreement.

##### **4.2. The opinions of the news parties on the official page of the PUK:**

The page's coverage of the News Parties was limited to three official parties, namely, the regional government, the meeting of the three presidencies of the Kurdistan Region-Iraq and the American embassy in Baghdad, and two official figures, "Ahmed Mullah Talal", the official spokesman of the former Iraqi government, and "Jeanine Plasschaert", the UN special representative in Iraq. At the same time, it does not mention any position of the party leaders and its prominent members in the Kurdistan Regional Government-Iraq.

The page mentioned the statement issued by the Kurdistan Regional Government-Iraq on 7/10/2020 about the visit of a high delegation of the regional government to Baghdad on 8/10/2020 under the supervision of "Reber Ahmed", the Minister of the Interior of the Kurdistan region (a high delegation from the region visits Baghdad, 8/10/2020).

The page referred to the statement issued by the meeting of the three presidencies of the region with the president of the Republic of Iraq "Barham Saleh" on 12/10/2020 in Erbil, which confirmed its support for the agreement and the normalisation of the situation in Sinjar (the president of the Republic of Iraq and the presidencies of the Kurdistan region discuss the status of the country, 12/10/2020).

In a statement to the American embassy in Baghdad, it welcomed the agreement between Erbil and Baghdad on how to manage the security and administrative cases of the district and expressed its wishes to implement the deal in general and lead to achieving security and stability in the region (America announced its position on the Erbil-Baghdad agreement, 9/10/2020).

Ahmed Mullah Talal reported that the governments of Iraq and the Kurdistan region have concluded a historic agreement under the supervision of the prime minister of Iraq on how to administer the Sinjar district and that the federal government's powers have been strengthened in the community. Thus, the activities of armed groups will end in the region (the region and Baghdad agreed on Sinjar, 9/10/2020).

Jeanine Plasschaert expressed her wishes that the agreement will be a new beginning for Sinjar and that the interests of its people will come to the forefront of the deal. It will also lead to the return of displaced people and accelerate the pace of reconstruction in the district and improve the provision of public services to the people. She also warned that to achieve this, the community requires security institutions and a stable administration, indicated the continued support of the UN to normalise the situation in Sinjar, and praised the strength of the determination of the people of this region in the face of the difficulties they faced for a better future, hoping that this future begins as of today (UNAMI welcomes the agreement between Baghdad and Erbil, 9/10/2020).

#### **4.3. Selected words and phrases on the official page of the PUK:**

On the page of the PUK, we find that the words and phrases focused on it in the content of its news about the Sinjar agreement from (8-12/10/2020) included: "two governments", "agreement", "stability", "security", "services", "reconstruction", "refugees", "conflict", "armed groups", "UNAMI" and "America".

Through the above words, the position of the PUK on the agreement was as follows: the federal government and the Kurdistan Regional Government agreed to normalise the situation and restore stability and security in Sinjar to return the displaced and provide services to the people and reconstruction in it, this agreement came after the survivors and victims of ISIS attacks were subjected to difficulties and obstacles as a result of the conflict over security stability and the provision of services and the lack of a unified administration in Sinjar after the elimination of ISIS, this agreement will lead to strengthening the powers of the central government in the district and ending the armed groups in it, and the deal was welcomed and supported by the UN and the USA, and the latter hoped to apply it.

We see here that the position of the PUK, according to this speech, was characterised by some change as compared to the position of the KDP, which was more severe and entirely consistent with the party of the regional government defending the restoration of legitimacy to Sinjar district. As the instability in it is a conflict between multiple parties, takes us to the direction taken by the PUK, which is its disagreement with the official position of the Kurdistan Regional Government-Iraq on the formula of the agreement with the federal government.

### **5. Conclusion**

Sinjar district is an area that has been the subject of conflict between the Kurdish liberation movement and successive Iraqi governments since the sixties of the last century until the signing of the Sinjar agreement in 2020. This agreement ended the situation between the Kurdistan Regional Government and the federal government in Baghdad, or at a minimum, to restore stability and normalise the situation there until before its fall at the hands of ISIS in 2014. Since the agreement was between the regional and federal governments, this agreement should have been the subject of consensus and satisfaction between the coalition formed by the government in the Kurdistan region, especially between the two main allies,

the KDP and the PUK. Still, by following up and analysing what was published about this agreement on the official pages of the two parties, it turns out that this is not the case and that there is a difference in views between them. Through this study, we came to the following conclusions:

A. The official website of the KDP covered the news about the Sinjar agreement days before and after the event, which indicates the party's great interest in normalising the situation in Sinjar. It also covered the news from its multiple aspects, including the support of the components for the agreement and the global and international welcome for it. It published everything corresponding to the party's opinion in favour of the deal and completely distanced itself from the views opposing it inside Iraq.

B. The coverage of the official website of the PUK about the Sinjar agreement was not at the event level, as we note that during the period from 6/10-12/10/2020, it touched on the subject only six times and was only a carrier of news. If this indicates something, it suggests the party's weak interest in the agreement between Erbil and Baghdad, despite the party being a significant part of the government alliance in the Kurdistan region.

C. The page of the PUK was limited to mentioning the statements of the official parties in its views without expressing any opinion or comment from the page itself or from the leadership and advanced party members about the agreement, except once the page referred to the ongoing conflict between the different parties over the administration of the district and the difficulties that this caused to the people of the region. It, thereby, implicitly refers to the KDP and the branch of the PKK in the district, indicating that the PUK is not enthusiastic about the agreement that would restore the influence of the rival KDP and remove its allies such as the Kurdistan Workers' and some popular mobilization factions to the district, which is the opposite of the official page of the KDP. This covered the issue from most aspects, reflecting the party's position in favor of the agreement, which would restore the influence of the Kurdistan region and the party to the Sinjar district and remove the various armed groups opposed to it from this area.

D. On the other hand, the positions of the two parties indicate the depth of differences between the two parties on vital issues related to the security of the Kurdistan region. The normalisation of the situation in Sinjar and other Kurdish areas outside the administration of the region or disputed areas will be a sure opportunity to apply Article (140) of the Constitution. This would then result in the return of the majority of these areas to the Kurdistan region and resolve a complex issue between the regional government and the federal government, which has remained unworkable for 17 years and was somehow the cause of the war between the two sides at the end of 2017.

E. This disagreement and lack of consensus between the two main parties in the Kurdistan region on how to resolve the Sinjar issue would hinder the implementation of the agreement or lead to the delay of the federal government in its performance, which would affect other agreements or understandings between the two governments to normalise the situation in the rest of the disputed areas. In comparison, there was no consensus and compassion between the two Kurdish parties in the first place.



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## تغطية الموقعين الإخباريين للحزب الديمقراطي الكردستاني والاتحاد الوطني الكردستاني لاتفاقية سنجار 2020

### الملخص:

في 10 تشرين الأول 2020، تم التوقيع على اتفاق سنجار لإعادة الاستقرار وتطبيع الأوضاع بين الحكومة الاتحادية في بغداد وحكومة إقليم كردستان-العراق بعد خلاف وصراع بين الطرفين حول كيفية إدارة القضاء من الناحيتين الإدارية والأمنية، وذلك عقب الوضع المتدهور الذي شهدته منطقة سنجار بعد تحريرها من قبضة تنظيم داعش الإرهابي عام 2016. حظي الاتفاق بتغطية إعلامية كبيرة، لا سيما من قبل الصفحتين الإلكترونيتين الرسميتين للحزب الديمقراطي الكردستاني KDP والاتحاد الوطني الكردستاني PUK، الحليفان الرئيسيان في حكومة إقليم كردستان. تهدف الدراسة إلى بيان الموقف الرسمي لكلا الطرفين الكرديين من الاتفاقية المذكورة، وتفتراض الدراسة أيضاً أن هناك اختلافاً في مواقفهم من الاتفاق لأسباب عدة، فالاتفاق يعود بالوضع إلى ما كانت عليه المنطقة قبل احتلال تنظيم داعش ومن ثم إعادة النفوذ الكردي إلى المنطقة، وقد أولى الحزب الديمقراطي الكردستاني اهتماماً كبيراً بالاتفاقية وتنفيذها، على عكس الاتحاد الوطني الكردستاني، ويأتي ذلك لأن تنفيذ الاتفاق سيعيد نفوذ الحزب الديمقراطي الكردستاني إلى المنطقة حصراً وسيزيل تأثير حلفاء الاتحاد الوطني الكردستاني (حزب العمال الكردستاني والحشد الشعبي) فيها.

**الكلمات المفتاحية:** اتفاق سنجار 2020، قضاء سنجار، موقف الحزب الديمقراطي الكردستاني، موقف الاتحاد الوطني الكردستاني، الصراع على القضاء.

## رومالمالپەڕێن نووچەییەن پارتی دیموکراتی کوردستان و نێکەتییا نیشتمانییا کوردستانی بۆ ریکەفتنا شنگال ل ۲۰۲۰ی

### پۆختە:

ل رۆژا 10ی تشرینا نیکەم 2020، ریکەفتنا شنگال بۆ فەگەراندنا سەقامگیری و ناساییکرنا رەوشا دناقیەرا حکومەتا فیدرالی ل بەغدا و حکومەتا هەرێما کوردستانا عیراقی هاتە ئیمزاکرن، بشتی هەفرکییا دناقیەرا هەردوو ئالیاندا ل سەر چەوانییا برێفەرنا قی هەرێمداریی ژ ئالیی کارگیری و ئەمنیقه، ئەفە ژێ ژ ئەگەرێ وئ رەوشا خراب یا دەفەرا شنگال کەتییه تیدا بشتی هاتییه رزگارکرن ژ دەستی ریکخراوا تیرۆریستییا داعش ل سالاً ۲۰۱۶ی. ریکەفتنی رومالمالپەڕێیا بەرچاڤ ب خوەفە دیت، ب تاییەتی ژ ئالیی مالپەڕێن فەرمییین پارتی دیموکراتی کوردستان و نیکەتییا نیشتمانییا کوردستانێ کو، دوو هەفریمانیین سەرەکیین حکومەتا هەرێما کوردستانینە. نارمانجا فەکولینی روونکرنا بۆچونا فەرمییا هەردوو ئالیین کوردینە ل سەر ئەو ریکەفتنا مە پێشتر نامازە پێ کری، هەروسا فەکولین و سەا گریمانی دکت کو، جوداهی د بۆچونا واندا ل سەر ریکەفتنی ژ بەر چەند سەدەمەکان هەیه. ب شێواز مکی ئەف ریکەفتنە رەوشا دەفەرا شنگالی بۆ پێش داگیرکرنا وئ ژ ئالیی داعشە فەگەرینت و پاشی هەژمونا کوردان ژێ بۆ دەفەرێ دئ فەگەرینت. پارتی دیموکراتی کوردستان گرنگییهکا ژۆر ب ریکەفتنی و بجهانینا وئ د دا، بەر و فازی پارتییا نیکەتییا نیشتمانییا کوردستانێ، ئەفە ژێ ژ ئەگەرێ وئ چەندییه کو، بجهانینا ریکەفتنی دبتە سەدەما فەگەراندنا هەژمونا پارتی دیموکراتی کوردستان ب ئەنێ بۆ دەفەرێ و ژ نافییرنا هەژمونا هەفریمانیین نیکەتییا نیشتمانییا کوردستانێ (پارتییا کارکەرین کوردستانێ PKK و هیزین حەشدا شەعی PMF) تیدا.

**پەییقین سەرەکی:** ریکەفتنا شنگال ۲۰۲۰، هەرێمدارییا شنگال، هەلوستا پارتی دیموکراتی کوردستان، هەلوستا نیکەتییا نیشتمانییا کوردستانێ، هەفرکی ل سەر هەرێمدارییا شنگال.