

Provincial Politics in Iraq: Fragmentation or New Awakening?

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In post-Saddam Iraq, decentralization has been a central rhetorical theme in the reconstruction process. Yet, it has failed to mature into fully realized policies on the ground, as seen in the continued lack of local participation in governance. Despite legislative changes and other efforts, the frustration caused by this unfulfilled promise threatens the cohesion of the fledgling Iraqi democracy.

In this Institute Policy Focus, Gulf experts Michael Knights and Eamon McCarthy highlight the challenges and options facing Iraqi decisionmakers on the issue of decentralization. In explaining how subnational governance works in Iraq, they assess the wide range of factors in play at the local and federal levels, from the "Concerned Local Citizens" and "Awakening" movements emerging in various provinces to uncertain legislative initiatives in Baghdad. They also discuss the international community's role in strengthening the government's capacities at the local level without making the country too reliant on foreign assistance. The new Iraq is in need of a formula that can give its diverse provinces and regions sufficient freedom to prosper. As this paper argues, failure to achieve such balance could result in a return to autocracy or complete fragmentation.

- **52 PAGES**

Annexes

Various supplemental annexes are also available for download. These include charts showing provincial budgetary allocations and provincial election results by party, and relevant excerpts from past and present Iraqi constitutions and Coalition Provisional Authority directives.

- Download [Annexes 1-10 \(html/newsletterImages/PF81Annexes.pdf\)](html/newsletterImages/PF81Annexes.pdf) (196 KB).
- Download [Annex 11 \(html/newsletterImages/DraftProvincialPowersLawForWeb.pdf\)](html/newsletterImages/DraftProvincialPowersLawForWeb.pdf) (248 KB), an English-language draft of Iraq's recently passed provincial powers law.

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