

A Timeline of Unrest in Iraq

by **GPF Staff** - February 21, 2020

Unrest in IRAQ

The October Revolution

Timeline of Events

Oct. 1, 2019

Protesters stage a sit-in at Liberation Square in Baghdad, kicking off a wave of protests that spread across the country and continue to this day.

Grievances

Government corruption since the U.S.-led invasion in 2003 that has benefited the elite and disadvantaged the masses

U.S. military presence in Iraq

Iranian influence in Iraqi politics and militant groups

Limited economic opportunities

Inefficient public services

Government Response

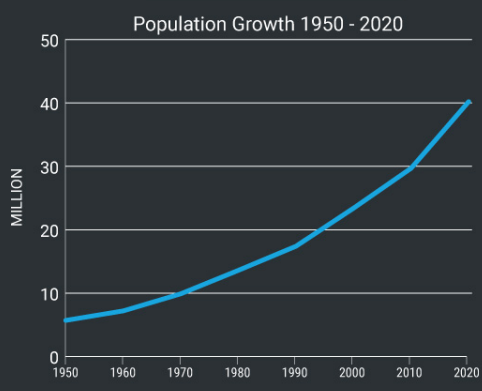
Prime Minister Adel Abdul-Mahdi announces his resignation in November 2019

Police Crackdown on Protesters

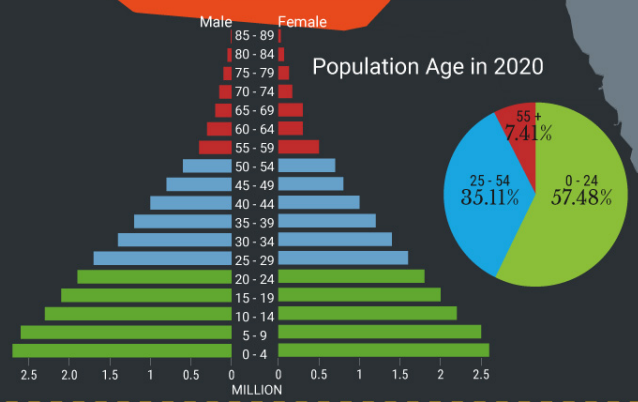
600+ deaths
 25,000+ injuries
 2,800 detained (estimate)



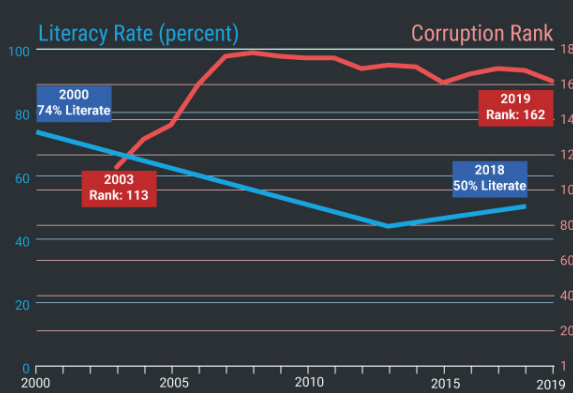
Iraq's population has grown immensely since 1950



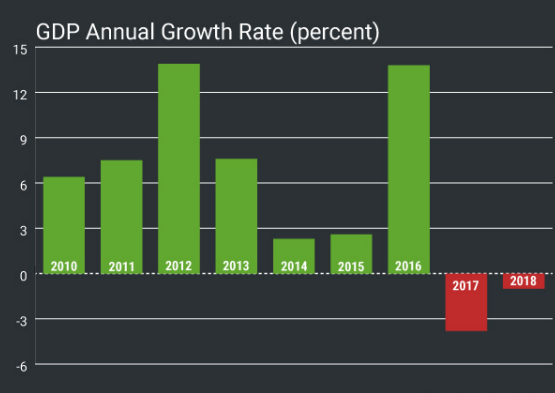
Over half of the population today is under 25 years old



In the 21st century, corruption has increased while literacy rates have plummeted



Negative growth rates exacerbate dissatisfaction toward the ruling class



Sources: Trading Economics, The Guardian, UNESCO Institute of Statistics, Worldometer © 2020 Geopolitical Futures

(click to enlarge)

Protests in Iraq over a number of social grievances have been ongoing for months now. The demonstrations started among the youth population in Baghdad last October and targeted poor living conditions, rampant government corruption, declining educational opportunities and unemployment. But the protesters' demands have evolved over time.

Following the Jan. 3 U.S. attack on Qassem Soleimani, the commander of Iran's Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps, and the subsequent U.S. and Iranian missile strikes in Iraqi territory, concerns over foreign influence have added a new dimension to the demonstrations. Many of the protests have taken place in Iraq's southern, Shiite-majority provinces, where demonstrators have condemned Iranian political interference and support for paramilitary groups in the country. Some protests in this area have even led to the destruction of Iranian consulate buildings and the offices of IRGC-affiliated militias. A camp led by Muqtada al-Sadr – known as the Sadrist movement – has also objected to foreign involvement in Iraqi affairs, calling for the expulsion of U.S.-led anti-Islamic State coalition forces stationed in Iraq. The protests continue to fragment, with no clear demands or leadership.

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