

Abstract

Since 2003, Iraq went into a significant shift of political authority in which many political parties fighting for leadership failed to keep peace in the region; however, for many – like ruling parties in Kurdistan Region of Iraq – a golden compass was in the pot to gain more authority high political positions in the region. The new Iraqi Constitution recognized KRG as an autonomous entity of Iraq, and Kurdish politicians were taking high political positions within the new Iraqi government. Despite these achievements, the political instability post-Iraq War remained and was shaped by internal factors like security, economy, and unresolved issues over disputed territories. Regional and international interventions also had a hand in these internal conflicts. For Kurdistan Regional Government, the question of Kurdish statehood never dissipated. The internal political setting post-2010 provided an environment of possible Kurdish statehood – or at least as the Kurdish leaders anticipated. In 2017, the KRG went for an unsupported referendum of independence that soon shifted the political dynamic between Kurdish parties and Baghdad into a turmoil of power struggle. The thesis builds a comprehensive discussion of factors of internal conflict in the KRG and analyzes how these internal disputes affected instability in KRI that led to a failed referendum.