

## Turkey's violence in the Kurdish region

The Turkish state recently declared curfew in Kurdish regions which are Cizre, Silopi and in Nusaybin. 52 curfews have been imposed since mid-August across this region. Even though Tens of Kurdish citizens have been killed, the Turkish media chooses to remain silent about the government terror. Why are the Turkish people closing their eyes when it comes to Kurdish people's basic human rights that are being abused, while Kurdish civilians are being killed by the Turkish state?

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## The advance of Isis: implications of a new REDLINE in the Middle East

"Rush 0 Muslims to your state. Yes, it is your state. Rush, because Syria is not for the Syrians, and Iraq is not for the Iraqis" (Abu Bakr al-Baghdadi)

On the first day of the Muslim fast which marks the commencement of the month of Ramadan corresponding to 1st July 2014 or 1st Ramadan 1435AH, the leader of the neo-caliphate enactment Islamic group also known as ISIS declared an Islamic State in the territories under the control of his group which straddles from Aleppo in Northern Syria to Diyala province in Iraq; effectively nullifying any existing border between Iraq and Syria whilst concomitantly invalidating any government control over these areas in both countries.

These actions were not neoteric, in fact, it had long been beginning to come and what was only left of that precipitate was the effect of that declaration and the harsh realities it meant for the peoples of the affected territories, neighbouring countries, the international diplomatic cosmos of World powers and other Nations of the Planet Earth.

The current civil and political instability in the Eastern Levant was precipitated by the US led invasion of Iraq in 2003, which toppled a stable Iraqi regime presided by Saddam Hussien, and the evasive consequence of the Arab spring which has perennially condemned Syria to a bitter warfare of attrition. Of all the Countries affected by the Arab Spring, the Syrian case remains most volatile and bloody; claiming fatalities of nearly 200,000 lives, displacing over 2000,000 civilians, and leaving heavy patches of ruins in all cities across the Syrian Urban and rural landscape.

What began as a protest for regime change snowballed into that of sectarian strife pitting the majority Syrian Sunni population against the minority Alawite led Syrian government. With Western powers wary of intervention, the Syrian scenario pitted a proxy warfare with sectarian regional powers sponsoring their military interests. The

Syrian government found a ready ally in Iran (a regional Shiite power) and a readymade fighting man power in Hezbollah (a Lebanese based Shiite militant group). In response to the sectarian dimension of the Syrian conflict, Sunni led militias such as Jabat al Nusra, ISIS (Islamic State in Syria and the Levant) and several others sprang up to fight the 'infidel' Alwaite or pro-Shia supported government. In no time, the Syrian conflict metamorphosed from a civil one to a religious one.

Across the Syrian Eastern border in Iraq, the government had been grappling for control of the country since the withdrawal of US and other allied forces. The ensuing unrest in Iraq assumed a sectarian cum religious dimension as the Kurds opted for autonomy whilst the Sunnis and Shiites grappled for political power. The once repressed Shiites under Sunni Saddam Hussien gained political power being the majority (65% of Iraqis are Shia Muslims) amidst Sunni cries of marginalization. In between the Iraqi political discontent was a wave of pockets of insurgency by Islamic militias against what was seen as an American perpetrated government in Iraq. This insurgency was later mostly exclusively perpetrated by Sunni based militias against Shiite and government interests.

With regional and religious rivalry in the brew, Shiite militias and governments led by Shiites received military and support from Iran whilst Saudi Arabia and other gulf states actively funded Sunni Militias.

### **AN IMPLOSION OF THE ESTABLISHED ORDER**

With the Syrian situation attaining a stalemate, ISIS (a Sunni led Islamist Militia) seized Raqqa (a provincial capital in Northern Syria) and declared it a model for a proposed burgeoning Islamic State and claiming that they had the entire Middle East at sight for a Caliphate. Taking advantage of the security and political impunity in Iraq, ISIS fighters crossed over and disgraced an established multibillion dollar US funded Iraqi army; seizing Mosul, Tikrit, Anabar and Nineveh provinces in a lightening advance and threatening to march on Baghdad. For reasons best known to ISIS, it has slowed the pace

of its advance whilst seeking to consolidate control on the swathes of territory under its control across Syria and Iraq.

### **IMPLICATIONS**

The military exploits of ISIS has had a reverberating effect across the Middle East and even amongst Sunni led governments. The ISIS fighters are just a few kilometres away from the borders of Saudi Arabia and Jordan and providing a new impetus to crumble an already endangered Shiite led Syrian and Iraq government. For once, the quest of ISIS is now seen as a valid threat to an established order in the Middle East.

### **PERMUTATIONS**

All through the wake of the Arab spring, the US and her allies have refrained from directly intervening militarily apart from Libya where air support was used to defeat the Gaddafi government. Rather, western intervention has been through cautious military advisory tactics and equipment (whether lethal or non lethal) to militant group they deem sympathetic.

Whilst tension and mistrust amongst Iran (a regional Shia power) and the rest

of a Sunni dominant Arab Middle East remain high, both parties do not want to see a crumbling of established order in their respective domains.

A crumble of established order will add a renewed impetus for Kurdish independence a cause which will distort the boundaries of Turkey, Syria, Iraq and Iran—all of which are not ready to lose territory.

Continued heightened tensions will ensure the partition of Syria and Iraq along Sectarian lines, deflating existing borders and threaten the corporate borders of Jordan and Saudi Arabia all of which who have tribal affiliations across the borders.

A continued push by ISIS will threaten Jordan and Saudi Arabia and later on Iran and Turkey. Remotely, Israel and Lebanon will come into the fray and it will be hard for the US not to fight.

At this juncture, the bi-polar powers cannot afford to stand arms akimbo. And maybe this explains why Russia has provided Iraq with jets to bomb ISIS positions with a fore running support of Syrian attempt

In all, the latest trend in the Middle East precipitated by the action of ISIS may precipitate another gun power for a global conflict. Let's hope Armageddon is not yet here!

"We have been very clear to the Assad regime, but also to other players on the ground, that a **red line** for us is we start seeing a whole bunch of chemical weapons moving around or being utilized..... "That would change my calculus. That would change my equation." (Barack Obama; 20th August 2012)