



## **Iraq 15 years after occupation**

### **Health situation in Iraq before and after occupation**

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## **Introduction:**

It is known, in public, that before last 3 decades, the Health Situation in Iraq was one of the best, at Middle East level. Enough capitals were allocated thereto; hospitals were duly equipped with then modern equipments and medications. During such era the Government of Iraq used to offer free medical care and therapeutic services via public health institutions.

Most of worldwide constitutions have room for Human Rights to live in healthy environment to fulfill public needs and enable them to live happy and secured life. The community, through the government, guarantees such right by offering health medical care to individuals, which was set out in all Iraqi Constitutions. The provisional Iraq Constitution in 1964 set out firmly the Iraqi people right to obtain the medical care through establishing all types of health facilities. Moreover, the provisional constitution of 1970, enjoined on the Government to protect the Public health via sustainable expansion of free health services offered for health treatment and preventions.

Enjoying health care is a right for each Iraqi individual to enable him acquiring the physical, mental and social integration in addition to the limitation of diseases and sickness. In order to reach such target, each person in Iraq shall benefit of the health care which is based on sound practical & technological method and in the same accepted by the targeted community and to be in line with its financial capacity. Besides, treatment and prevention are considered major components that are adopted by the Iraqi Government to offer medical care to the public since birth until death. This worked to make happy life available to all Iraqi People at that era. The Iraqi government, since its first beginnings in the 20s of last century, worked hard to offer free medical care to its citizens and such issue was confirmed in its law and legislations.

The Health system in Iraq was at that era based on public hospitals as private hospitals contribution in such services were few; some minor hospitals distributed in many of Iraqi regions and used to offer its services against, relatively, high expenses. Such issue imposed on the public health institutions heavy burden, since the 20s of this century until 2003, represented by allocating huge amount of money to fulfill the public health needs and services. The Government associated with the most important foreign companies, sought to establish hospitals and equipped thereof with medical supplies and equipments, qualified and trained teams; i.e. Ben Al Khateeb hospital which was established in 1962, and was specialized in treating the communicable diseases, Endemic diseases and un-diagnosed fever. The foregoing hospital was subordinate to the armed forces, then subordination was transferred to the Ministry of health. The First obstetrics hospital was established in Baghdad in 1956 which was developed in 1969 under new name; i.e. Al Olwiah Obstetrics hospital. In 1975 new born section has been opened which was the first section established in the Middle East. In 1989 the Government developed that hospital and opened new buildings, nursing school for delivery which were appended thereto.

Kamal Al Samerraei' Hospital was also opened to represent the Fertility, Infertility center and laboratory tubes.

In 1985 Al Hassan Ben Al Haytham Ophthalmology Hospital was opened which was the sole specialized hospital in Iraq whereas Ophthalmology services are offered to the people and was equipped with the then most developed center of Ophthalmology diseases.

In 1969, nuclear medicine and radiation hospital was opened to offer medical treatment against Cancerous tumors, and thyroid diseases by using radiation and chemical medications.

In 1979, Ben Al Nafees Hospital was opened which included medical specialties in radiology, chest and vascular diseases.

In 1982, the sole hospital in Iraq to rehabilitate Spinal cord injuries and paralysis and was subordinated to medical affairs directorate in the Ministry of Defense during the Iraqi Iran war.

The Government paid more attention as to establish hospitals adjacent to the medicine colleges and allocate thereof to be training centers of medicine graduates in addition to its basic duties to offer medical care for public. Medicine students admitted to such medical colleges from Iraq and Arab countries.

In 1920 the current medical city was established in Baghdad and carried the name "Majediah", which was one of the biggest medical centers in M.E. The medical city was established in same place and was opened in 1972 carrying name of Baghdad Medicine College. In 1961, studies and designs were set out and five Millions Iraqi Dinars were allocated to build such medical city under specifications that equal the USA and German hospitals at that time<sup>3</sup>. The medical city was opened in 1970 and was consisting of 8 specialized hospitals, researches centers, labs and X-ray centers, and blood bank. Besides crematory was established to burn the waste materials and medical wastes. Dentistry College was also established and containing big halls for international conferences that tackle the modernist researches and scientific performances as well as students housing buildings. Besides, the Ministry of health premises was built adjacent to the medical city which made it Medical and scientific Iraqi tower enjoying unique architectural buildings.



The government delegated great number of health personnel to study post education outside Iraq in all specialties and prepare them to control and manage the health institutions and offer distinguished services to the Iraqi Citizens.

The Central government issued its directions to the Ministry of Health to import the modernist medical devices and equipments to supply its hospitals and walk in line with the development witnessed abroad.

The State witnessed joint development between the Ministry of industry and Ministry of health, represented by Drugs industry which is considered one of the pioneer and distinguished industries. Iraq acquired during the last years enough expertise and the medications manufactured in Iraq are equal to foreign medications. In early 1960s cooperative agreement was signed between Iraq and Soviet Union including, but not limited to, establishing factory for drugs industry in Samarra city, and was called later on, General company for drugs and medical supplies industry. The production started to cover tablets & ointments. By end of the 1960s most of production lines were not able to fulfill all materials and thus the factory was considered the best institution to train personnel of such industry and research institution as well. Drugs industry is new in Iraq at that time. Production lines in the said factory started to be changed gradually, to be in line with the technological development in such drugs industry. New production lines were imported from Germany, Spain and Korea.

In 1990s the company included the following factories

- Samarraa Pharmaceutical Factory
- Nenava Intravenous solutions factory
- Medical gases factory in Baghdad
- Injections factory in Babil
- Nenava pharmaceutical factory

Productions lines were established to manufacturing the following:

- Tablets and coated tablets
- Capsules
- Powders
- Ointments
- Eye drops
- Disinfectant solutions
- Oxygen
- Bottles and injections
- Bronchial asthma sprays
- Syrups

Figure: Samarraa Pharmaceutical factory photo once established.



Figure: Modern Samarraa Pharmaceutical factory photo



The production diversity and keeping up with international manufactured medicines enhanced Iraq to establish Nenava pharmaceutical factory and propping up thereof with Iraqi expertise and efforts. The production list included most of familiar pharmaceutical forms, in addition to the most recent production lines in producing two types of medications used in treating cancer and further it proved successfully its efficacy.

The Pharmaceutical industry sector role in Iraq proved its great importance during the economical unjust blockade since 1990. So the new mission rose to produce new medications to fulfill the local Iraqi market needs and new medications which are produced abroad.

The basic medications list accredited by the Iraqi Ministry of health included 640 pharmaceutical types to fulfill medications need. The Ministry of Health adopted important decision in that regard by adding 100 medications types /annum and delegate such issue to the Iraqi Scientists and researchers who are engaged in pharmaceutical industry. Such medications were supposed to materialize the basic medications list by the end of 2004. Based on the Ministry of Health and Ministry of Industry efforts, 50% of such issue was recognized and further it worked to avoiding diseases, which the Iraqi public suffered during the economical blockage. Further more, it saved Millions of US\$ from buying such medications from abroad.

Although pharmaceuticals industry is very profitable, and the private sector is associated therein, but the Government worked to limit such participation of the private sector to make pharmaceuticals available for all Iraqi public. The Government also sat our ambitious plan to produce Vitamins, and Nutritional supplements.

Iraqi Government sought to offer free health and therapeutic services to its citizens via developing health services offered through public health institutions before 2003. The number of public hospitals in Iraq registered at 307, 1354 health centers and 480 public medical clinics.

The health situations passed successive efforts stages of the Governments before 2003, and registered improvements by the end of 1980s. Such indications were positive; decrease in infants' death cases; which registered at 80/1000 in 1979, while in 1989 such indication is decreased to 40/1000. Also children death cases was decreased from 120 to 60 /1000 cases. Also age expectations was raised to be 68 years old.

The Public medical clinics contributed in offering public medical and therapeutic services after the working hours including laps, dentistry clinics and pharmacies and free special care is offered to the chronic diseases patients; i.e. diabetes, blood pressure, cardiology and Bronchial asthma....

In 2003 the Iraqi Government established special medical and therapeutic centers for individuals of private need and handicaps who suffered from 1<sup>st</sup>. gulf war crises. Also medical rehabilitation clinics were also established in Baghdad and all regions of Iraq. The government offered such locations supportive aids and organized championships games among handicaps to integrate the disabled in the community and release them from psychological stress in addition to pay them monthly salaries.

We shall not forget the important role of health outreach of the citizen offered by the Ministry of Education that contributed in literacy of the Iraqi citizens. Based on international studies, of 2003, Iraq is classified as a country where illiteracy is almost vanished.

The Health situation in Iraq was affected negatively by the developments, which Iraq was imposed thereto in the 1980s and represented by 3 big wars



- Iraq – Iran war and 1<sup>st</sup>. gulf war 1980-1988
- Second Gulf war 1991
- USA invasion of Iraq in 2003.
- The unjust blockage which lasted for 13 years.

The impacts of the foregoing incidents on people health situation exceed, materially, all traditional dimensions and indications in that regard. Such incidents affected the right of people to survive and live, human losses, disabilities, diseases and injuries that took place to thousands of Iraqi People. We shall not forget also the burden which Iraqi citizen faced during the blockade after 1991 whereas life necessities were not available; food, medications ... etc., Based on the survey concluded in 1996, the life expectations of individuals fell down.



There are 30,000 children out of 950,000 who suffers chronic malnutrition, death of mothers during blockade registered 273/100000 and 70% of pregnant women were suffering of Anemia which exposed them to death danger.

Based on the survey of health and living conditions during the 3 wars and ban stages increased from 0.9% of total inhabitants in 1977 to 6% in 2003.



Despite the relative improvement in the living level and health situations in Iraq during 2<sup>nd</sup>. Gulf war; 1991, but the health situations kept facing plenty of setbacks. The public health indications witnessed retract during 1990s, in terms of services quality and level, offered by health institutions due to lack of medical and therapeutic supplies during the economical International ban imposed on Iraq.

### **2003 Iraq witnessed occupation**

#### **Public health situation after occupation**

**HERE THE STORY OF IRAQI COUNTRY CAME TO AN END**





This story came to exterminate what is left from the Health institutions capabilities in offering medical care to the citizens. This was ascribed to un-fulfillment of occupation authorities as to its duties to protect such institutions. The outcomes came to pull out such institutions' abilities in terms of offering medical care; absence of technical capabilities, steeling all its contents and medical supplies and medical equipments. Therefore, bringing such institutions status to its normal position became impossible; large amounts of money were spent to rehabilitate such institutions buildings and premises which was big fault as such buildings and premises became un fit and thus such large amounts were vanished, corruptive administrations became steeling the money. So Such retreat as to health care services was reflected negatively on the human right to live and obtain health care.

In order to be aware of the offered health services, government's legal and moral responsibility towards arranging for sound environment whereas the individual enjoys happy and healthy life.

On the other hand, the new Iraqi constitution, which was subject to referendum in 2005, refer to such rights and assured on:

- The Government guarantees the medical care for all community individuals through guaranteeing preventive and therapeutic means, establish hospitals and clinics as well as medical treatment houses.
- The government care of the private needs individuals and disabled to rehabilitate them inside the community
- The stage guarantees to protect the environment, biodiversity and maintaining thereof.

The constitution referred to important step, after the Iraqi citizen was subject to being deprived from his simple rights to obtain medicine and therapy after looting the health institutions and destroying all its health environment via explosions, bombing and using the deadly weapons. The constitution did not handle method of carrying out individual right to live in sound circumstances and left such issue to be tackled by the Federation to draw a environmental policy to protect the environment from pollution and this is also major fault to deal with this subject as if it is side issue.

The central government organization for statistics and IT data presented the active health institutions in Iraq in 2006; total at 2198 institutions that offer its services to the community via work supplies and capabilities that are still modest. Three of which; could be distinguished as follows:

Health institution	2005	2006	2007	2008	2012
Public Hospitals	156	155	156	204	204
Private hospitals	68	64	60	81	98
Health care centers	1854	00	849	921	800
Public clinics	349	358	346	334	300
Health Insurance clinics	322	327	321	319	300

- a. The Hospitals occupy the senior position in the health institutions which are dying and suffering after the occupation. 204 public hospitals offer various therapeutic services, 98 of private sector hospitals are offering its services in relative clear mode compared to its services before the occupation. Such hospitals suffer of shortage in the supplies, doctors and medical cadre and thus this influenced its service level especially after 2003.
- b. The Initial health care centers offered by medical centers scattered in the Iraqi regions, which are calculated by 800 centers. The single center receives 140 visitors /day and this affects the service quality offered in such centers that suffer qualified cadres, un-fit buildings and lack of medical treatment.
- c. The Public medical clinics that offer its services outside working hours, totaled at 300 clinics. Such clinics also suffer same shortages as mentioned in item (b) above.
- d. There are also Health insurance clinics that offer medical care for some missions and special official institutions.
- e. The Human Sources are also suffering shortage due to un-stabled security situations and repeated attacks of doctors and health personnel; who were subject to kidnapping against ransom, murder; i.e. Dr. Mohammad Al Rawi, Baghdad University chair; who was murdered inside his clinic. Such circumstances forced great number of such qualified personnel to immigrate outside the country. Such immigration caused shortage in doctors to register 0.6/10,000 citizens. Hamourabi Center data for researches and strategic studies displayed doctors' number and medial personnel number decrease to display 1.4/10,000 inhabitants.

Given the immigration of the medical and related educational cadres, the existing colleges suffered severe shortage in its experienced professors that was reflected, negatively, on such colleges students and their academic level which affected the Iraqi people who seek medical care. The Iraqi people found themselves obliged to approach medical institutions abroad for treatment, as they are no longer confident of the services offered by Medical hospitals in Iraq. We also noticed that the governmental officials also, without exceptions, used to receive medical care abroad as well.

It is worth mentioning herein that most of Iraqi young people quit their schools and searched for vocational works to earn their living, and they suffered lack of medical care offered to them.



### Public Health indicators

Circumstances of occupation after 2003 and its sequences at the social and Health levels, refer to public health indicators' declination. Map of deprivation and living standards, set out by Ministry of Planning under cooperation with UN developmental program, refers to deprivation from health services. This study displayed 31% of families; representing the study sample, were deprived from health services. Whilst, deprivation level among individuals registered 32% during same study year. The foregoing refers that 1/5 of the Iraqi community suffer from Health services deprivation, at various levels, the worst level of deprivation is consisted of 8.9%:

- 1 chronic diseases and Health problems
- 2 Nutrition status of children, who are under five years old, and suffering lack of weight, and decrease of length. While 41% of families; study sample, suffer from nutrition deprivation that was assured by the Ministry of Planning via its survey that displayed 42% of Iraqi people are living at poverty level until 2012.
- 3 The health care during pregnancy, bad services are offered to pregnant woman.
- 4 Possibility to reach the hospitals and medical clinics which takes more than 60 minutes to reach to the hospital and 40 minutes to reach the medical clinic. Such delay is ascribed to closed roads, Military check points and so on.....
- 5 By virtue of Ministry of health data, the Disabled persons in Iraq registered 12% of total inhabitants; i.e. 3 Million disabled persons are living in Iraq due to violence acts, explosions.. etc., and such number is witnessing continuous increase so far.

### **Environmental situation and its impact on the Health situation**

- 1      Radiation pollution; that worked to threat Iraqi people by causing cancerous tumors. 2<sup>nd</sup>. Gulf war in 1991, occupation in 2003, the enormous war bombs developed by the occupation governments and its contents of Enriched uranium used to hit the Iraqi Targets before occupation and the Radiation pollution residuals. The Iraqi cities were subject to such risks, especially in Basrah Region, and the southern regions worked to increase radiation risks to unpredicted rates that it causes Cancerous tumors among Iraqi Citizens. The normal standard rate should not exceed 0.3% while in Iraq it registered 130%. We shall not forget Congenital malformations accompanied by the unavailability of health care for such radiation victims and the remnants of wars consisting of thousands of tons spreading in all Iraqi cities without being treated or lifted or buried. The statistics issued from Radiation and nuclear medicine hospital in Baghdad displayed that two third of the people who suffering cancer are located in Al Basrah and surrounding areas, especially those areas that are adjacent to Kuwaiti borders, Falloujah whereas the occupation troops used Enriched uranium and white Phosphor during 1<sup>st</sup>. and 2<sup>nd</sup>. Faloujah battles then followed by ThiQar and Missan cities.





Such crises were accompanied by the lack of hospitals that are specialized to treat Cancer cases, lack of capacity to receive such huge patients and the unavailability of chemical medicines to treat cancer diseases.

### **Landfill and hazardous wastes**

The Government of Iraq inaction to take necessary procedures to solve wastes accumulation in many areas at Baghdad city caused material problems to the city inhabitants. Such accumulation shall indeed increase the people burden in terms of Viral and bacterial contaminants and further the Iraqi citizen life is severely threatened.

Baghdad City is suffering of wastes accumulation in all its main and secondary streets, in particular the popular areas, which are converted into Marshlands of waste that deform Baghdad civilization trend, communicating diseases, environmental pollution, air, soil and water pollution. Moreover, such waste materials affected negatively the aquatic life. As for the medical wastes, that accumulated before hospitals outdoors and worked to communicate viruses and bacteria easily to human.

Therefore human, livestock, aquatics, low water level in Dijlah river in summer worked to still the water and pollute it by sanitary water.

Some hospitals lack technology that affects negatively humans. If such is not treated well the community is and shall be subject diseases.

We like to tackle Abu Ghareeb & Nahrawan landfills sites in Baghdad which are not in conformity with health and environmental standards. We would like to refer also to the wastes collection machineries which are not specialized to collect and transport the wastes and do not comply with the international standards. Also the recycling projects of such wastes are not available in Iraq as to using such wastes to generate electricity as used in Europe, USA and Japan.



### **Drugs are ghost that destroy and kill youth who become suffering of HIV diseases**

HIV is spreading rapidly in Iraq since 2003. Number of those who are suffering from HIV are not known exactly. Based on statistics declared from the Ministry of health; Baghdad witnesses around 1500 case who are suffering HIV disease. All sources have agreed that there is defect in the health system in Iraq, weakness in applying security restrictions and medical tests for incoming persons from abroad, the chaos and drugs taking among youth especially in the middle and south zones in notable manner. Drugs traders are increasing rapidly especially in the absence of security entities, administrative corruption, and the armed Militias who are supported and controlling such trade in Iraq. Further, there are neither rehabilitation centers to rehabilitate the additives nor programs for anti-drugs purposes.

### **Administrative corruption that touches the Government entities.**

#### **Progressive cancer that includes the health sector in Iraq represented by the Ministry of health**

In spite of the availability of money, oil prices rise, forming successively parliament governments after 2003 invasion, the indicators refer and assure the frequent health status declination and infrastructure services. The foregoing imposes an idea of deliberate scheme targeting the medical, health sectors and qualified doctors to destroy its institutions and performances.

Before the announcement addressed by G. W Bosh, ex- president of USA, to terminate the war operations in Iraq , 70 % of Iraq hospitals, emergency and first aid clinics were subject to robbery and destruction, the corruption pervading in the health sector was notable. Since 2003 up to 2015, the Iraqi Government spent 17 Billions US\$ to develop the health sector in Iraq. In spite of the foregoing,



the health sector is still suffering shortages of hospitals, lack of medical equipments & shortage in medical cadres. Standardized death cases were registered in the last two years. The Iraqi Judiciary entities received many corruption files in the health field and building hospitals. The corruption files include, but not limited to, Atomic Radiation theaters file for patient who suffer cancer amounting to 78 Millions. Also Sonar devices file valued at 91 Million US\$. Corruption also hits new hospitals building file, pregnant women and children centers projects at a value of 895 Millions US\$. Iraqi Government alleged that it re-constructed a hospital located west of Iraq, before it was discovered that wife of Japanese reporter who was murdered in Iraq is the person who financed such project rather than the Iraqi Government.

As far as administrative and financial corruption in the Ministry of Health are concerned, import conditions and restrictions imposed on devices, medications, medical supplies ... etc., were cancelled which caused severe shortage of such supplies and inactive medications are allowed to enter to Iraq some of which were poisonous. Furthermore, some medications are manufactured locally, without license, and sold in the sidewalks.

Specialists in the Health field reported an important notice about covering up the financial and administrative corruption in the Ministry of Health, practiced by unfair personnel who lack professionalism and were selected under sectarian affiliation and sharing standards and adopting exclusion and marginalization policy. The minority of financial allocations in the Government budget directed to the health affairs; maximum 3.2% of total budget, is also reason that led to such declination. The initial, protective health care services and health centers were neglected; including, but not limited to, Maternity, Childhood Centers, vaccinations, destroying the medical services infrastructure, unavailability of clean water, absence of the sewages, accumulated wastes, lack of electricity supplies, lack of control and inspection on food and drugs, declination of the medication industry.

Many political analysts of the Iraqi cause ascribed the fire that broke out in Al Yarmook Hospital in August of current year that originated death of 11 infants to the corruption diffusion in the government institutions, especially the administrative corruption in the Ministry of Health.

Based on the official documents, the Ministry imported old devices that do not fit to treat the patients who suffer cancer that caused death to such patients; New Al Arabi newspaper.

Corruption spread is considered a reflection of negative culture on the environment served by the Health Sector. Studies displayed that such corruption is the least spread in countries that respect the law. Health sector in such countries is committed to rules, morals and mechanisms that are declared and clear to the public.

Therefore facing corruption in Health care services is public material cause, which could be classified as a matter of life and death to all citizens without exception. Medicine is profession, science and behavior that is connected to humans' health, pleasure, ease and presence. For sure, achieving any virtue or innovation in developing medicine is considered real renaissance of the life which is the core of the universe.

In conclusion, Philosophers state " Axioms' discussions is considered "sophistry", health experts, political and economical analysts say that corruption of Health sector in Iraq is knowledge rather than novel.

## **Communicative diseases among displaced persons in Baghdad City**

They left their cities and villages to unknown destination after death surrounded them from each side. This is the Iraqi displaced persons status in five cities that witnessed military conflict between armed forces and Militias from one side and Dayesh troops from other side.

International organization of Immigration mission in Iraq stated that displacement from Iraq is continuing to rise and the displaced people do need comprehensive support. The foregoing organization referred also that the Iraqis who were subject to displacement since 2014 registered so far to read 3.25 Million persons. The displaced persons represent more than five hundred thousand families, 87% of them came from 3 districts; Al Anbar, Nenava & Salah Eddin which are under the control of Dayesh terroristic regime.

Statement issued by the UN mission in Iraq mentioned that the migration tracking matrix which was published in the beginning of 2016 reads 3,182,736 displaced persons consisting of 530, 356.00 families since beginning of January 2014 up to 20/2/2016.

Photos





























