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New Report Offers Inside Look at Iraq's Popular Movement for Reform

WASHINGTON, DC – Today, on the 2-year anniversary of the start of Iraq's Tishreen ("October") protest movement, the Enabling Peace in Iraq Center (EPIC) publicly released its [new report](#): **The Long Game: Iraq's "Tishreen" Movement and the Struggle for Reform.**

The report is the product of one year of extensive research studying the Tishreen protest movement, incorporating insights from dozens of in-depth interviews, a series of focus group discussions with Iraqi activists, an analysis of social media, and a nationally-representative public opinion survey of eligible voters. Among the report's key findings, EPIC found that:

- ❖ The Tishreen protesters enjoy widespread public support, with 70% of Iraqis declaring support for the protesters and 31% saying they had participated in at least one protest since October 2019.
- ❖ Tishreen candidates hold an overwhelming lead among decided voters, with 7 out of 10 saying they would vote for candidates representing the protest movement.
- ❖ Only 23.3% of respondents said that they believe the next elections will be "free and fair" or "somewhat free and fair."

Backed by these and other salient findings, the report sheds light on how popular protests are seen as an expression of Iraq's sovereignty, at a time when elections have so far failed to reflect the will of the people due to fraud and a process that favors incumbent parties with access to military power and state resources.

"Too often, the analysis of policy makers and researchers focus on the Prime Ministers, Presidents, the heads of ruling political parties, and other senior leaders," remarked EPIC's Executive Director, **Erik Gustafson**. *"In the case of Iraq, such a focus is wholly insufficient, missing the dynamics of change that are currently underway below the surface."*

Earlier this week, the EPIC research team presented some of the report's key findings at a launch event moderated by **Bilal Wahab**, a senior fellow at The Washington Center and a member of EPIC's board of directors. The presentation was followed by an external academic review by **Marsin Alshamari**, a political scientist and Baghdad-based fellow at the Harvard Kennedy School. In addition to offering an insightful critique, Dr. Alshamari praised the research team and writers for a *"well written, very useful report with lot of really interesting data."* She stated: *"Really great research on what was happening each day at Tahrir Square and how things accumulated into the events we saw."*

The full report is available at <https://enablingpeace.org/what-we-do/projects-in-iraq/tishreen>

*Founded in 1998 with offices in Washington DC and Erbil, the **Enabling Peace in Iraq Center (EPIC)** is an independent 501(c)3 organization working directly with Iraqi civil society to improve governance and human rights, promote peace and recovery in conflict affected areas, and combat climate change while mitigating its impact on vulnerable populations.*

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