



مركز البيان للدراسات والتخطيط
Al-Bayan Center for Planning and Studies

Toward a Rescue Program for Convincing Reforms!

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Al-Bayan Center Studies Series

About

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Al-Bayan Center pursues its vision by conducting independent analysis, as well as proposing workable solutions for complex issues that concern policymakers and academics.

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Toward a Rescue Program for Convincing Reforms!

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After the defeat of ISIS and the rise of people's demands for better living conditions, the political forces are required now, more than ever, to present a clear and accurate reform program to restore people's trust in the political process and the democratic system before they face imminent danger.

The continuation of the protests, the rising doubt of the media, the elite, and the people about the result of the investigation of the shooting of protests and the use of excessive violence against demonstrators, and the continued pressure imposed by the religious authorities on having a clear and convincing reform program supported by them and the people call on political authorities to take an advanced step to create a preliminary reform program for post-protest or beyond the current government.

The program must demonstrate a strong political will aiming at obtaining a clear popular mandate to achieve reforms in the fight against corruption and the corrupts.

Any reform program should attract young people with experience and quality education outside and inside Iraq and enable them to lead reforms rather than relying on existing staff, whatever their status is, who are trained within the current bureaucratic system. It is difficult to imagine them working away from the system they are used to.

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The reform program should believe in the need to limit the work of the state to reduce bureaucracy and routine to ensure an open and transparent economic system, rather than the orientation that characterized governments after 2003 of opening the doors of the public sector and hire too many people which facilitates bureaucracy and corruption.

Fighting corruption requires innovative efforts and unexpected methods by relying on intensive public media to transform reforms from a political will to a popular orientation and encourage the righteous to pursue corruption and corrupt ones.

The leadership of the reform and anti-corruption process requires a coherent mini leadership to coordinate and make decisions in an intensive, fast and effective manner. The reform process requires opening to international experiences rather than closing itself to maintain sovereignty.

Sustainable reforms also require the government to harness modern technologies on a large scale to limit its employees' face to face dealings with citizens and investors.

This paper presents an intense idea of a reform program that moves away from public slogans and aims. It is especially aimed at restoring public confidence in the political system. The paper includes proposals in combating corruption in administration, economy, and politics.

Anti – Corruption Reforms

- Investigating about major corruption deals: the Russian weapons, the Canadian aircraft, the industrial city in Basra, etc., and the arrest of the accused through the “anti-terrorism” force, to be a clear message to the public, political forces and the judiciary and show the seriousness of the government in the pursuit of corruption and corrupts .
- Use an international investigation team to help Iraq to prosecute corrupts and help with smuggled funds, and to be a message to the international community that the government is taking these steps seriously.
- Extensive communication with the media, activists and civil society organizations, to use them in the campaign against corruption, and to hear their views on what is going wrong, which is part of the public involvement in this matter rather than waiting for protests.
- Activate the secret police and economic security, and urge the discovery of cases of extortion, bribery, and corruption through the installation of cameras in service providing departments.
- Propose legislation or decisive legal amendments to combat corruption, at once, including expelling abusive employees from the public offices, and bargaining the embezzlers and beneficiaries to pay their what they have taken to the state treasury.

- Forming committees of academics and international and local organizations, and involving the public through direct communication, as well as former and current officials in the following departments and institutions, in order to diagnose the areas of corruption, and propose ways to combat it.. (**Central Bank currency auction – Ration Card contracts and distribution – Border Port Commission – General Commission of Taxes – General Commission of Customs – General Directorate of Land Registry – Soldiers’ pensions and livelihoods in various armed forces – Police stations and traffic police – public and private banks – public and private schools and universities – missions and equivalence of certificates – social protection network – Judiciary – Commission of Integrity – gas stations – salaries and protections of officials and their office miscellaneous – side contracts in oil and gas – government factories – investment bodies – the single window in the investment bodies that have not yet been implemented – Foundation of Martyrs, Foundation of Political Prisoners, Supreme National Commission for Accountability and Justice – the holy shrines – the system of government contracts – Telecommunications companies – Internet companies and others**).

Management and Economic Reforms

- It is not possible to talk about reducing corruption or increasing the effectiveness of the administrative system without more control and transparency and reducing the bureaucracy. The completion of e-government and getting rid of paperwork

within a reasonable time and contract with international companies in this regard will ensure this.

- It is necessary to restore confidence in independent bodies to be truly independent using international bodies and local organizations to select personalities according to the points system. They are also selected after testing in terms of their knowledge of the law, management, and psychological aspects.
- After selecting the Federal Service Council according to the above system, the same procedure can be applied for special grades (Director-General and its equivalent, Undersecretary of a Ministry and its equivalent).
- Amending the law of special grades like Director-General and its equivalent, Undersecretary of a Ministry and its equivalent and make them in position for four years, extendable at the request of the highest official.
- Amending the law of special grades allocations of Director-General and its equivalent, Undersecretary of a Ministry and its equivalent, Minister and its equivalent, and the three presidencies by not covering them in case retirement and cover these job grades by the normal salary scale system for promotion, bonus, and retirement.
- Working on the railway project to link Al-Faw Grand Port to Turkey, with the inclusion of all provinces of Iraq on this railway. This project will link all the provinces together and employs hundreds of thousands of manpower. It will bring economic profits for the country and link Iraq to the global economy.

- Opening the project of Al-Faw Grand Port to investment and accelerating the completion of the current plan, since many international companies and countries, such as Japan, have previously announced their readiness to implement the project.
- Establishing a free and open economy by getting rid of the accumulated laws issued since the monarchy, which amounts to more than 21 thousand laws, regulations, instructions, orders and directions that affect the economy and direct it towards a socialist economy. Iraq can implement the “legislative guillotine” to end all the harmful economic laws and replace them with modern and effective laws.
- Linking state institutions with each other to unify administrative procedures at once and merge the formal transactions, based on international experience so these institutions can focus on collecting information rather than customers.
- Raising the slogan “silence is a sign of satisfaction”, by forcing institutions to issue licenses and permits within 20 days. After that people can assume the license is issued, and the government official or employee will bear any possible error.
- Establishing a new one-stop national agency to issue public records to citizens in few minutes, including birth and death certificate, national card, passport, marriage and immigration documents, document equivalents, ration card, housing, market licenses and car registration, in order to reduce bureaucracy and prepare for the abolition holding an ID or a driver license since people can be identified electronically by police or government institutions.

- Establishing a unified database for all citizens showing their work, unemployment, sources of income and account numbers to apply the system of collecting taxes and social security while achieving control under the law “Where Did You Get This?”
- Linking water, electricity, gas, telephone, and municipal services to each other, and granting the power to discontinue the service if the consumer does not pay for it within three consecutive months.
- Unifying the investment bodies with the construction council that will be formed, and make their work electronically, and setting a time limit for issuing investment licenses to investors.
- Adopting the real estate development law proposed by the late Ahmed Chalabi which includes an advanced plan to solve the problem of housing in Iraq.
- Resolving issues related to the oil sector through the investment of associated gas (note that Iraq is losing more than 5 billion dollars annually as a result of burning associated gas), and ending the import of oil derivatives through the transfer of liquidation and petrochemicals projects to achieve self-sufficiency as quickly as possible, which cost us about \$ 4 billion currently. Iraq has to establish a fleet to transport crude oil to international markets to save about 2 billion dollars and review the entitlements of the licensing round and payments because it costs the state about 15 billion dollars now. Iraq should invest the free gas in the fields of Akkaz, Rawa, and all the northwest region which will bring an annual profit of more than 15 billion dollars. The country

must pay attention to oil-related industries to save about 2 billion dollars and work to end the dependence of power plants on black oil, which is currently costing the state around 6 billion dollars.

- Adopting the Japanese plan to reactivate the South Korean industry at once, which is valid for adoption in agreement with Japan itself, to enter into a deep investment partnership that will lead to activating 270 public industrial companies and amend the laws and instructions for the industry.

Political Reforms

- Call for a new constitution that adopts the presidential system rather than the parliamentary. There is no doubt that Iraqi individuals and political forces, over the past years, have been looking for the legitimacy of representation through the parliamentary system, but the weakness of government cabins, the prevalence of quotas and corruption, and compromising have crippled the government. This led the elite, observers and the public to call for a strong and responsible presidential system. These calls are very logical and aim at highlighting the legitimacy of the achievement of the government while not neglecting the legitimacy of representation. The presidential system is better when it comes to achieving reforms and progress and give a strong unified image of Iraq in international and regional forums. The parliamentary system wastes great efforts to compromise and achieve political and electoral balances at the expense of economic and service achievement to evade from the entitlements of responsibility and remain in power at any cost. This is what Iraq has experienced since 2003.

- The new constitution should also overcome the loopholes in the current constitution in terms of territorial validity, government control over foreign policy, armed forces, borders, water, and others.
- The new constitution should also include clearer mechanisms for holding MPs accountable and replacing them, lifting the immunity of crimes and misdemeanors and restricting immunity only to political statements.
- It is not possible to talk about political reform without introducing a new electoral law for the Independent High Electoral Commission and changing the law of parties to ensure more transparency and the exercise of democracy. Iraq also must pass many other constitutional laws such as the law of the Council of the Union, the Federal Court, and the freedom to demonstrate and access information, etc.
- It is important to accelerate Iraq's accession to international agreements to transform the country into an active member of the international community and resolve many internal problems. For example, Iraq must join the international arbitration agreements, a prerequisite for foreign-invested companies. Since the number of these agreements is large, and the work of parliament is slow, we can propose that Iraq join all these agreements at once and by one law.