

Beat: Politics

Nechirvan Barzani: Iraq is a federal name, not guaranteed

Rudaw Centre for Studies

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USPA NEWS - The President of the Kurdistan Region, Nechirvan Barzani, stressed that the regime in Iraq is "federal", but in application and practical field, "what is happening in Iraq can be called any name, but it is not federal," which is "an end in centralisation."

Speaking during the third annual Erbil Forum, organised by the Rudaw Centre for Studies, and launched on Wednesday (February 26, 2025), he explained that Erbil, when you look at Baghdad, "see it as central to a degree that does not exist in any federal country in the world, and this is the truth, and not a challenge to anyone."

"Oil is a commercial commodity, not a political tool"

The President of the Kurdistan Region stressed that oil, as a commercial commodity, should not be a political tool, stressing that stopping the export of the Kurdistan Region's oil has caused Iraq financial losses estimated at between 19 and 20 billion dollars.

He added that all procedures are ready to resume export, except for some technical details, expressing his hope that the process will resume very soon.

He also spoke about the role of Turkey, the United States and Russia in resolving this crisis, noting that Turkey has always announced its readiness to export the oil of the Kurdistan Region, while America and Russia have made great efforts to push the resumption of exports forward.

He pointed out in this context: "America has endeavoured a lot to resume the export of the Kurdistan Region's oil, and Russia has also made efforts, as the Russians work in the Kurdistan Region, not just the Americans. But America, as a key partner of Iraq and the Kurdistan Region, has played a role in encouraging both parties, as well as Ankara, to speed up the resolution of this problem."

Isolating salaries from political differences"

With regard to the differences between Erbil and Baghdad, Nechirvan Barzani stressed that the decision of the Iraqi Federal Court was clear in "isolating the issue of salaries" from political conflicts, as well as the Prime Minister did "the same in order to secure the salaries of the Kurdistan Region, and did not shorten as much as he could."

He also stressed that the Kurdistan Regional Government dealt with "extreme transparency" with Baghdad, expressing his hope that "the budget will not become the main subject" in relations between the two sides.

We want to know the path of development"

Regarding the development road project, the President of the Kurdistan Region stressed the need for it to be a project that "unites Iraq and does not divide it", pointing to the importance of "knowing the path that this path will take" to serve all components of the Kurdistan Region and Iraq alike.

In this context, he said: "We are discussing the project seriously, and it is necessary that it be in a way that benefits the Kurdistan Region as well. We hope that Baghdad will look at the project in a way that makes it a reason to build belonging and loyalty to the country, and that it will go through a place that benefits everyone."

"The Sudanese acted wisely"

On the regional issue, Nechirvan Barzani praised the decision of Iraqi Prime Minister Mohammed Shia Al-Sudani to prevent armed groups from going to Syria, describing the decision as "wise", which "protected Iraq from a major fire", and calling for the organisation of all armed groups within the framework of the Iraqi army.

He said that the Prime Minister and the Iraqi state "acted very wisely, and prevented Iraq from burning with the fire of what is happening in the region," noting that the vision of the Kurdistan Region is that "Iraq must distance itself from that."

"We are ready for any role that brings Turkey closer to views"

He also pointed to the need to reach a political solution in Turkey that includes all components of society, expressing his hope that the Kurdistan Labour Party (PKK) and other political forces will respond to the call to be launched by Abdullah Ocalan.

Regarding the role of the Kurdistan Region in this regard, he said: "We had a role in the past, and we have now assured both sides that the Kurdistan Region is ready to exercise any role that leads to rapprochement between these parties."

"The experience of the Kurdistan Region cannot be duplicated in Syria"

Regarding the situation in Syria, he explained that what happened there was "unexpected even for Ahmed Al-Shara," stressing the importance of supporting the political process in Syria to ensure the representation of all its components.

He praised Turkey's "great and decisive" role in protecting the Kurds in Aleppo, adding: "We thank the Turkish state, which was in contact with us and did what it could, especially in the early days."

He pointed out that the continuous efforts of the leadership of the Kurdistan Region were in order to help our brothers there, saying: "Our message to them was that you should find yourselves in the political process, and not wait for your invitation, but you have to go to Damascus to participate in the political process in the new Syria. The Kurds should be part of this process."

He continued: "What happened in Syria was not a surprise to us alone, and I think it was a surprise to Ahmed Al-Shara himself. Maybe he didn't expect it to happen so easily. This plan was not, but a collapse, as happened in Mosul in 2014. They may have been planning a specific operation in Aleppo, but the collapse has begun, so they have gone to Damascus."

The President of the Kurdistan Region stressed: "Syria cannot be centrally managed in the way they want. Syria is a multi-national and multi-religious country. Everyone should be involved. If all parties are not involved in the political process of the new Syria, the process will certainly not succeed."

He stressed that the experience of the Kurdistan Region cannot be reproduced in Syria, saying: "What we did in the Kurdistan Region cannot be reproduced in Syria as it is, it is impossible. But we believe that a process can be started that ultimately leads to all Syrian components finding themselves in the political process, and that would be a great victory for Syria and an important opportunity."

"The Palestinian Cause and the Conflict in Lebanon"

In response to a question about the situation in Palestine and Lebanon, the President of the Kurdistan Region stressed that "anyone who has a case will not be eliminated and will not end easily."

He said in this regard: "For Hamas and Lebanon, something happened that temporarily weakened them, but the issue is about a people, and it will not be solved by wars or killing, but the war will increase their determination."

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