

Women and Gender in Iraq

Since the US-led invasion and occupation of Iraq in 2003, the challenges of sectarianism and militarism have weighed heavily on Iraqi women. In this book, Zahra Ali foregrounds a wide range of interviews with a variety of women involved in women's rights activism, showing how both everyday life, and political and intellectual lives have developed since the US-led invasion. In addition to this, Ali offers detailed historical research on social, economic, and political contexts since the formation of the Iraqi state in the 1920s.

Through a transnational and postcolonial feminist approach, this book considers the ways in which gender norms and practices and Iraqi feminist discourses and activism are shaped and developed through state politics; competing nationalisms; religious, tribal, and sectarian dynamics; wars; and economic sanctions. The result is a vivid account of the everyday life in today's Iraq and an exceptional analysis of the future of Iraqi feminisms.

Zahra Ali is Assistant Professor of Sociology at Rutgers University-Newark. Her research explores the dynamics of women and gender, social and political movements in relation to Islam(s), the Middle East, and contexts of war and conflict with a focus on contemporary Iraq. Ali is also a Muslim feminist activist involved in antiracist and anti-imperialist struggles.

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Women and Gender in Iraq

Between Nation-Building and Fragmentation

Zahra Ali
Rutgers University–Newark



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For my mother, Raja Musa Shaaban, for all her
suffering and sacrifices, forever in exile

إلى والدتي رجاء موسى شعبان التي تحملت وعاشت كل معاناة وتضحيات
الغربة والمنفى

In memory of my father, Ali Kadhim al-Adhahd,
killed in Baghdad on November 18, 2006, by
a terrorist sectarian armed group

إلى روح والدي الشهيد علي كاظم العضاض الذي قتل في بغداد يوم ١٨
تشرين الثاني ٢٠٠٦ على يد مجموعة مسلحة إرهابية

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Organizations, Networks, and Groups

Women's Organizations, Groups, and Networks

Al-Rafidain Women's Coalition (RWC)
 Association for Women's Revival
 Association of Women for Women
 Assyrian Women's Association
 Asuda
 Baghdad Women's Association (BWA)
 Center for Widows' Progress and Training
 Chaldean Women's Association
 Civilian Women (*al-Nisa' al-Medeniyyat*)
 Iraqi Independent Women's Group
 Iraqi Mothers' League
 Iraqi Muslim Women's League
 Iraqi Women Journalist's Forum (IWJF)
 Iraqi Women Network (IWN)
 Iraqi Women's League (*al-Rabita*)
 Iraqi Women's League of Kurdistan (*al-Rabita al-Kurdistaniyya*)
 Iraqi Women's Will (IWW)
 Islamic League for Iraqi Women (ILFI)
 Jewel of al-Rafidain
 Kurdistan Islamic Sisters Union
 Organization for Muslim Women in Iraq (*Hawa'una*)
 Organization for Women and Future
 Organization of Women's Freedom in Iraq (OWFI)
 Mihaniat Organization
 Model Iraqi Women Organization
 National Union of Women of Kurdistan
 New Life Organization for Anfal Women
 Rasan Organization
 Rewan Center
 Sisters of Kurdistan Organization

List of Organizations, Networks, and Groups

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Society of Modern Women
 Tory Hawbesh
 Women Empowerment Organization (WEO)
 Women for Progress Center (WPC)
 Women Leadership Institute (WLI)
 Women's Alliance for a Democratic Iraq (WAFDI)
 Women's Association for Reform and Development
 Women's Union of Kurdistan (*Zhinan*)

Civil Society Organizations, Groups, and Networks

Al-Ansar Charity Association
 Civil Initiative to Preserve the Constitution (CIPC)
 Iraqi al-Amel Association (al-Amel)
 Iraqi Civil Society Solidarity Initiative (ICSSI)
 Iraqi Council for Peace and Solidarity (ICPS)
 Iraqi Democratic Future Network
 Iraqi Human Rights Society
 Office of the Iraqi Child
 Organization for Development in Kurdistan
 Organization for Family Well-Being
 Organization for Social Solidarity
 Start Social Development Organization
 Tammuz Organization for Social Development (TOSD)

Political Parties, Coalitions, and Unions

Al-Da'wa Party or Da'wa
 Al-Fazila Party
 Federation of Worker Councils and Unions in Iraq
 Iraqi Communist Party (ICP)
 Iraqi National Alliance
 Iraqi National Movement
 Islamic Group of Kurdistan
 Islamic Supreme Council of Iraq (ISCI)
 Kurdistan Democratic Party (KDP)
 Kurdistan Islamic Union
 Left-Worker Communist Party of Iraq
 Mustamarun Movement
 National Democratic Party
 National Reformist Trend or Tayar al-Islah

xvi List of Organizations, Networks, and Groups

Patriotic Union of Kurdistan (PUK)
Sadrist Movement or *Tayar al-Sadri*
Worker-Communist Party of Iraq

Cultural, Ethnic, and Religious Groups and Centers

Al-Batul Cultural Center
Ashur Banipal Cultural Association
Islamic Institution for Women and Children
Khanzad Social and Cultural Center
Yazidi Cultural Forum

Research Institutions and Centers

Al-Thakalain Study Center
Gender and Violence Studies Center (Sulaymaniyah University)
Iraqiyat Study Center

Governmental Institutions

Bayt al-Hikma al-‘Iraqi
High Council in Charge of Women’s Affairs (Erbil)
Ministry of State in Charge of Women’s Affairs (Baghdad)
Office in Charge of the Struggle against Gender Based Violence (Erbil)
Parliamentary Committee for Women and Children (Iraqi Parliament)

Note on Translation and Transliteration

This book is meant as much for a general reader as it is for specialists. I have preserved Arabic terms when it was possible for words commonly used by non-Arabic speakers and names of places such as cities, neighborhoods, and institutions. I have generally followed the transliteration guidelines of the *International Journal of Middle East Studies* but have not used diacritical long vowel marks.