

UN envoy 'confident' Baghdad and Erbil can work hand in hand to overcome differences

26 October 2017 – Even as Iraq breathes a sigh of relief with the defeat of the Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant (ISIL or Da'esh), it has been hit by another crisis – one between Baghdad, the capital, and Erbil, in the Kurdistan region – the top United Nations official in the country has said.

“The post-Da'esh period has brought to the fore many serious problems that accumulated over the years and remain unresolved,” Ján Kubiš, the Special Representative of the Secretary-General for Iraq, [said](#) Tuesday.

“Challenged by the unilaterally declared independence referendum Baghdad has taken steps to re-assert the constitutional order, re-establish the federal authority,” he added, noting that the strained Baghdad-Erbil relations, including deficiencies in the implementation of the Iraqi Constitution.

According to Mr. Kubiš, the developments have, sadly, triggered confrontation between the erstwhile partners who worked together to overthrow dictatorship in the country and, more recently, fought together against ISIL.

The differences have also added to insecurity, fragmentation and difficulties, bringing about new waves of displacements, this time mostly of Kurds.

Adding that the UN continues to closely monitor the situation, provide humanitarian assistance to communities affected as well as work to protect human rights, guided by the principle of impartiality and with the interests of Iraqi people – including in Kurdistan region – at heart, Mr. Kubiš expressed confidence that Iraq will be able to overcome the crisis.

“A solution lies primarily in stopping military activities and in de-escalation, including ending public inflammatory statements and confrontational actions,” he said, also highlighting the need for dialogue between Baghdad and Erbil on the basis of the Constitution.

Stressing the importance of preserving the unity and re-establishing stability of the country and peaceful coexistence amongst all Iraqis, based on equal rights and justice in the condition of good and democratic governance, the UN envoy said that the UN stands ready to provide needed assistance, if requested.

“We are confident that the Government of Iraq and the Kurdistan regional government, just like they banded together to defeat Da'esh, can work hand in hand to overcome their differences through dialogue and away from confrontation to resolve all outstanding issues in a manner that is consistent with the Constitution,” he concluded.