

## TRANSFORMATIONS OF THE DRUG PHENOMENON IN IRAQ

<sup>1</sup>HAIDER DAWOOD SALMAN ASSIST <sup>2</sup>PROF AMAL WAHAB ABDULLAH  
 haiderdawood1981@uomustansiriyah.edu.iq / amalabdallh7979@gmail.com  
 Al-Mustansiriya University / College of Political Science

### **Abstract**

*The study of the research investigates the effects of the drug phenomenon with the political, security and economic transformations witnessed by Iraqi society before and after 2003 and the lies of this deadly phenomenon, which is no longer a transient health and social problem, Rather, it turned into a predicament facing the political decision-maker, accompanied by repercussions threatened by behavioral deviations, family disintegration, disruption of work energies and the spread of organized crime.*

*Keywords: investigates, phenomenon, predicament, repercussions*

### **INTRODUCTION**

Throughout its long history, Iraq has known stages of well-being, progress and economic and social prosperity, and other stages of decline and the spread of negative phenomena, including the phenomenon of drugs, which reflected its effects on Iraqi social construction with its different sects. It caused a defect in the value balance of social and family structure, especially after the American occupation in 2003, and the accompanying rapid changes in the social and political lifestyle, especially in the segment of young people most affected and accepting change and modernity, and the many and great negatives that accompanied him to multiple social segments accompanied by the phenomenon of ethnic and tribal conflicts, as well as the phenomenon of unemployment, forced migration and the loss or abandonment of family to search for work, The state's security situation contributed to its inability to control political borders and its openness to neighboring countries, which facilitated the drug trade that entered with the occupation forces and promoted them by its own means in order to keep young people from targeting its military forces. These new situations paved the way for the increase in drug crime rates in their various forms and the emergence of their different consequences for society. Drug crimes have witnessed several radical transformations in their nature, rates and methods of committing them, and the characteristics and quality of narcotic substances used and addicted in different forms for the years before 2003.

Accordingly, the study was divided into two demands. The first demand included the transformations that occurred in drug crimes before 2003, and the second demand was the transformations that occurred in drug crimes after 2003.


### **RESEARCH PROBLEM**

The drug problem in Iraq is one of the contemporary problems, which requires a statement and description of this problem in Iraq as one of its deadly threats to the social, economic and political security of the country. It is accompanied by repercussions threatened by behavioral deviations, family disintegration, disruption of work capacities, the spread of organized crime and its alliance with the system of corruption and money laundering.

Accordingly, the research entails the phenomenon of drugs and its escalation with the political, security and economic transformations witnessed by Iraqi society before and after 2003, and the scourge of this deadly phenomenon, which is no longer a transient health and social problem, but transformations to a predicament facing the political decision-maker.

In light of the above, our study raises the above questions:

1. What are the most prominent transformations witnessed by the contemporary reality of Iraq, especially after 2003?

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2. How were the transformations of Iraqi society before and after 2003 associated with the aggravation of the phenomenon of drugs and the escalation of criminal behavior?

#### RESEARCH HYPOTHESIS

The political, economic and social transformations of Iraqi society imposed psychological and social pressures resulting from terrorism, violence and internal and external conflicts that contributed to narrowing the margin of moral governance, undermining public morals, and falling into the trap of trafficking and abuse to escape poverty and destitution, especially as it is a means of money laundering and illicit trafficking.

#### RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

To achieve the objectives of the research, the researcher resorted to the combination of inductive and analytical methodologies.

The first went from the specific facts to the formulation of holistic conclusions of partial introductions and advances that contributed to the spread of the drug phenomenon.

As for the analytical approach, the researcher relied on it through an analysis of the drug phenomenon in Iraq using contemporary facts, information and statistical data available as much as possible to describe and interpret the phenomenon under study and to enrich the contents and contents of the research.

#### **The first requirement: Shifts in drug crimes in Iraq before 2003**

Iraq did not know the drugs in their current form during the 1940s and 1950s, it existed, but in a very limited way. Iraq recorded several cases which are few compared to the percentage of the population at that time, but with the obsolescence of years and according to international standards, Iraq was declared a state free of the phenomenon of drug use and spread in 1972, Iraq's record in this field was not serious, and drug addiction was not known and common<sup>(1)</sup>. One of the things that has been underestimated the use and spread of drugs in Iraq is the mind that rejects this situation, although Iraq is one of the transit countries for narcotic substances according to its geographical location, Studies issued by the United Nations have proven that transit countries consume 10% of the narcotic substances that pass through them and that Iraq mediates countries that produce, and countries that consume narcotic drugs and psychotropic substances, making it vulnerable to drug users<sup>(2)</sup>.

Iraq is one of the few countries free from the spread of drug crimes in terms of abuse, addiction or trafficking, and the country in which the amount of drugs was seized is considered the lowest amount compared to other Arab countries during 1993, It did not increase (42 kg) of cannabis, (237 gm) of heroin, compared to the total value of drugs seized in the Arab countries, which is estimated at about (531905,648) US dollars<sup>(3)</sup>.

Iraqi society was distinguished from the rest of the surrounding societies, as the prevailing customs at the time and the social and cultural structures had a great impact on the general behavior of Iraqi society, as social factors, prevailing customs and religious determinants were often factors that had an impact on the general movement of members of society. Iraq was far from its regional neighborhood, in many practices prepared by these customs and determinants, things that must be moved away from practicing, but during the period of the siege imposed on Iraq and a natural result of the series of destructive wars fought by Iraq one of the most important repercussions is the eight-year-Iraq-Iranian war and expatriate employment such as the Egyptians and the unjust siege during the 1990s, and because of the absurdity of the previous political system, Iraqi society began to indicate immoral cases, including the disintegration of the family and the spread of moral corruption, as it began to spread among the youth group, especially the phenomenon of the use of



locally manufactured narcotic substances, bad under the pretext of forgetting reality or as an alternative to alcoholic beverages and wines that have become expensive, Or as a means of salvation from the scourge of war, this phenomenon began to leak into the Iraqi social body, announcing the alarm and that society is at the gates of radical changes that lead it to the abyss<sup>(4)</sup>. Where there were only a few cases of substance abuse in some street children and beggars, with limited cases of drug use in some inmates of correctional institutions, Which was the result of the psychological anxiety felt by some inmates and the continuous thinking about how to spend the legal punishment imposed on them within the correctional institution, which makes some inmates resort to taking these narcotic pills in the belief that it will reduce thinking and psychological anxiety within the correctional institution<sup>(5)</sup>.

One of the most prominent reasons for the lack of drug use in Iraq at that time was that traditional Iraqi culture rejects drugs, as the Iraqi citizen viewed the user (the substance of cannabis) with suspicion and ridicule and strongly criticized him, As the user poses a danger to society because of his disordered behavior and loss of mental and motor balance, which makes him vulnerable to deviation from positive behavior, The severe penalties that were affecting the perpetrators of drug promotion and abuse crimes constituted a deterrent in restricting the freedom of deviant offenders to use and trade drugs, The Iraqi Drug Law No. (68) of (1965) established the penalty of criminalizing drugs up to life imprisonment or death and confiscation of movable and immovable property, for every person who trades or contributes to the promotion of drugs in Iraq<sup>(6)</sup>.

During that period, Iraq did not witness the existence of criminal organizations that are professional in the promotion, smuggling or trade of narcotic substances, as a result of the severe legal, political, security and social restrictions that were imposed on the deviant elements, This made Iraq in the late twentieth century one of the cleanest countries in the world in the field of drug use and trafficking, according to the data of the United Nations and the Drug Control Commission, as Iraq was not named as a country suffering from this deadly phenomenon<sup>(7)</sup>.

### **The second requirement: Shifts in drug crimes after 2003**

The change in April of 2003, carried with it many transformations that affected all the facilities of life in Iraqi society, which allowed many of what was represented in socially forbidden areas, as the change carried with it cases of departure from the ordinary after many determinants were met, It no longer exists legally until the law reached the lowest level of deterioration in its application, after the dominance of unbridled weapons, terrorism (ISIS), bribery and financial corruption over everything around it, economic differences increased to form a dangerous turn between the categories of Iraqi society, after the change carried with it the demolition shifts of all the values that prevailed ,Which pushed much towards absolute wealth while others suffered from the pity of living, as well as insecurity, justifications for coercive measures and the loss of the state of power that prevailed, The inability of successive governments to impose the power of the state because of its weakness and rivalry against power, all these motives led to the spread in society of phenomena that were never a difficult number in the social, moral and cultural equation, including the phenomenon of drug abuse and trafficking, and even to manufacture them locally<sup>(8)</sup>.

### **The most important transformations of drug crimes in Iraq can be explained through the ass: First: The shift in drug crime rates**

The problem of the spread of drugs in Iraq began to increase after the US occupation in 2003, as before that it was just treatments and precedents for the spread of the phenomenon, but the

insecurity witnessed by the country led to the expansion of the drug trade and its reaching unprecedented borders, This is because of the American invasion of Iraq and the chaos and insecurity left by the state of war and the manifestation and alienation that the citizen was living, under the shadow of repeated wars, economic blockade, lack of job opportunities, and the high cost of living, All these conditions met to provide an environment conducive to increasing rates of drug addiction and illicit drug use at rates similar to the Arab countries surrounding Iraq.

Iraq recorded the number of addicts to narcotic drugs and psychotropic substances at the Iraqi Ministry of Health / Drug Control for the year 2008, (1462) cases of addiction, as some studies in Iraq indicated that most of the addicts are from the category of young people aged (18 years) and older, so the percentage was as indicated in Table No. (1) and (2):-<sup>(9)</sup>

**Table No. (1): It shows the distribution of addiction cases by governor-ate and by sex for the year (2008)**

The total	Females	Males	The governor-ate
468	26	442	Baghdad
329	-	329	Basra
249	-	249	Najaf
119	-	119	Babylonia
108	6	102	Karbala
81	-	81	Dhi Qar
61	19	42	Diyal
24	-	24	Muthanna
22	1	21	Diwaniya
1462	52	1410	The total

**Table No. (2): Shows the distribution of addiction cases by age for the year 2008**

The total	Over the age of 18	Under 17 years old	The governor-ate
468	439	29	Baghdad
329	329	-	Basra
249	249	-	Najaf

The total	Over the age of 18	Under 17 years old	The governor-ate
119	117	2	Babylon
108	104	4	karbala
81	70	11	Dhi Qar
61	46	15	Diyla
24	24	-	Muthanna <sup>1</sup>
21	21	-	Diwanayah
1	1	-	Kirkuk
1462	1401	61	The total

It is clear from the above tables that the highest percentage of reviewers of health institutions in terms of getting rid of drug addiction in Iraq is the province of Baghdad, as it recorded the highest percentage of addiction among the rest of the provinces. As it is considered one of the most populated cities in Iraq, followed by the governorates of Basra and Najaf, as the above table indicates, the rate of addiction among males is much higher than among females, knowing that the number of govern-orates covered by the survey conducted by the Iraqi Ministry of Health was ten govern-orates, and therefore these statistical data, It does not specify in detail the severity of the phenomenon of drug addiction and the extent of its spread to the reality of Iraqi society, but it nevertheless indicates the high rates of drug and psychotropic substance crimes, patterns and trends now and in the future, as well as indicates the extent of the prevalence of drug and psychotropic substance crimes in the southern governorates in addition to the capital Baghdad, The increase in addiction rates, especially among the youth and events category, has been accompanied by the increase in drug trafficking rates to Iraq. Drug traffickers have been able to introduce large quantities with the participation of international gangs based on well-organized networks and equipped with great potential to flood the country with different types of drugs. As the cases of seizure of narcotic pills in the Iraqi street are constantly increasing, as the Ministry of Interior indicated in (2012) that the security services have seized narcotic substances and drug traffickers in some southern govern-orates, so they confiscated those materials and referred the perpetrators to the judiciary <sup>(10)</sup>.

Reports from the Ministry of Health in Baghdad and in the southern provinces confirmed that three out of ten young people between the ages of (18-30 years) are addicted to drugs, and that the cases of heroin addicts in the outskirts of Baghdad alone increased from 3,000 cases in (2004) to (7 thousand) in (2008).

It seems to us through Table No. (2) on the ages of civilians in this study and there was a case similar to the upward count, as the percentage of users increases with the increase in the age of addicts, and its proximity to the stage of (adolescence), which is one of the most dangerous stage experienced by the individual. The result is worth considering when implementing preventive programs, as the target group of this program must fall within this age group. It must be noted to cities. This phenomenon has spread among students, schools and Iraqi universities, as it reached

<sup>10</sup>Amjad Abdel Reda Al-Quraishi and a group of researchers, in the era of drug addiction, Ministry of Health, Baghdad, 2014, p.5.



about 20% of that segment in its latest statistics, which is dangerous and possible to increase<sup>(11)</sup>. As the narcotic pills invaded the pockets of college, institute and school students, some of them worked for abuse and also as a material for the hospitality of friends, but most of them were moving to a second stage after a while and began to use cannabis. Some of them are moving into a catastrophic stage to heroin and cocaine.

### **Second: Transformation in narcotic substances in Iraq**

Iraqi society before (2003) was witnessing the use of some deviant groups of young people and the creation of narcotic pills in abundance because of their cheap prices and availability in pharmacies, in addition to the fact that the effect of these pills is no less effective than drugs (natural plant), And its derivatives, which spare them from drinking alcohol, as well as some deviant events and youth return to inhaling gum and suction because they contain some narcotic substances<sup>(12)</sup>. Iraq did not witness in that period the presence of synthetic synthetic drugs such as cocaine and heroin, which is spreading in the countries surrounding Iraq such as Iran and Turkey.

However, after (2003), Iraq witnessed a qualitative transformation in the manufacture of drugs and their various forms, as new types of narcotic substances appeared that were unknown in Iraq. It has become a transit point for the drug trade and is classified as a transit country according to the Arab Bureau for Drug Affairs of the Council of Arab Interior Ministers, which considered Iraq as a transit country or so-called (transit) to transport heroin produced in Afghanistan and Iran to the countries of Europe, the Mediterranean and the Arabian Gulf<sup>(13)</sup>. Drug traffickers have been able to bring large and diverse amounts of drugs into Iraq with the participation of international gangs based on well-organized networks and equipped with great potential to flood the country with various types of drugs, most notably cannabis and heroin.

### **Third: Shift in ways and means of committing drug crimes**

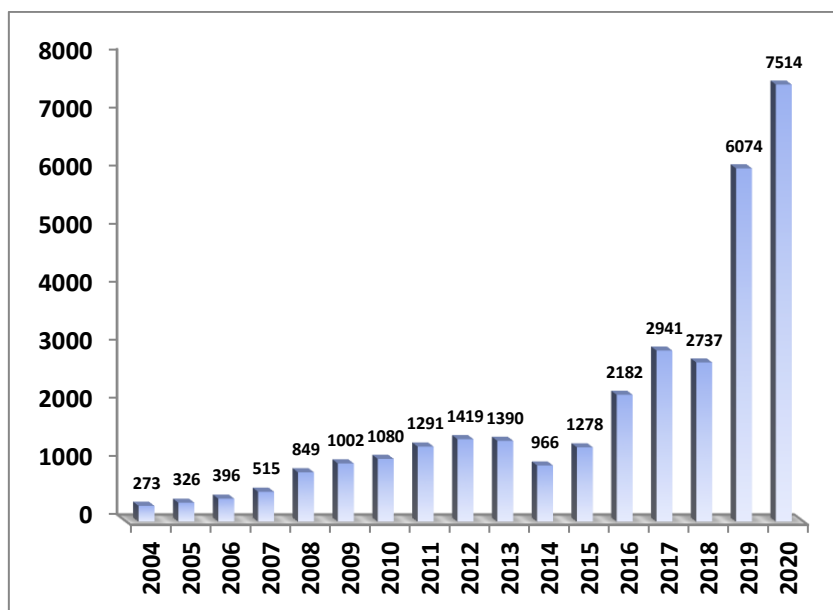
The reality of drug crimes in Iraq after (2003) witnessed a new pattern in terms of organization and methods and means of committing these crimes, as security reports indicated that the crimes of narcotic drugs and psychotropic substances are no longer limited to trying to abuse and addiction to certain proportions of narcotic substances, It was also not limited to a group of perverted individuals united by a perverted culture encouraging crime, but it has become a serious social and criminal phenomenon, as it is one of the organized crimes that uses techniques and technical plans to implement it<sup>(14)</sup>. Where gangs or so-called (mafias) smuggling and drug traffickers took advantage of the weakness of social control, the imbalance of legal control and the opening of borders with neighboring countries in order for thousands of tons of various types of drugs and psychotropic substances to enter it, As drugs are smuggled by hiding them in travel bags or hiding them in innovative technical means in goods, foodstuffs, goods in them and others, and large traders of these narcotic substances participate in their smuggling and distribution, and they hide these materials in camouflaged stores under the name of foodstuffs or some household appliances, Some security reports indicated that the warehouses of the Al-Batawin area in Baghdad provide most parts of Baghdad with narcotic substances such as heroin and narcotic grains and even extended their services to other areas of Iraq<sup>(15)</sup>.

The methods and means of abuse and addiction vary from one region to another, where heroin and cannabis abuse expand among the rich classes, The intake of narcotic and addictive pills is common in the poorest areas. The shift in the nature of the criminal organization of gangs of narcotic drugs and psychotropic substances can be considered a negative result of the political and social changes that Iraq witnessed after (2003), Criminal organizations have exploited the security chaos in Iraq,



as well as modern transportation in transportation, financial transformations and the opening of borders to the movement of the flow of goods and commercial goods, which allowed those conditions to spread drugs in various ways and means that are more professional and skilled than before. The Scheme No. (1) below also shows the number of defendants who were arrested for several crimes from (2004 to 2020) issued by the Ministry of Interior of the Directorate General for Drug Affairs, and the tableNo. (3) below represents the number of registered and discovered drug crimes and the percentage for 2022<sup>(16)</sup>.

**Scheme No. (1): Accused of drug crimes for the period from 2004 to 2020**



Source: Prepared by the researcher based on the statistics of the Ministry of Interior

It is clear from Chart No. (1) of the accused who were arrested by the security forces from the period (2004 to 2020), It seems to us through the above plan for the accused, and there was something like the ascending count, as the percentages of crimes rise with the increase in the number of addicts and we notice there is a difference in numbers and percentages, which is the most dangerous stage experienced by Iraqi society, The reason for this is that the lack of social justice, rampant corruption and unemployment have made crime a socially acceptable situation.

**Table No. (3): Represents the number of recorded and discovered drug crimes and the percentage for 2022**

Percentage of the discoverer	Preparing discovered the drug crimes	Preparation registered of drug crimes	Directorates
%100	1832	1832	Baghdad
%88	1602	1816	Babylon
%98	710	728	Basra
%100	714	714	Wasit
%95	482	509	Diwaniyah <sup>l</sup>

%97	446	458	Diyala
%82	304	373	Nineveh
%98	335	341	Dhi Qar
%100	326	326	Najaf
%100	302	302	Anbar
%100	271	271	Karbala
%100	211	211	Muthanna
%97	191	197	Maysan
%89	173	195	Salah al-Din
%100	164	164	kirkuk
%100	8	8	Baghdad crimes
%96	8071	8445	The total

Source: Ministry of Interior, Ministry Agency for Police Affairs

It is clear from the table above for the year (2022) that the province of Baghdad is the first among the rest of the Iraqi provinces in the preparation of drug crimes registered by (1832), and then the province of Babylon comes in second place in terms of the number of registered drug crimes by (1816), It is an access point between the central and southern govern-orates, and then the province of Basra comes in third place in the number of drug crimes recorded (728) through the table above, As for the rest of the provinces, they share something through the proportions in the number of drug crimes, it is clear to us that the crimes of narcotic drugs and psychotropic substances in Iraq have reached a degree of organization, organized crime, fraud and deception in order to avoid falling under the law.<sup>(17)</sup>

### CONCLUSION

Iraq faced political, economic and social advances and challenges before and after 2003, coinciding with a remarkable rise in the levels of the spread of the drug phenomenon, which was accompanied by the intersection of criminal behavior threatening the safety and security of society. As this negative phenomenon of its current size and the extent of its increase locally represents an emergency and new situation in Iraqi reality. This deadly phenomenon is increasing and its risks are exacerbated in the conditions of wars, conflicts, security deterioration and economic crises. As some segments of society, including the youth group in particular, are exposed, this target group has often been subjected to forms of exclusion, social and economic marginalization, limited employment and weak growth. The spread of this phenomenon economically for money laundering, rapid profit, organized crimes and the generation of sustainable crises left deep scars in the Iraqi body that threaten the opportunities of empowerment and development and improve the quality and sustainability of life, Health, environmental and educational problems have also worsened and development rates have declined due to the erosion of societal capacities, which have also sized traditional confrontational mechanisms and created a complex atmosphere fraught with fragility and risks, and put the state in front of challenges that portend escalating repercussions at the security, social and economic levels. The urgent need to protect the security and stability of society and its development future by adopting a conscious strategy according to an integrated national vision. In light of our study, we propose the following preventive and deterrence treatments:





1. Activating strict and deterrent laws against anyone who practices the cultivation, manufacture and promotion of narcotic substances, tightening the death penalty and confiscating movable and immovable property.
2. 2-Developing statistical centers to follow up the transformations of drug crimes in Iraq and the extent of the escalation of this deadly phenomenon and providing statistics and graphs to the official authorities concerned in the fight against drugs, as well as providing these data to researchers interested in trapping and addressing this negative phenomenon.
3. Improve the quality of life and adopt containment strategies and supportive means to develop the skills of young people and the unemployed who have been involved over the days in the groups of users, as well as setting standards and mechanisms to integrate them, contain and psychological health care, and urge families and educational and educational institutions to activate and stimulate the elements of socialization of the young generation to become a good actor in society through more awareness guidelines and educational seminars supporting the fight and besieging the drug phenomenon.

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