**Iraqi Youth and Suicide**

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The paper reviews medical reports, official and documented statistics and other press releases on youth suicides in Iraq and arises these questions:

* Has the youth suicide rate in Iraq increased after 2003 compared to before 2003?
* Is the rate touch the rate level of their counterparts in the Arab and European countries?
* Are the causes of youth suicide in Iraq the same as compared to the Arab and foreign countries, or they exceed in severity and quality?
* Are mental health institutions able to contain youth suicides or suffer a lack of specialized staff and other requirements?
* What should the Basra Conference (March 2019) do to deal with suicides among young people including recommendations of this paper?

**Suicide..Globally:**

* Between 800,000 and 1 million people commit suicide every year, at a rate of one person every 40 seconds, according to(WHO)
* In 2015, suicide is the second leading cause of death among 15 to 29-year-old.
* Between 10 to 20 million failed suicide attempts each year, most of them among young men and women.
* According to the (WHO) of the list of countries by suicide rate, Japan ranked ninth, Switzerland, ranking 22, Kuwait came in order (89), Syria (98), Egypt (100) and Iraq did not reply.
* Sweden reports 1544 suicides in one year and 1500 suicides in 2017 due to extreme happiness!

**Iraqi Suicide..Evidence:**

• Iraqi society has witnessed a rise in suicide rates, especially among young people and adolescents (AL-Hayat, January 2016)

• The Ministry of Human Rights has obtained certain information about the increase in suicides rates in Karbala province, most of them are young men and girls (Ministry of Human Rights).

• The police command of Dhi-Qar province revealed, that the number of recorded suicides since the beginning of 2013 till the end of May was 17 cases of individuals who are less than 25 years old (Sumerian news, May 2013)

• In March 2014, the Iraqi Human Rights Commission published a statistic report, which revealed the highest rate of suicide in the southern governorates, the first of which was the governorate of Dhi-Qar (199 cases) in 2013 (Al-Quds Al-Arabi Newspaper). Iraqi judiciary recently stated that during the year of 2016 Baghdad, Karbala and Dhi Qar topped suicide cases of 22, 23, 38 cases respectively (Alhura Iraq, 5/7/2017).

• “A state of anxiety and fear in Basrah province after increasing suicides cases and touching worrying levels which make it a phenomenon,” (Google).

**Differences in the estimated number of suicides**

**Position -1**

• A study of Iraqi psychiatrists in English (2016), indicated that suicide rates in Iraq are lower than the rate of suicide globally "*the suicide rate is lower than the global rate*". The study also indicated that 24% of the suicides suffer from psychiatric disorders.

• “*The rate of suicide in Iraq compared to the population is one of the lowest in the world. I mean it is less than 15% of the suicide rates in Britain and less than 5% of their ratios in Scandinavia or Hungary.* Dr Riyad Abdul, consultant, psychiatry, UK

**Positions-2**

* The phenomenon of suicide among Iraqi young citizens has recently escalated in an unprecedented way(AL-Arabi AL-Jadeed Newspaper).
* The phenomenon of suicide is worsening in Iraq (Yaqeen news agency).
* The Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR) stated that "633 suicides were officially recorded in Iraq during 2013, most of them young citizens with an increase of 60% from 2012″.
* The high rates of suicide after the regime change (2003) have not happened in the history of Iraq before that, (Salih, Modern Discussion-2018).

**Displacement**

When we studied the causes of girl's suicide in the camps, we found Special reasons like:

* A girl adores the beauty of life and losing it drives her to commit suicide.
* Loss of life and academic future.

 And General reasons like:

* Prolonged displacement without a solution.
* The feeling of humiliation and frustration as a result of oppression, loss of dignity and social status, and the sudden transition from a respectable lifestyle to one that is unworthy of human beings.

**Suicide..Iraqi psychology**

 : **What causes the number of suicides in Iraq to be doubled in a period officially defined as "democratic"?**

 The traditional causes of suicide are:

1. Unemployment in the youth sector,
2. Deterioration of socio-economic conditions;
3. Outdated and uncivilized habits and social traditions.

Two issues have happened in the democratic time: -

**First**: The intensity and severity of the traditional causes after the change have been increased (2003).

**Second**: The emergence of new and exclusive (Iraqi) causes of suicide.

The new (Iraqi) causes of suicide are summarized as follows:

* Successive disappointments. Iraqi has been patient for fifteen years after (2003). Because patience has its limits and endurance, some of those who were out of patient commit suicide as the last resort to their problems.
* Feeling of inequality, injustice and regret.
* Depression, despair and reaching the state of inability.
* Failure of power .let people lives a miserable life and ignored their protests from February (2011) to date.
* Promoting of frustration. The local and social media are spreading frustration by continuously countdown the hope, especially via social media like Facebook such as:
	+ Such a passive people who reject every movement towards salvation.
	+ Changing the situation in Iraq like the devil's dream in heaven.
* Conflicts, disasters, violence, abuse or loss and feelings of isolation are strongly associated with suicidal behavior, as well as suicide rates are high among vulnerable groups that suffer discrimination, such as refugees and immigrants.
* Health and official reports stated that there is a broad use of drugs and hallucinogens among young people which urged the "Mental Health Department" at "AL-Basra General Hospital" to rise a "distress call" to help them after an extensive use of a drug substance called (Crystal) among young people starting from youths to university students.
* According to a study titled (Death of God in Iraq-J.R.Cole),that (32%) of Iraqis "no longer believe in God's existence", and "a large segment of Iraqi youth has converted to atheism during the last years.The global studies stated that the rate of suicide among atheists is higher than among religious people.

**Recommendations**

• Consolidating the efforts of: -

* Concerned mental health institutions,
* The Iraqi Society for Medical Research and Studies,
* The Iraqi Psychiatrists Association,
* The Iraqi Psychological Society,

In order to develop a scientific plan to reduce the suicide phenomenon in Iraq.

**We Invite…**

* Departments of psychology, educational and psychological counselling and sociology from all Iraqi universities to coordinate among themselves in order to interact with the suicide phenomenon within the university community in particular.
* Writers, intellectuals and media to stop spreading the "Culture of Despair" and to promote the "Culture of Optimism" and to love life.
* The Ministry of Interior to implement strict measures to prevent the entry of drugs into Iraq.
* The Iraqi Parliament to adopt the recommendations of AL-Basra Conference (2019) and to cooperate with it to achieve the required researches and studies that aimed at reducing the suicide phenomenon and to provide the required financial support to complete those studies and researches.
* The media (TV, radio, social media, digital and hardcopy newspapers..) to provide specialized programmes directed to solve psychological and social problems and promoting psychological knowledge similar to a drama programme (Beware of Despair-حذار من اليأس), which has been broadcasted for (17) years from Radio Baghdad (1991 – 2008),then 8 years in Alsabah Paper (2005-2011).

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