
KRG and the Crisis Management Challenge

21-10-2020

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Abstract

The Kurdistan Region Government (KRG) suffering gravely currently. As it has been for a much time that a variety of crisis are continue. on other hand, the huge amount of studies published during the past years on the concept of the crisis, which tried to address it from various angles, made it difficult to find out what it really is. As this difficulty does not stem from the excessive use of this term in the areas of our daily dealings only, but in what it has done in the process of historical development from expanding the scope of its use. So that, the term "crisis" has become called to many different situations. Therefore, due to the multitude of crisis, in the beginning we have to categorize them. Indeed, categorizing these crises as a first step, is not easy. Where, any solution for any problem should start with delineating the core of the problem. We may classify these crises according to the nature of the crisis in terms of political, economic, administrative, etc. Or we classify them according to the parties; internal crisis within the Kurdistan Region or within the framework of Iraq, or regional crisis with neighboring countries, or international crisis like the terrorism or as is the case of Corona pandemic. Categorizing the crisis experienced by the KRG is important but the most important is the suggestion to resolve those crises whether as to find solutions or to manage the crises.

Crisis as a Concept

In order to properly understand the emerging shape of crisis management it is essential to recognize that in the present discussion the term crisis is used to refer primarily to administrative crisis – where KRG is specifically impacted. This discussion is not intended to focus on societal crisis – including natural disasters such as earthquakes or even climate change.

The concept of the crisis and its characteristics mean the critical and decisive moment that relates to the fate of the administrative entity that suffered from a problem and thus found severe difficulty for the decision-maker due to the lack of data or information. It also defines as a dangerous or unexpected threat to the goals, values, beliefs, and properties of individuals, organizations and states that limit the decision-making process. It is a fateful turning point in the course of an event, characterized by a severe delay, and linked to old tensions that must disappear to be replaced by new connections, and the quantitative and qualitative changes are inherited in this event. [\[1\]](#)

The crisis expresses a situation, a statue, a process and an issue that the decision-maker faces in one of the administrative entities (Government, institution, project, family) in which, events are chased by accidents and overlap and intertwine with causes and results. The matters get mixed up and complicated, to that level that the decision-maker loses his ability to see and insight. The crisis is a critical and decisive moment related to the fate of the administrative entity that afflicted it, creating a severe difficulty for the decision-maker, and any decision taken in light of a cycle of uncertainty, lack of knowledge, and a lack of data and information increases the degree of unknown about the developments of the crisis. [\[2\]](#)

Crisis, in its Greek origin (Krisis), means "decision" and is the defining moment that emerges during an uncertain process of diagnosis and implementation. On the other hand, nowadays crisis means the moment when uncertainty appears in conjunction with a disorder. When the crisis is confined to the economic sector, it can at least be recognized, for instance, by some quantitative characteristics: reduced production and increased unemployment. But when the crisis includes administration, civilization and governance, the crisis as a concept will lose its features, and from it goes to say that something is not right, this at the very least.

The crisis is used to name what cannot be named. This indicates the existence of a double gap: the lack of knowledge of the true meaning of the crisis (knowing the core of the crisis as a term), and the gap in the social reality itself, where the crisis appears.[\[3\]](#)

The British scholar Denis Smith observed in 2005: "The definition of crisis has generated considerable debate within the academic literature and there is no real collective acceptance about the precise meaning of the term."[\[4\]](#)

Therefore, nowadays, there are verity of naming and cycled terms in Kurdistan like governance crisis, electricity crisis, transportation crisis, political, economy, internal, external ...crisis. Uncounted labeling and unenumerated quantity of terms which hinders any deep reading of what is going on in the realty. And what can be planned in order to start the first step towards whether categorizing the events or diagnosing and suggesting the solutions by the KRG.

It is difficult to reach a unified concept of the crisis, especially with the different angles of handling, but it always shares a set of characteristics such as threatening resources, values and goals, the limited time available for making decisions, some of them and lack of information. Likewise, the crisis has seized the interest of many entities, institutions and individuals, in addition to the complexity, intertwining and overlapping of the elements that need to be confronted far from the usual Administrative patterns.

In fact, if we look a little bit accurately, it will become clear that the problem itself is a state of tension and dissatisfaction, caused by some difficulties, that obstacle the achievement of goals. The contours of the problem become evident if the required results are not achieved. Therefore, it is the primary cause of an unwanted situation. Rather, it becomes a prelude to a crisis if it takes a complex path, through which it is difficult to predict the results accurately. In fact, crisis are fundamental, strong and acute problems towards which a feeling of emotion and great pressure is felt, and the continuation of these problems threatens the survival of the administration and destroys its goals, mission and vision. That is, the relationship between the problem and the crisis is closely related. The problem may be the cause of the crisis, but it is not the crisis itself.

Shortly, the main elements of crisis could be: (1) a threat to the entity, (2) the element of surprise, and (3) a short decision time. Some specialist argues that "crisis is a process of transformation where the old system can no longer be maintained". Therefore, the fourth defining quality is the need for change. If change is not needed, the event could more accurately be described as a failure or incident.

With regard to what is going on in the Kurdistan and what the government and individuals are experiencing, it is difficult to say that the element of surprise is among the factors that aggravate the situation or is a direct cause of the existence of a specific crisis at the political, economic or social aspect. Rather, the lack of consideration and examination of previous problems whether or not it remained, by postponing it, is the real reason behind the current worsening situation. In addition to the ongoing conflict, where the central structure was subjected to disruption or turmoil due to the conflict of two or more wills and their contradictory interests, which caused severe negative effects on the government's competence in all fields.

Scientifically, it cannot be said that the government is in crisis. Rather, it is in an ongoing problem or in other word, crisis problem. Due to the absence of a surprise element and the fact that there is ample time to find a solution, but the government's efforts have not succeeded in this area. For example, the problem of electricity and services, the financial and administrative deficit.

nevertheless, there is a strong need to change. The administration to be updated with new features and characters that make it as a system to be acclimated with a status quo. Otherwise, we have to confess that the system should be described as a failure or incident. As, in the field of crisis study there is a strong notion that the crisis is changing shape and the

potential impact is likely to grow.

The Crisis Management concept

The simple concept of managing something is dealing with it to reach the best possible results, in the interests of the person in charge. Hence, crisis management means “dealing with the elements of the crisis situation using a mixture of compromising tools – pressure and compromise – in order to achieve the goals of the state/government and preserve its national interests.”[\[5\]](#)

Crises can neither be avoided nor accurately predicted. When they occur in the public sector, the community rightly expects that their government’s response will minimize negative impact to life and to the operations of important public services and restore the situation to normal as soon as possible. This is what the individual expects from the KRG, or at least this is what has been waiting for to nearly three decades. Reducing risks and providing good opportunities for living and enjoying amenities within the framework of an administrative system that guarantees the dignity of the individual and meets his minimum expectations.

It is noted that the crisis can be aborted at the first stage if “prevention is better than treatment” as a rule is applied. But the inability to abort it puts the administration’s two options; The first is to manage it effectively and adequately, and the second is to surrender and receive its effects that may be destructive to the entity of the administration as a whole. From there, crises require a dexterous management capable of making difficult decisions in difficult confrontations.

The new crises differ significantly from the past in several respects: their unexpectedly large scale, the fact that they are unprecedented or their unusual combination, their trans-boundary nature. These crises bring deep uncertainties and challenge government structures, playing up tensions between many stakeholders in the public and private sectors.[\[6\]](#)

In addition to the emergence of new threats and vulnerabilities, elements to consider in the changing paradigm for crisis managers relate to the evolution of governments. While crisis management will always remain one of their fundamental roles, the wave of privatization and decentralization has reduced overall capacities in many governments to take direct actions to prevent or mitigate risks in sectors that are critical for the well-functioning of societies, such as utilities and infrastructure.[\[7\]](#)

Crisis management has been defined as a technique for dealing with emergencies, as it is a method of controlling a crisis. A planning to deal with situations that cannot be avoided. This administrative technique is applied to deal with these cases when they occur or before they occur, for the purpose of controlling the consequences and the successive damages that may result from the defect that leads to that damage or loss.[\[8\]](#)

Crisis management is the process of identifying a potential issue or crisis and coordinating organizational or inter-organizational response as necessary. Where there is a need to identify lines of authority, roles and responsibilities and means of coordination, in order to create an effective integrated command system, which has been proven to be particularly helpful where crises require a response from an administration.[\[9\]](#)

Through the previous concepts of crisis management, its characteristics can be identified as follows: Using the scientific method in decision-making, managing through a group of competent and trained administrative capabilities, taking a set of exceptional measures that go beyond the usual descriptions of administrative duties, then minimizing losses.

Accordingly, the main factors affecting crisis management are:[\[10\]](#)

The size of the risks (losses and damages resulting from the risk), the extent of control over the environment through people, their training, the provision of the required tools, and the speed in the confrontation, time available to act and

take action, and number of options available.

In regards the aforementioned factors, in relation with the KRG situation, it is known that KRG, since its establishment in 1992, has faced grave and great difficulties and challenges, both in terms of the size of the risks or the losses resulting from them. Having to say, those dangers are still continuing up to this writing. A simple reading of the Kurdistan reality from various aspects, current or past, will simply conclude that facing the dangers for the KRG is a reality and has become a fait accompli. The important thing is not to highlight this fact in order to be a justification for the status quo, but the most important thing is how the KRG was able to confront these dangers with a scientific approach. Within the framework of what was mentioned above when talking about the content of crisis management as an effective applied technique for getting out of the intractable problem. Unfortunately, these problems persisted, and even magnified and increased their severe negative effects, which is the tangible result now.

Knowing that the extent of the KRG's control over the Kurdistan environment, when compared in time, was wider and more in control in the first half of the first decade and whole second decade of the KRG's reign. This is in terms of controlling people and training them or controlling resources and then providing the necessary devices and tools to confront and solve problems, or at least prevent them from reaching the current stage.

The persistence of the problems plaguing the government for nearly three decades, without a doubt, sufficient evidence of abundant time and plenty, in front of the KRG to discuss the root of the crisis problems and find a solution! Other than, it is proof of failure in managing the problem until it became aggravated and today becomes an intractable problem (crisis problems). The length of the reign itself, is sufficient to work, at least, to reduce and limit the risks emerging from these problems, in addition to the numerous options that KRG gained. Options in terms of human resources and financial and economic capabilities, especially during the second decade of the KRG's reign (2002 – 2012), as the Kurdistan Region witnessed unparalleled openness and a massive economic boom. It would have simply been an essential factor and an effective tool to solve many of the problems that the KRG is currently suffering from, or it would have directly contributed to the effective management of those problems until a satisfactory solution is reached.

However, the scourge of corruption has ruined all these opportunities and nullified the options, but rather led to keeping the problems intractable as a crisis problem. In a way that allows some to say that the KRG is managing by crisis. This in particular is the biggest and most difficult challenge facing the KRG.

Managing by Crisis

The ruling rule in crisis management is that every crisis is a problem and not every problem is a crisis, meaning that there are some small problems that may exacerbate and extend their effects to states and peoples in the event that they are not addressed immediately. In the sense that there is some slowdown in that, while each crisis appears to be a complex multi-dimensional problem.[\[11\]](#) In the science of risk and crisis management, delay in taking a decision may turn the problem into a crisis.

There is a difference between three concepts circulating in management thinking related to the crisis, namely: management by crisis, management by exception, and crisis management. Management by crisis is the process of generating crises from nothing and fabricating them with the aim of diverting attention away from the existing problems and directing attention to other issues far from the real problems facing the administration i.e. contrived crises. On this basis, and through the previous definitions, crisis management is defined as a scientific technique that includes a scientific and rational approach that makes the organization able to overcome the crisis, its pressures and negatives, and benefit from its positives.

Dealing with the crisis situation and managing the crisis requires the use of several advanced management methods that

work to achieve the appropriate climate to deal with the crisis. Hence, crisis management needs special administrative needs as well as special management skills, hence again, some call it the term management by exception. Where administrative orders deviate from the path of regular orders, and from the existing organizational structure, the authorities become removed and assigned to a Task Force that has all the powers and responsibilities to deal with the crisis.^[12]

A careful reading of the role of the crisis in general leads us to touch a thread that leads us to the fact that the societies in which the leadership hierarchy relied on special and efficient teams in dealing with crises were harder to return and more on obedience and continuity than their peers who adopted a different approach represented by the improvised response and dealing in ill-considered ways. In advance with hotbeds of conflict and tension, what thus led to its weakness and disintegration.

Accurate scientific monitoring of the factors of success in crisis management should focus on the most important factors directly related to the situation of the crisis and the different stages of its development, and in this context, we focus on the following factors:^[13]

Realize the importance of time, create a comprehensive and accurate database of information, always prepared to face crises, availability of efficient and accurate early warning system with ability to detect danger signs, ability to mobilize and mobilize available resources

In fact, management by crisis is matched by another method by the opposite party, which is crisis management. As this critical situation created by the first party calls for the opponent to intensify all its capabilities and harness its full powers to get out of this crisis with gains or with minimal losses.

Indeed, the results are not always satisfactory to those who created the crisis. At least that is what past experience tells us.

From this standpoint, it is hard to believe that the KRG is managing by crisis. Simply because talking about the crisis problems that the KRG suffers from, is talking about the KRG's position as the administrator of another party, whom is individuals or the people. It is unreasonable to say that the problem being aggravated by the KRG intentionally. Because it is the party that, as a result, should deal with the problematic situation and find a solution to the crisis. Such a hypothesis, no one imagines except in the case of a corruption. And this is what actually applies to KRG.'s current situation. As the corruption indeed led to eliminate the aforementioned factors of success in crisis management.

There is a reform act, but there is also a slowdown in its implementation. The KRG has all information and data base for each problematic filed, but there is no transparency. The corruption paralyzed the KRG for preparation to any surprise. Finally, the KRG has the ability to mobilize available resources but for political purpose and in the context of a political conflict, not to find a solution to a crisis problem. Nutshell, corruption is the mere challenge of crisis management for KRG.

[1] [http://www.siironline.org/alabwab/edare-%20eqtesad\(27\)/1447.htm](http://www.siironline.org/alabwab/edare-%20eqtesad(27)/1447.htm)

[2] https://www.google.com/url?sa=t&rct=j&q=&esrc=s&source=web&cd=&ved=2ahUKEwif07Sjjq3sAhWDmeAKHV1UDmsQFjAMegQIDRAC&url=http%3A%2F%2Fwww.uobabylon.edu.iq%2Fprints%2Fpubdoc_11_25447_5012.docx&usg=AOvVaw1SYIT0hWyW47jZqmlF7aJ8

[3] https://books.google.com.sa/books?id=CKpqDwAAQBAJ&pg=PA12&lpg=PA12&dq=%D9%85%D9%81%D9%87%D9%88%D9%85+%D8%A7%D9%84%D8%A7%D8%B2%D9%85%D8%A9&source=bl&ots=hA53LDDUUg&sig=ACfU3U3e4SB3jujpiNVxy9epCc8mq1Q_hQ&hl=en&sa=X&ved=2ahUKEwif07Sjjq3sAhWDmeAKHV1UDmsQ6AEwEnoECB0QA#v=o

[4] <http://www.issueoutcomes.com.au/Websites/issueoutcomes/Images/Reshaping%20crisis%20management%20ODJ.pdf>

[5] <https://www.lebarmy.gov.lb/ar/content/%D8%A5%D8%AF%D8%A7%D8%B1%D8%A9%D8%A7%D9%84%D8%A3%D8%B2%D9%85%D9%80%D8%A7%D8%AA%D8%A7%D9%84%D8%A5%D8%AF%D8%A7%D8%B1%D8%A9-%D8%A7%D9%84%D8%A3%D9%85%D9%8A%D8%B1%D9%83%D9%8A%D8%A9%D9%88%D8%A7%D9%84%D8%A5%D8%B3%D8%B1%D8%A7%D8%A6%D9%8A%D9%84%D9%8A%D8%A9%D9%84%D9%84%D8%A3%D8%B2%D9%85%D8%A7%D8%AA%D9%86%D9%85%D9%88%D8%B0%D8%AC%D9%8B%D8%A7>

[6] <https://www.mmc.com/content/dam/mmc-web/Files/Strategic-Crisis-Management-paper-July-2013.pdf> like the COVID-19 crisis and the global response. In this regard, relating to the KRG. Please see the previous published article on: <http://rudawrc.net/en/?p=319>.

[7] <https://www.mmc.com/content/dam/mmc-web/Files/Strategic-Crisis-Management-paper-July-2013.pdf>

[8] إدارة الازمات: الأسس والتطبيقات، الأستاذ الدكتور غسان قاسم داوود اللامي و الأستاذ المساعد الدكتور خالد عبدالله إبراهيم العيساوي، ٢٠١٥، ص ٣٩.

[9] https://www.effo.gov.hk/en/reference/publications/crisis_management.pdf

[10] إدارة الازمات: الأسس والتطبيقات، الأستاذ الدكتور غسان قاسم داوود اللامي و الأستاذ المساعد الدكتور خالد عبدالله إبراهيم العيساوي، ٢٠١٥، ص ٤١.

[11] <https://elaph.com/Web/opinion/2020/04/1288261.html>

[12] <https://sst5.com/readArticle.aspx?ArtID=1024&SecID=42>

[13] <http://www.almothaqaf.com/ab/freepens-16/921695>