

# New Developments in Rojava

22-08-2020

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In the past weeks Rojava (Syrian Kurdistan) has witnessed three important developments that related to: the progress of talks between the Kurdish parties under auspices of the United States and the Syrian Democratic Forces (SDF), signing an oil contract between the self-Administration of Rojava and its military wing (SDF) with an American oil Company, and US decision to train local forces to protect oil fields. These three developments can make important impact on the future of Rojava in Syria.

#### Deal on political authority

Last Wednesday, August 12, a new round of talks between the delegations of the Kurdish National Council (KNC) and the Kurdish national unity parties took place, during the second phase of these talks they focused on formation of a unified political authority. According to sources familiar with the talks, the two parties have reached a preliminary agreement to form a united authority, that share of each side will be 18 members in that authority, without decide on the mechanism for determining the complementary number of their shares. The same sources confirm that the two parties decided not to disclose this agreement before its joint official announcement, similar to the announcement of the joint political vision, on June 16, 2020.

And the informal denial of having reached this agreement is related to three reasons. First concealing the content and results of talks is to keeping it away from media debates and disputes between the parties involved in the dialogue that may harm it. Second is that each delegation from the dialogue has its own authority, which won't ratify any initial agreement before it is approved by their own authority. And third as the deal related to political authority so each of the two main sides of the talks needs an internal understanding on how to distribute their shares in the authority. Because each side composed of a group of parties and organizations. There is another problem that needs to be solved before the announcement of the political authority, which is the position of three parties not participating in the talks, which they are: Al-Wahda (Yekiti), Kurdish Democratic Progressive Party (KDPS), and Free Patriotic Union Party. These parties have different positions, the Free Patriotic Union Party may faces a veto by its twin, Al-Wahda (Yekiti), due to their defection from each other. The KNC is concerned about al-Wahda party, which is politically affiliated with the self-Administration, as it is part of (SDF), the political umbrella of the administration, and is represented in the self-Administration without officially been announced; But KNC is less concerned about the progressive party (KDPS) because did not join any departments linked to self-administration. Despite this difference, the issue of involving these three parties, simultaneously with their joint efforts to unity is important even if not going to involve them in the talks, this matter needs to be settled.

#### The oil contract

The Rojava's oil contract with an American oil Company Delaware-based firm Delta Crescent Energy LLC (which is newly established by three American personalities with military and diplomatic background) can be seen as the first practical embodiment of the US President's statement about his country's forces remaining in Syria to protect oil, and is indication to assign an American company to improve the oil sector. Also this is the first exception for the Autonomous Administration regions from the effects of the Caesar Act of sanctions on Syria.

And granting authority to the self-Administration, because this is disposal of public wealth that supposed to be sovereign. This is a long-term contract that includes the oilfields located between the Tigris River and the town of Tirba Spi. If

implemented will contribute to improve the economic and service situation in the region, as well as is a political reassurance for the people of the region, as it will regulate the process of managing the oil sector in refining , marketing ,and production and will keep party's hand away from the sector. And in this case, it is likely that the matter will not be limited to the American company and the Syrian Democratic Forces, but perhaps lead to real regional partnerships, especially with neighborhoods that for oil marketing process an understanding need to be reached. This may combine the economic interests and political projects which if continues, will have positive impact.

### **Oilfield guard force**

In his last report, Lead Inspector General for Operation Inherent Resolve (OIR) revealed that the American forces are finishing training of 2,200 man unit in the Autonomous Administration areas, to prepare them to protect the oil fields in the Kurdish regions. According to the report by March, roughly half of the required oilfield guard force had already been trained. The funding for those units is provided through the Counter-ISIS Train and Equip Fund, which received \$200 million for the Syrian mission in the 2020 budget. . It is clear that planning to form oilfield guard force was simultaneous with negotiating over the oil contract. The oilfield guard force will protect the oil fields under direct American supervision, which will keep it away from partisan influences.

### **Conclusion**

-For the first time, there is a link between direct economic interests and political projects in the self-Administration regions.

- US is insist on the success of the efforts to unify the Kurdish parties to reach and form new administration that expresses the will of the people of the region and to be managed by their own decision.

-The American involvement in the oil dossier of Rojava in production, manufacturing, marketing and protection will enhance the chances of securing the protection of the region.