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شبكة المنظمات العربية غير الحكومية للتنمية



News Bulletin

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Beirut Port Explosion Is a Result and not a Cause

Ziad Abdel Samad

The explosion on the 4th of August was heard in Cyprus and felt in Jordan, where it registered an earthquake of 4.4 magnitude. It was considered the third strongest explosion after Hiroshima and Nagasaki. It was a result of several factors, which could be seen as a precursor and a cause.

First was the stifling economic crisis that began in the summer of 2016, but worsened in the summer of 2019. Lebanon began to suffer from a deficit in the budget, the treasury, and the balance of payments. Speculations on currency prices returned for the first time since 1993. The situation required radical reforms to stop waste and adopt measures to control public spending and boost imports, in addition to obtaining financing from abroad in the form of investments, grants, loans, or foreign transfers. Two international conferences were devoted to donors in Paris. The first was held in March 2018, on the eve of the parliamentary elections, and the second in December 2019, when the IMF was tasked with supervising the implementation of the reform package required to obtain grants and loans. However, the package was not implemented.

The popular revolution of October 17 was as a response to the economic collapse, which the authorities were unable and

reluctant to deal with. The revolution demanded that the regime steps down, withdrawing its confidence and holding it responsible for the collapse. There was a lack of conviction in its ability to manage the situation and complete the reforms necessary to get out of the crisis. The October Revolution led to the toppling of two governments in a period of 9 months, demanding an independent government to lead the country in the transitional period. The financial and monetary crisis worsened during the revolution. Banks stopped paying dues to small depositors, except according to certain conditions and ceilings. Lebanon also stopped paying its foreign currency debt. A law to control the transfer of capital abroad was applied without being approved in Parliament, which opened the way for discretion. Influential persons and capitalists were allowed to smuggle their money abroad, as other depositors were deprived of it. The capital that migrated after the outbreak of the October Revolution is estimated at 20 billion dollars.

The global pandemic had an impact on all countries, as well as on international relations. Its effects on Lebanon were double due to the economic crisis, which caused an increase in unemployment, poverty, and inflation rates. The poverty rate hovered around 40%. Inflation rates reached

unprecedented levels, accompanied by the collapse of the national currency, which lost 80% of its value. The percentage of workers in the informal sector in Lebanon reached 60%, leaving the majority of the population outside social protection systems.

Lebanon is part of a region that suffers from occupations, armed conflicts, and wars between regional and international axes whose main drive is a historical struggle over influence and natural resources. These crises have contributed to the division of Lebanese society in light of a weak state in which institutions do not play their full role in formulating internal or external public policies.

The sectarian and partisan quota system continues to practice neglect and corruption at the highest levels, leading to the August 4 explosion, which shed a bright light on the level of state collapse and the lack of will for reform. The judiciary was aware of the existence of dangerous materials and issued decisions that were not implemented. The same applies to the relevant security agencies, the port authorities, and the political leadership at the level of the concerned ministers and the first and third presidencies. They all knew. However, poor coordination, on the one hand, and the lack of will for reform on the other hand, meant

that nothing was done. All the parties of the regime are silent about the chaos in the port and in other public facilities because they benefit from the proceeds of corruption, each in their own way and through their associates in public administrations who are employed to collect the share. All these practices plunged Lebanon into bankruptcy and led it to the most painful moment in its history. When the port blew up, it caused the worst catastrophe the country had known in the first centenary of its founding.

The painful reality of the Lebanese state and its institutions has led to the absence of a national disaster management strategy to respond to similar cases, especially since Lebanon is vulnerable to natural (fires) and security (the 2006 Israeli aggression) disasters. Despite the existence of the Disaster Management Authority since 2013 according to a decree issued by the Presidency of the Council of Ministers, which established the position under its authority. However, the absence of a law to establish a national institution for disasters, as a result of the quarrels over its powers in parliamentary committee deliberations, resulted in the authority's powers being limited. Consequently. The High Relief Commission (whose mission is to identify people and their needs) and the Lebanese Army Command (aid distribution) were

assigned with relief work, although the disaster requires a comprehensive national strategy that takes into account its different dimensions, its size, and severity.

Destruction and Reconstruction

The city of Beirut one of the oldest cities on the Mediterranean, the city port played a role in flourishing the Phoenicians trade. Beirut arose and expanded around its port, created by Muhammad Ali Pasha in the 1830s, before the capital of Sidon Wilaya moved there. The port was developed in 1887 leading to an increase in the population, which did not exceed six thousand at the time. It became more important during the era of The Mutasarrifate (1861-1918). The city's neighborhoods adjacent to the port are the oldest and contain luxurious and beautiful surroundings. Some buildings are more than 150 years old and suffered the brunt of the explosion, which makes the restoration process a complex issue if the goal is to preserve the city's heritage and the traditional character marking it since the nineteenth century.

Following an initial field inspection it carried out in the first days after the explosion, the Order of Engineers reported that "a total of 30 to 40 buildings are in danger of collapse after being completely destroyed, in addition to the damage of 800 to 900 homes that are no longer habitable." The initial report concluded that the total number of damaged buildings amounts to 39 to 40 thousand and close to 200 thousand citizens lost their homes" (18 August). According to the Antiquities Directorate of the Lebanese Ministry of Culture, 640 historical buildings have been damaged, including 60 at risk of complete collapse. They are among at least 8,000 buildings

damaged by the explosion, including museums, art galleries, and religious sites (15 August). The explosion also destroyed all the shops, stores, cafes, restaurants, and offices, most of which were closed and their staff dismissed. This is in addition to the severe impact on the infrastructure. Therefore, the process of restoration and reconstruction is complicated and requires planning and organization that exceeds the capacity of public administrations and voluntary and international organizations involved in the relief work.

Relief Initiatives & Humanitarian Aid

Civil initiatives that seek to coordinate their field work and whose efforts converge with concerned international organizations have a positive, albeit insufficient, effect. Volunteers removed the rubble and restored what could be restored. They also provided humanitarian aid to the affected population, including clothing, food, and housing, using available resources. Around 7,000 wounded were treated, of whom about a thousand were hospitalized and 130 were placed in intensive care. The number of casualties is about 200.

The head of the Bar Association initiated a coordination committee in partnership with the Order of Engineers, contactors, and accounting experts to contribute to facing challenges and provide appropriate support to the population. The process requires coordination at higher levels by the state and public administrations, but the system of corruption that caused the disaster, and bankrupted the country before that, has been laid bare and is unable to carry the burden. The regime failed to protect the crime scene, which was exposed to three

fires, destroying evidence and documents that could have been useful in the investigation. We cannot expect it to have a role in relief and reconstruction work.

The Lebanese Regime After August 4

Beirut will not rise from the rubble "like a phoenix" unless conditions are met, which begin with the reconstruction of the state and its institution, restoring the sound, historical regional relations that characterised Lebanon for decades and had made it into a destination and haven for guests, tourists, and the downtrodden and freedom-seekers.

Lebanese citizens have been calling on the corrupt and consociational regime to allow for an independent government to manage the political transition:

Conduct an independent investigation into the crimes on August 4 and on August 8 when the security forces used live ammunition against peaceful protesters, causing 770 injuries including loss of eyesight, holding accountable those responsible for the crimes.

Carry out the necessary economic, financial, and monetary reforms to restore the confidence of the Lebanese and international community in the authorities and to obtain the promised donations and loans.

Take measures to enhance the independence of the judiciary to carry out its supervisory role, especially in the field of administrative and financial inspection, conduct investigations into corruption, hold accountable corrupt persons responsible

for the collapse of the country, and seek to recover the stolen money.

Form an independent body to propose an election law and organize free, fair, and democratic elections to reconfigure power.

Carry out administrative reforms that enable the state to play its role in relief, reconstruction, and in preventing smuggling through legal and illegal crossings.

On the first of September, 1920, General Gouraud, the French High Commissioner, stood on the steps of the Pine Palace to announce the founding of Greater Lebanon, a categorical Lebanese demand at the time. One hundred years later, French President Emmanuel Macron stood on the same stairs to point to the system of corruption, announcing a road map to political, financial, and economic reform, asking it to give way to a new generation of politicians to lead the country in the transitional phase and get out of the crisis, stressing that there is no funding without reform.

Lebanon will not be able to remain an independent, sovereign, free, and democratic state unless it transitions from the sectarian system into secularism and the separation of religion from the state. The state should regain its security, administrative, and political sovereignty over its entire territory and especially over its foreign policy and especially decisions of war and peace.

Lebanon and the Lebanese have wasted an entire century on sectarianism and corruption, so let the next century be the century of modernity, progress, and prosperity.



The War of All against All in Yemen

DR. Mohammad Al Mekhlafi

The War Economy Impedes Peace

It goes without saying that peace is a necessity for Yemenis who suffer from the ravages and horrors of war and the consequent extreme poverty, unemployment, hunger and the spread of multiple epidemics including COVID-19, Typhoid, Dengue Fever, Crunch Fever, Malaria, and an unknown virus doctors are calling "A Viral Fever." Due to the worldwide spread of COVID-19 and other struggles that threaten the very existence of humanity, the world has lacked interest in Yemen's situation, leaving three competing religious projects (the Israeli, Iranian and Turkish) more involved in a country that has only known war as a means of existence.

There are large obstacles hindering peace in Yemen, including the distribution of power between armed groups and State, and armed groups' tight grip on violence and resources of the territories under their control without bearing any responsibility towards the population. This has created a new economic process known as war economy, threatening the future of peace, which is no longer a profitable solution for military groups since it would halt foreign monetary aid and thus lead to reinstating the political process and restoration of political parties.

As a result of war economy, state employees

have lost their salaries, the unemployment rate has increased significantly, large parts of the country are no longer suitable for agriculture due to property seizure, basic living necessities have been lost due to the government's inability to provide basic services such as healthcare, electricity, water, and education, and more severely, the food security of over 80% of the population is in peril.

Dependency on Other Countries Impedes Peace

The Ansar Allah al-Houthi group, through the representative of the People's Committees and the army, controls the capital, Sanaa, and the neighboring governorates, as well as parts of the northwest, northeast, and north-south governorates. The Houthi forces carry out brutal repression through a network of Houthi tribe members or those affiliated with them, seize the public and private funds of their opponents with the support of the judiciary, the courts and the administrative apparatus, or through decrees issued in the name of the five guardians and Hashemites.

Due to the unity of their military forces, the Houthis have been fighting the government forces (the National Army and the Resistance) in Marib, Al-Jawf, Taiz, Al-Dhale and Al-Bayda, and the tribes that oppose them in Hajjah, Amran and Ibb since 2018 and Al-Bayda since 2020. Furthermore, the Houthis have been fighting the West Coast forces, which include government forces, West Coast forces other than the government formed and supported by the United Arab Emirates, the Thami Resistance, the Security Belt Forces and the Southern Resistance in the Red Sea coast and Dali that are also supported by the UAE.

Conversely, tribes and residents have besought the help of Al-Qaeda in the Arabian Peninsula and in the Al-Bayda governorate to confront the Houthi attacks. Thus, the Houthis have been dealing with Al-Qaeda through communication and the exchange of prisoners. Despite the Houthi suppression of tribal opposition, this opposition is expanding and deepening.

In addition to fighting the Houthi forces, the Security Belt Forces have joined the Shabwani and Hadrami elite in fighting the government forces since 2018, with the support of the Emirati air forces. Due to this support, these forces have been able to undermine the state's authority in Adan and Abyan since August 2019 and maintain Sub-regional or tribal identities.

These forces combined have impeded any peace initiative between Yemenis, for Al-Houthi considers Saudi Arabia an ally in his war against America and Israel, and speaks humbly about his war with ISIS and attributes all the Yemeni opponents to ISIS and the Nusab. However, this war is often referred to as Saudi Arabia's war against Yemen. Iran has been able to promote this term due to individuals supporting Houthis distributed across European and American countries and the activists in this group. Since Houthis

rule out peace with the Yemenis, they seek to negotiate peace with Saudi Arabia.

The security forces and the military elites' media emphasize on their war with al-Qaeda or the Muslim Brotherhood, even though their leadership's main forces stem from the Salafists, while the armed groups affiliated with reform speak about their fight against Iranian militias, the Rafidah, or the Emiratis, and at the same time, coexist with al-Qaeda in their areas of influence.

Although these allegations express the difficulty for peace between the Yemenis, including those who reject their Yemeni nationality such as Houthis, the security leaders and the military elites, the different fighting forces can be attributed as subordinate to other countries in the region.

A Weak Government Hinders Peace Prospects

The legitimate government, with its limited capabilities, cannot confront each party alone, and it mainly depends on the support of the Arab coalition; however, this support has not been sufficient to enable the legitimate government to regain the lands seized by Houthis. Furthermore, the Arab coalition countries that can provide sufficient support through their regional and international weight such as Egypt, face threats from the three projects across neighboring countries (Libya and Gaza), and from terrorist organizations supported by Turkey and Iran. Iran and Turkey's confrontation was limited to Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates, but, the UAE has transformed part of the resistance into military forces to fight the Houthis on its own behalf and not to restore the government's legitimacy, turning a major part of the military forces into non-state forces, and therefore seizing Yemeni lands such as Socotra and the Western coast

Attempts Continue Despite the Obstacles

Attempts are being made to unite the ranks of the anti-Houthi forces politically and militarily through the establishment of the Riyadh Agreement between the government and the transitional council at the end of last year. However, parties in the legitimate authority and the transitional council are still impeding the implementation of the agreement, knowing that there is a reliance on this agreement to be able to restore an important part of solidarity between the majority of Yemenis and to create political and military opportunities to make peace a necessity for everyone.



Stop the Repression and Assassinations in Iraq and Hold the Criminals Accountable

Hanaa Edwar

Systematic Filtering of Activists

Outlaws have continued the systematic removal of many activists, protesters and human rights defenders since the start of the October uprising in 2019 without deterrence or legal accountability. This led to an increase in premeditated murder, kidnapping, enforced disappearance and intimidation. In recent weeks, we have witnessed a dangerous escalation of assassinations and threats of removal, during which the prominent researcher Hisham Al-Hashemi, civil activist Tahseen Al-Shahamani, and human rights defender Reham Yaqoub were martyred, in addition to ten other assassination attempts in Babel, Baghdad, Basra and Dhi Qar during the month of August 2020. The victim count has now exceeded 700 deaths and 30,000 injured, including thousands of individuals who are disabled, since December 2019.

Civil society activists, journalists, and youth movement leaders in the October Uprising are also being threatened with betrayal, distortion, defamation, and incitement to murder by some officials and electronic armies through social media and being accused of association and collaboration with external parties. These calls amount to physical removal, which has forced a number of civil activists and journalists to stop their work, flee their areas of residence and go

into hiding, with many having to leave the country to ensure their safety. This places the Iraqi authorities - the government, parliament and the judiciary - at urgent responsibility to stop the spill of Iraqi blood, safeguard the citizens' right to life and security, protect their right to freedom of expression, demonstration, and peaceful assembly as guaranteed in the constitution, and respond to the demands of the young protesters.

What is surprising is that most of these incidents occurred near security institutions, and some of them were clearly documented by security cameras. This highlights the failure of these agencies and of the government to perform their duties in protecting the lives of citizens and in controlling weapons in the country, as well as the procrastination in disclosing the investigations' results, which contributes to the perpetrators escaping accountability and punishment and the perpetuation of chaos in the country.

The civil society in Iraq attributes this fierce attack to the desire of the corrupt parties and their militias to silence the voices calling for change and implies that they are afraid of the calls for change. With the first anniversary of the start of the demonstrations approaching (October 1), there is an expectation that the

demonstrators' momentum will be restored and that they will increase the pressure to achieve their demands; however, it is not in the interest of the corrupt parties in power and their military wings to see a renewal in demands for change, hold the corrupt accountable, or open up corruption files. The call for early elections next year, increases the corrupt parties and their armed militias' fear of the effect the civil youth movement could have upon entering and participating in the electoral battlefield, as obtaining seats will threaten the authority, influence and interests of the current ruling authorities and the beneficiaries of widespread corruption and weaken the rule of law.

The current situation has revealed the fragility and weakness of international donations to rescue and evacuate defenders and activists to a safe place. There is an urgent need to allocate adequate financial resources and emergency budgets by the international community and donors to be used by local organizations to provide protection to civil society activists who are at risk of assassination, taking into account the seriousness of the situation and the seriousness of the threats. For example, the first statements of condemnation made by the activists did not include names or signatures out of fear and caution against

prosecution and assassination, and they warned that one of them would be the next victim!

Statement of the National Initiative for Civil Society Organizations in Iraq

Accordingly, the National Initiative for Civil Society Organizations to Support the October Uprising issued a statement signed by 150 organizations. The initiative indicated that the lack of condemnation of these crimes by the parliament and the judiciary, the silence applied by the public prosecution service regarding the series of crimes and the disregard of the rule of law, the failure to implement the rules of justice stipulated in the constitution and the covering-up of the criminals responsible is deeply concerning. International condemnations from the United Nations, human rights organizations and diplomatic missions in Iraq was not echoed and no reaction was seen from government agencies, which makes us believe that the current situation requires a firmer stance by international organizations, as statements of condemnation and denunciation are not enough. Furthermore, there is a need for concrete action to be taken by the Human Rights Council, the Security Council and the European Union, as well as by international human rights organizations. The United Nations has received several calls for the issuance of a list with the names of the many activists who may be subject to physical removal in the coming days.

Therefore, the National Initiative for Civil Society Organizations in Iraq to support the October Uprising— which includes many trade unions, professional and labor unions, non-governmental organizations, activists and human rights defenders—has declared a request to the Iraqi government to:

- Take immediate and firm measures to stop the series of killings, assassinations, threats and attacks against peaceful protesters and human rights activists.
- Set a specific time limit for the transparent detection of the killers and those controlling them and hold them accountable in court.
- Take strict security measures to protect the demonstrations and protests.
- Defining legal measures to confront the claims of treachery and distortion of the role of civil society organizations working in the human rights, humanitarian, and development fields.
- Work hard to restrict weapons to the hands of the security institutions.
- Purge the security services of corrupt, failed, or negligent constituents.
- Take rapid response to the demands of the youth of the October Uprising, prepare for early elections that are fair, and prevent the killers and the corrupt from contesting them.

The initiative has also directed its call to international and Arab civil society organizations to express their solidarity with its demand to hold a special session of the Human Rights Council to condemn the violations against activists and peaceful protesters in Iraq, and to demand the Iraqi government's investigation of these practices transparently while ensuring accountability and justice procedures. It

also stressed the role of international and regional organizations in providing moral and material support to human rights defenders and activists and to media activists to ensure their safety and the preservation of their lives.

The initiative appealed to the citizens and they are in support of this national campaign of solidarity and support to all the activities that we intend to undertake, as an expression of loyalty to the martyrs of the valiant October Uprising and its just demands to achieve the desired change, for a free and secure Iraq with peace, justice and goodness.



The Expansion of the Protest Movements in the Arab Region and the Shrinking of the Civic Space

May Makki

The world has been witnessing a trend towards a decline in the freedoms and spaces available for civil society organizations (CSOs), especially in the Arab region. This includes increasing restrictions imposed on CSOs in law and practice, such as restrictions on registration, operation and access to resources, in addition to limiting the freedom of speech and independent press, and prosecuting activists and individuals for expressing their opinions. This restriction can include more extreme measures such as violating the right to life and to move freely, as well as physical assault, torture, forced disappearance, arrest, and other grave violations that we witness in the Arab region in particular, and outside it. The space made available for the work of civil society organizations, which has come to be called “civic space”, is the basis on which any participatory democratic system is built, and the basis for any development partnership. This shrinking civic space trend is part of a larger setback in protecting human rights in general, and the crisis that democracy is suffering from, in a global context marred by the rise of populist and right-wing extremist and quasi-fascist currents. The repression practiced by the regimes against civil society, activists and dissenting voices is nothing but an attempt to stifle accountability and criticism. The alliance of governments with private interests plays a major role as well in

promoting this trend. Marginalized groups are being exposed to the most heinous types of oppression when they claim their rights to equality and a decent life.

Defending civic space, documenting violations against it, following civil society news and updates in the Arab world, and enhancing its role in influencing policy are at the core of ANND’s strategy. Therefore, in addition to the processes in which the Network is involved and which contribute to strengthening the role of civil society and promoting human rights and development partnerships, ANND launched a platform to keep up with the news of civic space, with the aim of amplifying civil society voices and highlighting the violations that it is exposed to in the region. The platform also contains analytical reports, on both regional and national levels, as a contribution to understanding the current situation regarding civic space, social movements and national contexts, and as a base that can be built upon to further develop our plans and strategies as CSOs. This year, the reports, which dealt with ten Arab countries, namely Lebanon, Jordan, Iraq, Bahrain, Egypt, Sudan, Algeria, Tunisia, Morocco, and Mauritania, sought to analyze the civic space in the Arab world in light of the recent developments in the region, the most important of which is the massive waves of

protests, and even the more limited social movements we witnessed.

The regional paper distinguished between CSOs, which are structured institutions whose activity continues for a long period of time, campaigns, which have a short period of time and are organized according to their requirements, and social and civil movements that are characterized by a wide numerical participation, with varying time ranges and degrees of organization. Social movements are more structured and strive to last longer. Then the paper identified four factors that leave an impact on civic space, which are the macro level (the global and national level, i.e. the nature of the political system), then the social and historical characteristics, the legislative and legal characteristics, and finally the civic space itself, i.e. the experiences that it has accumulated throughout history. The paper delves into the experience of Morocco, as a case of social movements in a climate of relative freedom and takes the women’s movement and the boycott movement as examples. Then the paper examined the experience of Tunisia as an example of a structured civil society that played a political role. The paper devoted a section to what has become known as the second wave of the Arab Spring, mainly the massive waves of protests in Lebanon, Iraq, Algeria and

Sudan, and the paper elaborated on each of these experiences.

Finally, the paper extensively detailed the most important trends regarding the means and mechanisms of restricting civic space that can be drawn from these national papers. The decline in the enabling environment for civil society in the Arab region is due to many reasons, including those related to the nature of the political system. Historically, the environment of civil society ranged between restriction and complete closure in countries that lived through periods of military rule, and generally under totalitarian regimes. While the ideological aspect is usually predominant in the discourse of totalitarian regimes, the security and military aspect prevails in discourses of regimes of a dictatorial and authoritarian character, but the two models do not differ in how they deal with civil society. Most of the Arab countries range in status between restriction and relative restriction, a position whereby states provide some space for the work of CSOs under the pressure of the international community, for example, or target a specific type of activity or a certain class of organizations without others. Finally, there is a situation of partial or relative freedom that characterizes a minority of the region’s countries. These regimes have always used

multiple pretexts to legitimize restrictions on civil society, such as national or revolutionary legitimacy, or the existence of other priorities in light of national conflicts, or traitors to civil society accusing it of being a cover for Islamist or leftist agendas, etc. Recently, the anti-terrorism pretext has been frequently used in limiting the freedom of civil society to operate and preventing it from accessing resources. The regional paper deals with each of these reasons and excuses.

The national papers deeply investigated each of the national contexts. Lebanon's paper examines the current wave of protests, placing it in a historical context of civic and political activism. It then relied on "a three-fold conceptual approach that focuses on the analysis of the interactions and dynamics between actors, and the strategies they employ: persuasion, coercion, and retribution," to analyze the recent wave of protests in Lebanon. Egypt's report examined the legal restrictions that are imposed on civil society today, reviewing the most important developments in civil society from the pre-revolution period until today. "The post-revolution period of openness in Egypt was an exemplary period for the quantitative and qualitative growth of civil society, as society developed new mechanisms to express its needs and solutions. Then a period of stagnation followed under legal, judicial and political restrictions by the state and the media. Yet, civil society continues to develop its mechanisms to defend its survival despite the circumstances of the war on terror and the exploitation of the political system." The report examined these mechanisms of pushing back against the shrinking space, and concluded with further steps that civil society can take at this stage. As for the Sudan report, it focused heavily on the

movement that toppled al-Bashir in 2019, giving an in-depth presentation of the various components that participated in the movement, the challenges that civil society faces in the transitional period, and how this affects the civil space. The Moroccan report starts from the the economic, social and political conditions in Morocco, and the movements that it has witnessed recently. Then the report examined, in light of these developments, the enabling environment for civil society, in terms of law and practice, the involvement of CSOs in national development efforts, and finally in terms of regional and international institutions' support for a CSO enabling environment.

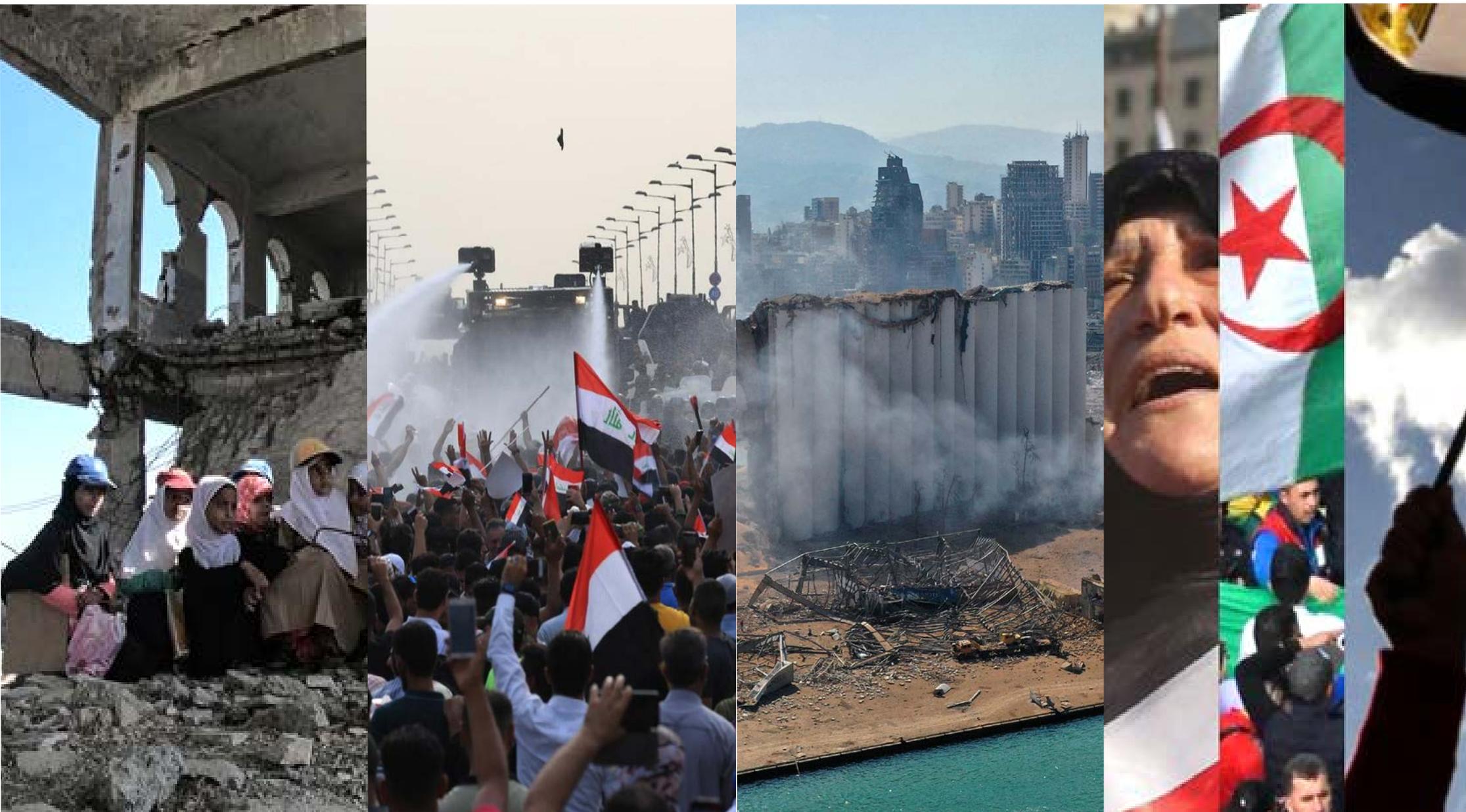
Finally, the report delves into the strategies used by social and civil movements in Morocco with which they faced the restrictions on civic space. As for the Algeria report, it examined the recent movement that shook the old regime in Algeria and overthrew Bouteflika producing new faces in civil and political work. "In this unprecedented revolutionary context, the authority is betting to reproduce itself as quickly as possible by changing its civilian façade and redistributing some cards [...] while the civil movement continues to resist all attempts to reproduce the system for itself. Where is the civil movement heading? And what is the role of civil society and the active forces in the movement to avoid the collapse of the situation in the country [...]" The report starts from these questions and moves into discussing the enabling environment for civil society and addresses it in its various aspects.

In Bahrain, "the development of events since the year 2011 proceeded to further restrictions until the performance of civil

society institutions weakened, as some of them were even compelled to freeze their activities and others were dissolved by the Ministry of Labor and Social Development for several reasons." The report examines the legal reality of the civil society environment and the restrictions it faces, and details both government and civil society proposals. The report also examines the composition of civil society and the challenges it faces today. The Mauritania report focused on "providing a picture of the situation of the Mauritanian civil society in terms of: (a) the space available for dialogue on national development policies; (b) the development effectiveness of civil society organizations; (c) regional and international institutions' support for the CSO enabling environment; (d) the legal and regulatory environment." The report also discusses the most important actors in the Mauritanian civil society, the most important issues they follow and the challenges they face. The Jordan report analyzes "the current situation of CSOs in Jordan and mainly deals with four issues: 1) providing an overview of the status of civil society movements in Jordan, focusing on recent years; 2) analyzing the legal framework, in brief, for the work of CSOs; 3) Discussing the impact of international and national intuitions on Jordanian CSO landscape; and (4) Finding strategies to challenge the increasing shrinking space." As for the Tunisia report, it examined social movements in Tunisia and the role of civil society and the environment affecting it, noting that "social movements have become an effective factor in the civil movement [...]. The vitality of social movements multiplied after the revolution as a result of the cracking of the old system and the incomplete construction of the new and alternative system. The economic and

social fragility is the defining feature of the post-revolution period. It is this fragility that drives us to say that, based on the many indicators that have been referred to in this report, that social movements are likely to continue in various shapes and sizes during the year 2020. They will continue to accompany the ongoing democratic transition in Tunisia, which is a difficult and fragile phase." Finally, the Iraq report examined the recent protests, as a result of cumulative civil action, and the roles of the various civil society actors, as well as the violations that civil society and activists have been subjected to in Iraq, which reached their climax during the last wave of protests.

Most of these national papers stemmed from the developments witnessed by civil society on the ground, especially in countries that witnessed an unprecedented wave of protests, and placed them in their social, historical, and political context. They then discussed the roles of the various components of civil society, and the challenges that civil society faces, especially the restrictive environment in which they live. ANND seeks to develop this work by networking between the various organizations and researchers working on civic space and developing the conceptual framework that it uses in its work on the civic space. It also seeks to develop the platform and its advocacy uses.



The Arab NGO Network for Development works in 12 Arab countries, with 9 national networks (with an extended membership of 250 CSOs from different backgrounds) and 23 NGO members.

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