

The Feminist Perspective on Military Security in the Kurdistan Region of Iraq

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Abstract

This study examines the military security sector of the Kurdistan Region by integrating the Copenhagen School's security framework with a feminist security perspective. The research seeks to provide a critical examination of the interplay between traditional military security practices and gender dynamics, leading to a more nuanced understanding of the military security situation in the KRI. Two main research questions drive this study forward:

- 1. How do gender dynamics influence the structure and functioning of the military sector in the Kurdistan Region, particularly the Peshmerga forces?*
- 2. How can integrating feminist perspectives within traditional military security frameworks improve and strengthen the national security of the Kurdistan Region?*

The research employs qualitative methods to analyze data and information, including interviews with relevant individuals, a critical review of existing literature through the examination of official documents, and case studies. On one hand, this study employs the Copenhagen School's security approach to assess the military sector in the region in terms of its structure, functioning, and organization. On the other hand, it uses the feminist security perspective to critique the Copenhagen School's understanding of military security for having neglected gender dynamics in its analyses. Key findings reveal that political parties have a significant impact on the military capability and political stability in the Kurdistan Region; this sector is under the influence and control of parties rather than the government. For example, the region's response to ISIS demonstrates the resilience and capability of the Peshmerga, but at the same time, it highlights several areas needing improvement, such as coordination, long-term strategic planning, and the creation of a unified, regular military force. From this viewpoint, the feminist analysis exposes gender inequality within the military sector of the Kurdistan Region, where the dominance of men, political parties, and the unequal distribution of senior positions limit the participation and influence of women. However, the study also notes that the goal should not be merely to increase the number of women in the military sector, but that women should be appointed based on competence and physical qualifications, as failing to do so could pose a threat to the national security of Kurdistan through military confrontations. Furthermore, the study discusses the use of sexual violence as a tactic of war, as used by ISIS in Sinjar, which has dangerous consequences for both individual victims and public security, yet for which there is no organized legal framework. Despite these challenges, women in the Peshmerga forces have played important roles, but not to the extent that they should, and the female perspective has been neglected in the overall military performance and

policy. The study concludes by discussing the broader implications for the national security of the Kurdistan Region, emphasizing the importance of integrating gender perspectives into military planning and strategy as a means to enhance overall security. The analysis suggests that a holistic approach, which addresses both traditional and gendered security concerns, can lead to the formulation of more effective and sustainable security strategies and the creation of a unified, multi-perspective military force that incorporates both female and male viewpoints.

Keyword: Military Sector, Feminism, KRG, MoPA, Women, PDK, PUK, Copenhagen S. S, Gender

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1.1 Introduction

National security is traditionally understood in terms of military defense, territorial integrity, and the protection of state sovereignty. However, contemporary security discourses have broadened the concept to include human security. Human security emphasizes the well-being and safety of individuals as a crucial component of a nation's security. It recognizes that threats to people's lives, health, and dignity are related to armed conflict and various socioeconomic, political, and environmental factors. According to the Copenhagen School, five areas of military, societal, political, economic, and environmental security are

identified as dimensions of national security. The Kurdistan entity is a recognized region by the Iraqi constitution (2005) (Aziz, 2014; Kirmanj, 2013).

The struggle for the Kurdish nation-state has been ongoing, with the southern region achieving regional independence. The region's national security is multifaceted and varies over time. Sadeq stated that the security priority of the Kurdistan Region and other parts of the country has been to preserve the national identity (Sadeq, 2020). Although the Kurdistan Region of Iraq lacks sovereignty and is not an independent state, it is a constitutional and political entity. Barry Buzan can provide a detailed theoretical framework for reading and assessing the security issues of society, as it can be applied to the Kurdistan Region of Iraq as a unit. Buzan believes that these five sectors and matters, as a national security sector, do not work separately. Still, each creates a security problem, threatens the center of attention, and determines measures and priorities, but ultimately, all of them are together in an interconnected network (Buzan, 1991). Furthermore, some scholars criticize Copenhagen's security analysis for ignoring the gender dimension, such as feminist security studies.

One of the most essential components of the Kurdistan Region of Iraq's (KRI) general stability and resilience is military security. This study uses both traditional and feminist security views to attempt to give a balanced understanding of the military sector in the KRI. We may get essential insights into the gender dynamics and underlying power structures that shape the security environment by looking at the military from a feminist perspective. Comprehending these aspects is vital in formulating all-encompassing security approaches that tackle traditional and unconventional dangers.

1.2 Analyzing the KRI Military Sector from Copenhagen's Perspective

The traditional goal of military security is to preserve the state's territorial integrity, with regional and domestic security again being the two immediate surroundings for the state (Buzan et al., 1998). Many Kurds believe establishing a state under their national identity (Kurds) is their primary goal. Empowering the military sector is the most effective way to maintain the state's territorial integrity. Many threats are obstacles in front of that, such as external threats, despite internal security issues. The military sector in the region is divided into three units. (Zaniary, 2021): the Ministry of Peshmarga (Law No. 5) Law of the Ministry of Peshmerga Affairs, 1992), the Ministry of Interior Affairs, and the Kurdistan Region Security Council (Law No. 4 of 2011 of the Kurdistan Region Security Council, 2011). However, the exact size of the military sector is unknown (Zaniary, 2021), but there are various estimates.

1.2.1 The Peshmerga Forces and Political Parties

Since its establishment, the Kurdistan Regional Government (KRG) has defined the Kurdistan Peshmerga forces as the national army of the Kurdistan Region (Law No. 5 1992, 1992). Article 121, Section 5 of the Iraqi Constitution assigns the Regional Government the responsibility for establishing and organizing internal security forces for the region, including police, security forces, and regional guards. However, the 2005 Iraqi Constitution does not specifically name the Peshmerga forces (Iraq's Constitution of 2005, 2005). However, the number and budget of the Peshmerga forces have been controversial between the Kurdistan Region and the federal government.

The Kurdistan Regional Government insists on a force of more than 180,000, while the federal government wants it reduced to 25,000-30,000. The KRG also asserts that the Peshmerga budget should come from the Iraqi Ministry of Defense

budget, as the Peshmerga is part of the Iraqi defense system. In 2015, the Iraqi army signed over \$149 billion of weapons contracts with international companies. However, they did not pay any of that to the Kurdistan Region or the Peshmerga (Issa & Qader, 2021). Therefore, it appears that Baghdad is exploiting these conflicts to weaken the military security of the Kurdistan Region, which could be a real threat to the survival and security of the Kurdistan Region. Despite the tensions between the Iraqi government and the region, there are internal issues between the two ruling political parties, the PDK (PDK Official page, n.d.) and the PUK (PUK Official page, n.d.). These issues are affecting the military sector in the region, particularly the Peshmerga forces.

To understand the impact of political influence on the military, it is crucial to delve into how budgetary disputes have shaped the Kurdistan Region's armed forces. Two yellow and green zone administrations still influence the Kurdistan region. This means the Kurdistan region was divided between the Kurdistan Democratic Party and the Patriotic Union of Kurdistan after 1994. In zones within their authority area, officials cannot bring charges and administer punishment; therefore, military security is hampered. Sadeq stated that political parties dominate the armed forces rather than the government and other formal organizations (Sadeq, 2020). For example, Unit 70 is under the control of PUK, while Unit 80 is under the control of KDP. The Zeravani or the Interior Forces belong to the KDP; similarly, the PUK has its own Defense Emergency Forces. Both parties have their private security forces. Additionally, they have their counter-terrorism forces, which apply to the security (Asayish) forces.

It is worth noting that most of the security force officer belongs to one of the ruling parties (Hama, 2019). Even partisan forces further divide along personal influence and patronage, leading back to party leaders, which harms the KRI's national security. It has been reported that some political parties and private

individuals use armed forces for their purposes. In 2011, the Peshmerga forces were deployed against protesters in Sulaimani, leading to several casualties. In 2014, they prevented opposition ministers and parliamentarians from entering Erbil (Rzgar, 2021). The Peshmerga forces are also plagued by administrative issues such as corruption and using unofficial employees and pensioners, which have burdened public finances. It is important to note that over-reliance on the military alone can reduce funds for other important areas of the state's security. From a feminist security perspective, the military should not be the sole focus of the state's resources, as it could lead to a reduction in spending on other security sectors. This issue is evident in the Kurdistan Region.

The Peshmerga force has had two distinct roles since its inception. On the one hand, they have served as defenders of the country, while on the other hand, they have defended various political parties. According to Rubin, political authorities view the peshmerga as a personal militia rather than a Kurdish defensive force (Rubin, 2016). This has resulted in a major military and security issue in the Kurdistan Region, as the armed forces lack independence. Rubin made a clear assertion that the lack of independence of Pesgmarga would undeniably pose a serious threat to Kurdistan after becoming a state. Suppose Kurdish political parties cannot bring the peshmerga together before independence. In that case, it will be far more challenging to do so once independence has been achieved and the stakes are higher (Rubin, 2016). The first integrated Peshmerga brigade was established in January 2010 by the MoPA and was named the Regional Guard Brigade (RGB). Nonetheless, the political parties continued to have authority over KRI's intelligence (Parastin-KDP/ Zanyari-PUK) and internal security (Asayish) agencies.

It took over three years to properly build a united Ministry of Peshmerga Affairs (MoPA), officially reestablished in 2006 and supported by the KRG

Unification Agreement. Through an agreement with the KRG, the United States, the United Kingdom, and Germany formed an advisory committee following the territorial defeat of ISIS in Iraq in 2017. To unify and restructure the KDP and PUK Peshmerga forces over five to ten years, they unveiled a 35-point reform program, which has now been trimmed to 31 points (Borsari, 2019). In particular, the KRG and the Peshmerga require a strong institutional structure that maintains each group's autonomy and authority while sharply defining the boundaries between the political and military domains.

However, by Decree No. 228 of the Kurdistan Council of Ministers, dated December 25th, 2022, the Second Support Forces under the 70th Force were transferred to the Ministry of Peshmerga. As a result, Support Forces One had already been transferred to the Ministry of Peshmarga before this decree was issued (KRG/Ministry of Peshmarga, 2022). Chapman argued that unifying the peshmerga would prevent intra-Kurdish conflict and create a more effective military force (Chapman, 2008). But no official regional force currently operates independently of political parties' hegemony. The Copenhagen School, through the perspective of Bozan, considers it a significant danger to the military security of any country when non-state parties are allowed to use military force. According to this school of thought, the state should only use military force. Other sectors and areas of security also need to be considered.

Moving from the discussion of political influence, let's explore how these dynamics have affected the military's capacity and access to equipment. The term "military security" typically refers to a state's capacity to repel or defend against military assault. Alternatively, "military security" refers to the state's capacity to enact its policy directives through military force (Szpyra, 2014). After the ISIS (Daesh) attacked Mosul and Sunni areas of Iraq on 9 June 2014, the Islamic State quickly advanced towards Kurdish territory, and by August 6, 2014, they were

just 40 km southwest of Erbil. However, with the help of the international coalition forces, the Kurdish soldiers were able to fight back and retake 40 percent of their lost territory. Despite facing obstacles like a shortage of night vision equipment and better weapons and training, the Peshmerga stayed dedicated to their mission, even though not all members were professional soldiers (Charountaki, 2018).

According to that component, the Kurdistan region's military capacity is not as strong as it should be because the region cannot defend and/or deter military aggression, as in the war against ISIS (the Islamic State of Iraq and Syria), the KRI demands help from foreign forces to overcome that threat. The Kurdistan Region does not have advanced weapons that can fully counter external military threats, fighter jets, defense systems, or anti-missile systems. What exists are the human resources (peshmerga), which are not properly trained and do not have all the military equipment. Also, it is important to note that the uniform of the peshmarga is another point to focus on. Chapman noted that: "The Peshmerga lack a standardized uniform and instead wear various uniforms. Furthermore, their facilities are frequently in poor condition, highlighting the scarcity of resources. However, senior leaders typically have well-maintained and elegantly decorated offices" (Chapman, 2008, pp. 106-120).

So, the intertwined issues of budget disputes, political influence, and military capacity underscore the complexity of military security in the Kurdistan Region. Despite the many problems mentioned above, separating the Peshmarga forces between the two ruling political parties has made it difficult for the region to improve its security and military sector. This is due to conflicts that arise from their interests, which they sometimes try to justify as being in the best interests of the Kurdish nation. Even their regional conflicts impact foreign relationships with neighboring regions and the central government.

1.2.2 Response to Military Threats, with a Focus on ISIS

The central subject of the government's security, whether domestic or external, revolves around threats. Military security concerns the interplay of states' armed offensive and defensive capabilities, focusing on the government's capacity to defend against internal and external military threats. This duty encompasses traditional threats and nonmilitary threats like immigrants or competing ideologies. Buzan's argument highlights the multifaceted nature of military security (Buzan et al., 1998). Military security involves the two-level interplay of states' offensive and defensive armed capabilities. A state's fundamental responsibility is to address internal and external military threats, which is its basic duty.

Given the multifaceted nature of military security, governments must address various threats, including those posed by organizations like ISIS. The origins of Daesh trace back to an elderly Jordanian fighter named Abu Musab al-Zarqawi, who founded al-Qaeda in Iraq in 2004, a year after the US-led invasion of Iraq and following his loyalty to Osama bin Laden. On June 29, 2014, the Islamic State in Iraq and Syria (ISIS) formally announced itself as the Islamic State under the leadership of Abu Bakr al-Baghdadi, the global caliph (Hamadameen, 2022). This emergence posed significant security challenges, requiring governments to reassess their security strategies and responses to traditional and nontraditional threats.

ISIS put the Kurdistan region's security under threat by launching attacks and capturing territories. For example, Islamic militants captured Shingal, a town located 200 kilometers west of Erbil. This event led to the displacement of over 200,000 people, who were forced to leave their homes and seek refuge in camps within the Kurdistan Region. The refugee crisis has profoundly impacted the Kurdistan Region (KRG: Representation in the United States, 2023).

Additionally, ISIS killed nearly 10,000 Yazidis and abducted and enslaved thousands of women and girls (Biggs, 2015; International Organization for Migration, 2022). These large-scale kidnappings were intended to manipulate people, sow terror, and find spouses for ISIS members.

To combat the threat presented by ISIS, the KRG has to devote a large amount of resources, including strengthening its security forces and conducting military operations against ISIS. Due to this, security and military expenditures rose, increasing the KRG's budget and lowering the sum of funds available for investment and economic growth (Shali, 2023). Military spending increased, which affected economic security as resources were diverted from investment and development initiatives. Amidst the security challenges posed by ISIS, the KRG resorted to restarting its strategy of direct oil sales through the Turkish port of Ceyhan to compensate for income shortages caused by the Iraqi federal government's failure to adhere to its budget (KRG: Ministry of Natural Resources, 2015). However, the presence of ISIS hindered the KRG's ability to sell oil independently, as the ongoing war against the jihadist group put pressure on the KRG's financial resources. This situation necessitated immediate funds to finance the expensive war efforts and support the local population, including millions of Syrian refugees and internally displaced Iraqis who sought refuge in Kurdistan (Salih, 2016).

The impact of ISIS's control over oil markets in Manbij, Al-Bab, and Al-Qa'im extended beyond the Kurdistan Region, severely impacting Iraq's economy. This reduced the budget allocated to the Kurdistan Region, resulting in salary cuts for its citizens. Consequently, many government institutions, including the health and education sectors, have gone on strike due to the economic crisis. The economic crisis exacerbated by ISIS's actions has implications for all sectors,

demonstrating the interconnectedness of security sectors in the region, as noted by Buzan.

Due to the decline brought on by the terrorist group's actions and attacks, investors had to postpone or cancel their investment choices. Additionally, all the other sectors are unsecured, such as political instability, a decline in economic growth, a drop in investment rates, and an increase in military spending (Hamadameen, 2022), as Buzan mentioned that threats from the military may influence the state. It could compromise a state's essential duty to protect its citizens and harm the layers of social and individual interest (Buzan, 1983). There are still threats to the security of the region. The remaining ISIS fighters have launched several attacks on both the Peshmerga forces and the Iraqi army. The presence of ISIS and other terrorist groups is a matter of life and survival for the Kurdistan Region, and now they pose a severe threat to security in all sectors of the region.

One of the major factors that had a significant impact on the Peshmerga's ability to fight ISIS was the fragmentation and dispersion in the military sector. This fragmentation made it difficult to provide the necessary equipment and resources to the Peshmerga, as conflicts and power struggles between the two major political parties in the region - PDK and PUK - often resulted in delays or even outright obstruction of critical supplies. This, in turn, severely hampered the Peshmerga's ability to combat ISIS and protect their people effectively. Whereas, according to the Iraqi Constitution (2005- fifth section/ article 121) and Kurdistan Region's (law 42, 1993), A unified force is the only effective option for serving as the regional guard, even though Kurdish forces are officially under the control of the KRG Presidency Council and the Peshmerga Ministry. However, both political parties disregard the law, negatively impacting national security.

The Peshmerga forces were initially under-equipped and lacked sufficient resources to combat ISIS effectively. This included shortages in weaponry, ammunition, and essential supplies. The Peshmerga forces were historically under-equipped compared to their adversaries. Even before the rise of ISIS, the Peshmerga faced challenges in acquiring modern weaponry and equipment due to international embargoes and limitations on arms sales to the Kurdistan Region. During the ISIS onslaught, the Peshmerga experienced acute shortages in essential supplies such as ammunition, medical supplies, and food. These shortages severely hampered their ability to sustain prolonged operations against ISIS fighters. While the Peshmerga had a strong tradition of fighting, many of its fighters lacked formal military training or were veterans of irregular warfare rather than conventional military operations. This lack of standardized training further hindered their effectiveness in facing ISIS's well-trained and well-equipped militants. Also, Political divisions within the Kurdistan Region, particularly between the two major political parties, the KDP and the PUK, led to fragmentation within the Peshmerga forces. This fragmentation hampered coordination and cohesion in responding to ISIS threats.

These factors combined to create significant obstacles for the Peshmerga forces in mounting an effective response to the ISIS threat, particularly during the initial phases of the conflict when ISIS made significant territorial gains in Iraq. Over time, efforts were made to address some of these challenges through increased international support, reforms in command structures, and improvements in training and equipment for the Peshmerga. Overall, military doctrine builds and establishes its army (Shali, 2024). KRG should implement a comprehensive military strategy to strengthen the region's defense capabilities. This plan involves the adoption of a military doctrine, which will guide the development of a strong and modern army equipped with the latest technologies

and trained in the most advanced tactics. The region also needs to focus on establishing strategically located military fields that will provide the necessary infrastructure to support the armed forces' operations.

1.3 Feminist Criticism of KRI Military Security Sector

Feminist security studies have expanded the traditional notion of security to include more than just military threats. They also consider economic and environmental security, human rights, and the experiences of marginalized groups, particularly women. These studies emphasize the importance of considering diverse perspectives and the interconnectedness of security issues. The feminist critique of the Copenhagen School of Thought in IR challenges its gender-blind approach, masculine bias, and limited focus on traditional security. Feminist security studies call for a more inclusive and intersectional analysis that recognizes women as active security agents and addresses non-traditional security issues. This critique has enriched security studies by incorporating diverse gender perspectives and emphasizing the need to consider the experiences of all individuals, regardless of their gender.

This section criticizes the traditional security notions prevalent in the KRI region that prioritize military security at the expense of gender roles in decision-making centers. Women's presence in the military is typically symbolic, with only a few women holding ranks. This section aims to highlight gender dynamics within the military sector and explain women's position in the Peshmarga force. It delves into how wars and conflicts in the region have affected women, who are still used as weapons to gain victories and occupy territories, as was the case with ISIS in Shingal.

1.3.1 Gender Dynamics within Armed Forces (male dominance)

Traditional military hierarchies have historically been male-dominated, with men holding most leadership positions (Enloe, 2000, p. 45). Women, despite their increasing presence in the military, often face barriers to advancement, limited access to certain roles, and a culture that may be unwelcoming or hostile. Feminist critiques of this issue emphasize the need for systemic changes to dismantle gender-based barriers. They argue that military organizations should actively challenge and transform cultural norms contributing to gender bias (Tickner, 2001). Reforms in the security sector have to be inclusive and open. This implies that to prioritize civil society actors' engagement and adhere to gender-balance policies, it is necessary to develop real communication channels and a forum for interaction with the larger community.

It is believed that Kurdish women's activism started emerging in the late 1800s as part of the broader aspirations for Kurdish liberation within the Ottoman Empire. This was mainly seen among the urban Kurdish elite (Begikhani et al., 2018). However, despite the women's rights movement, Kurdish women did not gain independence due to the challenging sociopolitical climate in Kurdistan and the intellectual constraints of the movement (Hardi, 2013). In the military sector of the region, there is an evident absence of gender balance, and gender dominance is prevalent. Although women are in the Peshmarga force and positions of authority, it is not enough. It is necessary to enable women to exercise their authority over others in their duties without fear or discrimination. Therefore, there needs to be a cultural shift that encourages the participation of women in the military sector, such as Peshmarga, which is crucial for the nation's case of independence.

Nevertheless, it is essential to note the participation of women alongside men in the independence movement and their role in protecting their territories.

Kurdish women have fought against both gender and ethnic oppression as members of an oppressed population in a historically patriarchal society (Miranda, 2015). Before the establishment of the KRI, many women were involved in leadership activities, especially political and military activities. Some notable figures include Asenath Barzani (1590–1670), who became the female head of a yeshiva, a religious school where only men studied; Mir Khanzad in the late 16th or early 17th century; Adile Xanim (1847–1924), who ruled in the Halabja region and was famous for her governing capabilities, including building a bazaar and gardens in the Persian style and instituting a court of justice over which she presided; Margaret George Shello (1942-1969), who as a female Peshmarga joined the Peshmarga and participated in commanding the Peshmarga forces to great success at the Battle of the Zawita Valley; Laila Qasim (1952-1974), a student activist who was executed by the Ba‘th regime/Iraq in 1974 because of her nationalist activities. These women, among others, played significant roles both in society and in the fight for Kurdish independence (Mojab, 2001; Melammed, 2009; Bruinessen, 2001; Bengio, 2016)

For instance, a clear example of Kurdish women’s involvement in military actions was Mir Xanzad (K24, 2021), an army commander and ruler of the Soran Emirate (Badlisi, 2006). She is known from the late 16th or early 17th century and is known for her bravery, intelligence, and audacity. Following the poisoning death of her brother, King Mohammed, she assumed control of the Soran Emirate. Upon taking power, she exacted revenge by eliminating those accountable for his death. She also led a formidable force of 50,000 soldiers, comprising infantry and cavalry archers, to safeguard the Soran Emirate located in the Rwandz / Erbil area (Abdullah, 2023).

From the Kurdish nationalist perspective, women are allowed to participate in military actions, especially when it comes to the independence of the Kurdish

nation. However, this participation is not as open as it is for men. The Kurdish society is male-dominated and has a patriarchal attitude towards women and military activities (Hardi, 2013). Society believes that being a soldier is not a woman's duty, and they should focus on social affairs instead of being a Peshmarga. Even in recent years, women's participation in Peshmarga or other security or military fields has mostly been seen because they need their salary and an independent economy, not because the military sector needs women's experiences. A woman activist stated, "However, women's involvement as Peshmerga remains limited, and their role within the military structure is notably weak because most of them are there due to financial interests"(interview conducted by the author, December 25, 2024).

In an early time, the Kurdistan Government began to focus on women as peshmerga, possibly due to pressure from women's activists or to increase the number of women in the military sector. For example, the recent news is that on 25 February 2024, there was a meeting on the project of balancing the rights of women and men in the Ministry (KRG, Ministry of Peshmarga, 2024). which there were recommendations to prepare a draft of a project in which to activate and strengthen the rights ,duties ,and gender balance within the Peshmerga forces ,especially since the Gender Directorate has been activated in the MoPA as a unit to support and support the roles and impacts of women and increase their percentage in the Ranks of, in which to activate and strengthen the rights ,duties , and gender balance within the Peshmerga forces.

Moreover, the government claims to support women in the military sector and encourages them to showcase their abilities and ambitions. They offer women the chance to participate and voice their opinions. However, it is essential to note that most women do not wish to join the military as they believe it is not their duty. They prefer jobs that align with their aims and are socially acceptable.

According to feminists, this thinking is a result of societal norms that encourage women to conform to traditional gender roles. It limits their opportunities in fields that are not considered suitable for women. Beauvoir stated, "A person is not born a woman; rather, one becomes a woman through social and cultural processes" (de Beauvoir, 1953, p. 283). Women can choose a path that conforms to patriarchal expectations unconsciously. However, the Peshmerga Minister has encouraged women to develop their military and intellectual skills, and to raise their scientific and military knowledge by learning modern military principles (The Ministry of Peshmarga, 2021). The KRG has stated that it supports women and gives them equal participation opportunities, regardless of gender. However, fewer units are explicitly designated for women, and more job announcements are made for male Peshmarga employment than for women.

1.3.2 Sexual Violence as a War Tactic

UN Security Council Resolution 1820 recognizes "sexual violence as both a weapon and a tactic in warfare. It stipulates that acts of sexual violence, including rape, may be classified as war crimes, crimes against humanity, or acts contributing to genocide" (UNSCR, 2008). It is emphasized that sexual violence crimes should not be included in amnesty provisions when it comes to conflict resolution processes. Member states are also urged to fulfill their legal obligations to prosecute those who commit sexual violence to guarantee equal protection under the law and access to justice for all victims of sexual violence, especially women and girls. However, Iraq has not yet ratified the United Nations Security Council Resolution (UNSCR) 1820, despite the occurrence of a conflict with ISIS that involved numerous instances of sexual violence against Yazidi women. The absence of a specific legal framework for addressing such cases remains a notable gap.

The control exerted by ISIS was bolstered through a variety of methods, with sexual and gender-based violence occupying a prominent place among them. Notably, the most infamous of these methods was the enslavement of women. During the ISIS offensive in the Kurdistan region of Iraq in the summer of 2014, thousands of women and children were abducted (Termeer, 2022). ISIS's doctrine justified these actions when directed against non-believers who resisted conversion to Islam. In Dabiq, ISIS's English-language digital magazine, states, "According to sharia and verses in the Qur'an, female members of the Yezidi sect may legitimately be captured and forcibly made concubines or sexually enslaved people" (Gambhir, 2014, pp. 1-12). But according to ISIS, its soldiers have handed over their captive Yezidi women and children as "*spoils of war*." The article defends sexual assault by saying that Islam allows beating and selling non-Muslim "slaves," including females, and that sex with them is acceptable (Al-Ali, 2016, p. 12).

For many victims, the prospect of returning home was eclipsed by the fear of bringing shame to their families (Human Rights Council, 2016). As a result, these acts of sexual and gender-based violence effectively pushed them to the lowest echelons of ISIS's hierarchical structure, characterized by sexual and sectarian oppression. Conversely, women who chose to join the Brigade or marry into ISIS appeared to be driven not solely by ideological commitment but also by the pursuit of personal advancement.

Additionally, ISIS's strategic use of arranged and forced marriages served to expand its demographic base, as the group recognized the value of marriage and family ties in the context of its state-building efforts (Ahram, 2019). Numerous reports have extensively documented the scale and level of violence committed by ISIS members (UNAMI OHCHR, 2014), (Amnesty International, 2014) It is hard to summarize the heartbreaking stories of the victims—most of whom are

young, female Yezidi survivors of forced marriage, sexual slavery, beatings, and captivity, sometimes sold and sometimes given as gifts. ISIS's strategy has consistently emphasized the instrumentalization of women and girls as tools of war, with a particular focus on exploiting their vulnerabilities and roles in society. So, ISIS's strategy has always prioritized women and girls as war material (Al-Ali, 2016). What happened to the Yazidi woman belongs to some factors which may be a controversial reason in the community. Some argued that the KRI is responsible for the fact that they couldn't protect their citizens in Shingal. The issue of Shingal has become a source of contention between the ruling parties, with each side accusing the other of betrayal. Some have dubbed the situation the "nation's betrayal", arguing that the Peshmarga forces lacked the necessary training and military expertise to defend the area. Some have also raised concerns about their ability to use weapons effectively. As a result, there is a growing sense of frustration and disappointment among the people, who feel that those in power have let them down. The situation remains tense, and there is a pressing need to resolve this ongoing crisis.

1.3.3 Women in the Peshmerga

The Kurdistan Region of Iraq (KRI) has a long history of striving for autonomy and self-determination, and women have been an integral part of the Peshmerga forces despite their traditional male-dominated structure. Throughout different periods of Kurdish history, women have played significant roles in various capacities different periods of Kurdish history. In the early years of the Kurdish resistance, women played supportive roles such as providing intelligence, nursing wounded fighters, and assisting in logistics (Hamelink et al., 2018). As the conflicts escalated and the Kurdish struggle for self-rule intensified, more women took up arms and became Peshmerga fighters. They underwent military training and actively participated alongside their male counterparts in frontline

combat. After 1991 and the establishment of the Kurdistan Regional Government (KRG), women's participation in the Peshmerga forces continued to grow. In recent years, women have continued to serve as Peshmerga fighters, contributing to security and defense efforts against internal and external threats.

Some feminists, such as Runyan and Peterson, believe that women prioritize jobs to hold, which is reproductivity; because of being mothers, women are peaceful and do not like to go to war; instead, they want to protect the humanity task. The state sometimes abuses its legitimate authority over its citizens to safeguard its interests and ensure survival. It extends its control across all sectors, justifying social control ideologies and the use of force. This includes mobilizing collective resources for state-defined public interests and dominating cultural, military, political, and economic strategies. As a result, "the state becomes the most menacing actor globally, as it uses its interests to morally, economically, and politically entrap us all in militarism" (Runyan & Peterson, 1991, pp. 87-91). This reminds us of a point that some feminists tend to argue that participating in women equally in the military sector is necessary, and states need them to serve their survival goals and help apply their policy by encouraging women to be in the military. However, other feminists contend that if there were more women in the workforce, they would be able to advocate for women's rights and perhaps even stop internal wars or conflicts. This would suggest that the underrepresentation of women is one of the reasons why there aren't enough women in the military sector.

Accordingly, according to Cohn Ruddick, if women are represented in adequate numbers, they may be less susceptible to the suppressive effects of gendered national security narratives (Cohn & Ruddick, 2004). So, to them, having women in the military sector leads to increased advocacy for women's rights, but the effectiveness of this advocacy in preventing conflicts is uncertain.

Advocacy efforts may face challenges addressing deeply entrenched societal issues and systemic inequalities contributing to conflicts. Also, while promoting gender equality and women's empowerment is essential for building more peaceful and inclusive societies, it may not be sufficient to prevent conflicts, which often have complex root causes. Women in the military can bring unique perspectives and skills to peacekeeping and conflict resolution efforts, potentially enhancing the effectiveness of these operations.

However, participating women in the military, according to some writers, is not the main feminist aim, but security comes from preventing society from patriarchal strategies. Enloe noted, "Feminists' deliberate examination of what upholds male privilege has led many—though not all—feminists across various countries to move beyond merely questioning equality within the military and to challenge militarization itself" (Enloe, 2000, p. 33). Throughout history, women have been systematically sidelined from military roles, prompting numerous feminists to advocate for their right to engage in military service. Enloe stresses the need to move past mere inquiries into gender parity within the military and instead direct attention to the broader implications of militarization on society. She underscores that delving into what reinforces masculine norms has motivated many feminists, albeit not all, across different nations to expand their scrutiny beyond issues of equality within the military to encompass the broader phenomenon of militarization itself.

Women in the military sector, especially in the Peshmarga force. They are divided into different units through the Ministry of Peshmarga, the Interior, and the Security Council. It is important to note that data regarding the number of women serving in the Peshmarga forces is not readily available and can vary over time due to recruitment, training, and other factors. Despite this, efforts have been made to increase female participation in the Peshmarga, with reports indicating a

gradual rise in female fighters in recent years. One factor hindering women from becoming Peshmerga is the economic situation in the region, which affects the region's ability to employ them in the military forces of the KRG. The shortage of funds for hiring in the government sector has led to a halt in military recruitment, thereby hindering female volunteers from joining the female Peshmerga special regiment (Rudaw, 2015). The division of female Peshmarga between the two political parties, PDK and PUK, led to them going under different names of units. For example, the Patriotic Union of Kurdistan (PUK) established the first all-female unit in 1996 in the KRI. Since then, the unit has grown to include over 500 fighters (Marouf, 2018). This force had martyrs during the fight against ISIS in 2014, as Rangin Yusuf was a captain in the second battalion of the women's Peshmerga forces, belonging to the 106th unit of the 70th forces (Rudaw, 2014). The Peshmerga, which is the military force of the Kurdistan region in Iraq, has an estimated size ranging from 50,000 to 190,000 troops. Interestingly, there are around 1,700 women currently serving in the Peshmerga, according to Gorman (Gorman, 2017). However, there is no exact count of the number of women serving as Peshmerga fighters. The other female Peshmerga force in the KRI is the Êzîdxan Women's Units (Yekîneyên Jinên Êzîdxan or YJÊ). They were established by the Yazidi women's militia in Iraq in 2015 to protect the Yazidi community from attacks by ISIS (Oliaei, 2020; Moroz, 2015). They fought against ISIS, suffered casualties, and continued to defend their community.

Since 2003, female Peshmerga were mainly assigned duties such as maintaining border security and supervising women's shelters across the region. However, in June 2014, the first group of female Peshmerga was deployed to the Basheer front to fight against ISIS. In August of the same year, female fighters participated in the operation to recapture the Mosul Dam. After the dam had been

retaken, ten female Peshmerga were assigned to guard it, indicating a significant shift in the role of Kurdish women in combat during the war. So, the female Peshmarga are nearly different before going through battles and carrying defense duties. Women can also serve as Peshmerga and help secure the regions when necessary.

However, In traditional thought in the region, women in the military were seen as objects rather than subjects; as Enloe pointed out military policymakers have needed women to assume various militarized roles, including boosting morale, offering support during and after conflicts, ensuring the continuation of the next generation of soldiers, symbolizing a homeland worth defending, and stepping in to fill roles when there is a shortage of eligible male recruits (Enloe, 2000). Enloe's analysis sheds light on how women have been instrumentalized in militarized contexts throughout history. In a patriarchal society, women are often seen as secondary to men, more as symbols than defenders or protectors of national security. This belief is reflected in the structure of the military as well. Even in the KRI, the idea persists that women are weaker than men in warfare and their roles are of lower status compared to men.

Accordingly, women may be seen as weaker military personnel when serving as Peshmerga. This can lead to them being perceived as less reliable and trustworthy during conflict. As a result, the government may not view them as a dependable military force. This can harm the region's security sector. Even though there may be female Peshmerga, if they are less trained and not believed to be brave enough to defend the region's security, it may cause further problems, in which they may not be considered a dependable military force by the government.

A woman activist stated, "Women's role within the military structure is notably weak" (interview conducted by the author, December 25, 2024).

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A patriarchal structure in the KRI military is a hierarchical system where men hold most of the leadership and decision-making authority. This structure often reflects traditional gender roles and norms. Men usually occupy the highest positions of power and authority, while women may face obstacles in advancing and may be confined to more supportive or administrative roles. In the region, there are women in some military positions; however, in higher decision-making centers, such as the Ministry of Peshmarga, KRG Security Council, and the Interior Ministry, even ministers, senior officers, and their deputies are male. Historically, many militaries across the globe have been dominated by men, with patriarchal structures shaping the culture and policies of the institution. However, in recent years, several countries have promoted gender equality and diversity within the military. This includes initiatives to increase the representation of women in leadership roles and combat positions. A woman military commander in the Security Council states:

... “Women in the Peshmerga face limited opportunities due to the absence of a unified force and standardized policies, traditional gender expectations, and societal and institutional barriers. While some women have taken on leadership and combat roles, particularly during the fight against ISIS, challenges persist, including unequal treatment, lack of proper training, family obligations, and reports of harassment. Cultural norms and patriarchal structures

further constrain women's roles, hindering progress toward gender equality in the military". (interview conducted by the author, December 20, 2024)

It is important to note that the degree of patriarchy within a military can vary significantly, depending on factors such as cultural norms, institutional policies, and the level of commitment to diversity and inclusion initiatives. Despite notable improvements, women in the Kurdish Regional Government's Peshmerga forces still face significant challenges regarding gender discrimination, limited opportunities for advancement, and societal barriers. These obstacles have arisen from historical, cultural, and social factors, and they are not unique to the Peshmerga forces. There is a growing recognition, however, that promoting gender equality and empowering women in the security sector is not only a human rights issue but also a strategic necessity. It was noted by the Ministry of Peshmerga that a gender directorate was established to ensure gender balance in the sector (The Ministry of Peshmerga Affairs, 2021).

There was widespread resistance among the community and the families of potential recruits to the idea of women joining the military. Marrying a female soldier is not a common or generally acceptable practice (Frada, 2023). Even though women serving as peshmerga are not widely accepted by society, this patriarchal idea has also influenced the government's perspective on women as peshmerga. The government tends to focus on training and promoting male peshmerga, viewing them as the primary focus of defense efforts. Many women also share this viewpoint, seeing themselves as non-mainstream and unimportant in defending the region's security, believing that it is primarily a man's duty. As the commander of the Security Council stated:

..."Women Peshmergas are often not fully accepted in society, particularly by more conservative elements of Kurdish culture. Like many societies in the region, Kurdish culture has traditionally viewed women as being outside of active

combat roles, with their primary responsibilities seen as domestic or familial. These cultural norms are slow to change, and women who step outside these expectations often face societal pushback. Many view women in the military as 'breaking with tradition,' leading to stigmatization not only within their families but also in the wider community." (interview conducted by the author, December 12, 2024)

To this end, the Kurdistan Regional Government has implemented several initiatives to promote gender equality in the Peshmerga forces. These initiatives include increasing the recruitment of women into the Peshmerga, providing them with specialized training, and enhancing support services for female fighters. In addition, the KRG has established a Women's Affairs Office within the Ministry of Peshmerga to oversee and coordinate these efforts. Despite these efforts, there is still much work to be done. Greater awareness and understanding of the importance of gender equality within the Peshmerga forces is needed to overcome deeply ingrained cultural and societal norms. However, with continued commitment and investment, progress towards gender equality in the Peshmerga forces can be achieved.

1.4 Implications for National Security

The following points can be perceived as potential threats to national security in the region. These factors are viewed as incompatible and unsuitable from a feminist security perspective. It is recommended that the government take these factors into account and address them to enhance the region's national security:

1. Lack of Military Ability Put Women at Risk and Vulnerable to Harm:

The lack of military ability in the Kurdistan Region of Iraq (KRI) increases the vulnerability of women to various threats, including ISIS attacks like those

witnessed in Shingal. Insufficient military capability undermines the region's capacity to protect its population, particularly women, from violence and exploitation. As a Yazidi woman's lawyer explained, "The unstable political and military situation in the region affects not only society as a whole but also has a disproportionate impact on women, exposing them to unique challenges and vulnerabilities" (interview conducted by the author, December 29/ 2024). Similarly, a woman with a PhD in Sociology noted, "Women bear the brunt of political situations in the region, often paying the price for instability and conflict" (interview conducted by the author, December 17/ 2024). (Free Yezidi Foundation, 2022) FYF, in their annual report, stated how 31 Yezidi women with children born of rape received psychosocial support sessions. This underscores a significant challenge in the region, indicating a lack of organized legal mechanisms to address such issues related to internal security. According to Yezidi tradition, both parents must be Yezidi for a child to be considered part of the Yezidi community. Initially, the Yezidi Spiritual Council permitted these children, despite being born to ISIS fathers, to be accepted into the community along with their mothers.

However, following widespread opposition from the Yezidi population, the council reversed its decision, stating that such children would not be embraced as members of the Yezidi community (Free Yezidi Foundation, 2019). Yezidi mothers are confronted with difficult decisions regarding their children born of rape by ISIS fathers. Some mothers have opted to leave their children behind and rejoin the Yezidi community, while others choose to stay and protect their offspring. However, these mothers encounter significant challenges as their families often refuse to accept the children born of rape (Ali, 2021). This situation results in a form of discrimination against the human rights of these children, particularly those born to mothers whose ISIS fathers were raped.

Furthermore, ISIS sexual violence had an impact on the other generations, which are those children who were born as a result of forced sex by ISIS members with Yazidi women. Those children will go into society in the future, and the KRG has no clear strategy to deal with those cases. The KRG lacks a thorough plan to deal with rape-related pregnancies or offspring. The local health committee determined that women who choose to raise their children should receive government protection, including housing for themselves and their children and prenatal and maternal health care. In cases where women do not wish to raise their children, personal status courts will be responsible for making decisions regarding the child's welfare (Human Rights Watch, 2015). The remaining children by the obligatory marriage to ISIS should be taken into focus (Ali, 2021). It is the responsibility of the authorities to ensure that a child is provided with suitable alternative care if their biological mother or immediate relatives are unable or unwilling to care for them. This care can be provided directly by recognized non-governmental organizations or through competent local authorities. The authorities should prioritize keeping the child in the care of their biological mother or other close family members unless it is not in the best interest of the child. This is particularly important when the child's mother and family have not given up custody. If the mother decides to raise the child, there should be a government strategy to provide financial and psychological support to them.

2. Budget Allocation and Security Sector Funding:

Prioritizing military expenditure can strain the government's budget, diverting funds from essential security sectors like law enforcement and infrastructure development. This financial strain compromises overall security readiness, limiting the government's capacity to address various security challenges effectively. Monthly expenditures for the Ministry of Peshmarga, the

Ministry of Interior, and Kurdistan Region Security Council account for 41.89% of the KRG's public sector spending of 894 billion IQD per month (Bakr, 2021).

According to data obtained from the Biometric Registration Commission, out of the total government salary recipients, approximately 476,000 are civil servants, 292,000 are military personnel, excluding police and security guards, and the KRG has 1,378,000 employees. It means a huge expenditure goes to the military sector, according to other sectors (Rudaw, 2017). The advocates of feminism have contended that excessive focus on the military sector, as opposed to other sectors in budget allocation, can have a detrimental impact on a state's national security. Such a stance is particularly relevant in the Kurdistan region, where most costs and expenditures are directed towards the military sector, leaving other significant sectors, such as education, agriculture, and youth employment, neglected. Attention to these sectors could serve to reduce internal crimes, such as honor killings, killings due to poverty, or divorce due to poverty, and provide citizens with basic living necessities. Therefore, policymakers must consider a more balanced approach to budget allocation that considers the needs of all sectors.

3. Importance of Female Representation in Decision-Making:

Ensuring female representation in decision-making positions within the military, particularly the Peshmerga Force, is essential for promoting diversity of perspectives and enhancing decision-making processes. Women bring unique insights and experiences that can inform more comprehensive and effective security strategies, contributing to the overall strength of KRI's national security apparatus. So, another effective way to incorporate women's perspective in KRI national security is to ensure their representation in decision-making centers, such as the military sector. This will provide a peaceful point of view about what needs to be done to ensure the security of KRI. Participating in the public sphere is an

amoral responsibility; according to viewpoint theorists, women have a moral obligation to pursue peace and should bear exclusive responsibility for it. One of the most significant feminist psychologists, Carol Gilligan, provides more insight into this concept. Gilligan created the "ethic of care" idea, which links women's peacefulness to their concerns about relationship preservation. According to Carol Gilligan, women have moral opinions about relationships and believe that showing care indicates moral obligation. She said: "Women's construction of the moral problem as a problem of care and responsibility in relationships rather than as one of rights and rules ties the development of their moral thinking to changes in their understanding of responsibility and relationships" (Gilligan, 2003, p. 73).

In KRI society, it is not necessary to have all women participate in political or military affairs, as these are not very common roles for women. It is better to select women for these positions based on their ability and quality rather than just based on gender. This is important because filling positions based solely on gender can harm the security of KRI, as it may lead to the involvement of unqualified individuals in decision-making areas.

On the other hand, according to some scholars, women are naturally inclined towards peace and less likely to engage in conflicts or wars. Therefore, their involvement in political and military affairs is crucial in bringing a unique gender perspective that may help prevent conflicts. Jane Addams argued that Women, as life sustainers, possess a unique form of rationality that they should employ as active citizens to advance governance methods based on the rule of law rather than on force cited in (Otto, 2006); since the early 20th-century women activists have used maternal ideologies and biological rationales to justify their activism for peace on both national and international stages. In 1915, the women at the Hague Congress for Peace highlighted that their drive for peace stemmed from their natural roles as mothers (Aroussi, 2009).

According to Okamura, a maternalist ideologist, women are inherently pacifist due to their biological roles. Because women are biologically linked to life-giving and nurturing roles, women tend to avoid conflict and prefer peaceful resolutions (Okamura, 2019; Pankhurst, 2003). Ruddick (1989) also argues that maternal practice fosters peace politics. While this perspective is primarily explained epistemologically, it can also be considered within psychological analysis. Under this understanding, it is essential in the KRI to include women in decision-making positions and involve them in the military sector, particularly in diplomacy and military meetings. Their participation impacts national security; however, it is important to recognize that women's involvement in the military can have both beneficial and detrimental outcomes, such as the formation of the '*Force of the Sun Ladies*', a female Yazidi militia that was established in 2016 in response to the ISIS threat in Shingal (Gorman, 2017). The Sun Brigade, as it is also known, consists entirely of Yezidi women who have taken up arms to protect their homeland from further persecution and violence, particularly in response to the atrocities committed against the Yezidi community in Sinjar. In the KRI, political party conflicts exist, especially between the two major parties, PUK and PDK. Hence, the involvement of women in the military sector could potentially jeopardize the security of the region. This could happen if women are unable to embody their perceived biological role as peacemakers and instead become embroiled in political conflicts (Bouta et al., 2005; Ruddick, 1989). Additionally, if women are recruited into the military solely to meet quotas without being adequately trained as competent soldiers, it could also pose a security risk; rather than improving security, they could harm the nation and national interests. Women must adhere to gender roles and stereotypes within the military sector and avoid any political party actions that could lead to conflicts and negatively affect the lives of citizens.

4. Fragmented Peshmerga Force is a Threat to Human Security in the KRI:

The Peshmerga forces in the Kurdistan Region of Iraq (KRI) are not unified, resulting in significant security challenges, especially for women. This disunity has left women vulnerable, as tragically exemplified by the Yazidis in Shingal. The lack of a formal, unified Peshmerga force stems from ongoing conflicts among political parties. Instead of prioritizing the region's future and ensuring its security, political leaders have focused on their internal disputes, neglecting the critical need for a cohesive security force under a single government leader. The existence of fragmented, non-independent Peshmerga forces weakens the cohesion and effectiveness of KRI's security architecture. This fragmentation poses a serious threat to national security by hindering coordinated responses to threats and creating vulnerabilities that adversaries can exploit. Establishing a unified command structure is essential for enhancing the region's security resilience.

Moreover, the region's security sector lacks autonomy, which creates significant internal threats and harms individual security. The absence of a formal, nationally controlled force operating under government directives increases the potential for human rights violations, especially against women. Without a structured and accountable security apparatus, women may face greater risks and challenges due to the absence of a protective and regulated force. As Bakr mentioned, the KRI's stability is threatened by the Kurdistan Region Security Institutions' position as tools of political parties' competition and enforcers of public loyalty to the political bureaus, which is also responsible for serious human rights violations (Bakr, 2021). Bakr argued that efforts to professionalize and unify the Peshmerga forces would likely fail without a comprehensive security sector reform plan, including the interior forces (Bakr, 2021).

The involvement of partisan forces and the exploitation of Kurdish forces for political advantage by both the KDP and PUK significantly affects the military strategy of the Kurdish forces. This undermines their combat effectiveness and diminishes Kurdistan's strength as a democratic society (Hama, 2019). The absence of a united military force threatens its national security. Recent events have shown the consequences of this, such as the capture of Shingal by ISIS militants in 2014 when Peshmerga forces withdrew. This resulted in a massacre of Yazidi civilians and the displacement of thousands of people. Even in an urgent situation, the two political parties could not unite with each other to overcome the threat far from the region. As Hama mentioned, just one week after the self-declared Islamic State took control of Mosul and started to advance toward Erbil, the capital of Iraqi Kurdistan, the Kurdish parliament gave the KRG the order to unite all Kurdish forces within six months on July 23, 2014. It's the same as four years ago, despite the immediate and maybe fatal risk (Hama, 2019).

Most women interviewed emphasized that conflicts and disputes between political parties negatively affect women's situations in the region. A political science expert explained that political instability and weak governance result in inconsistent enforcement of laws protecting women, leaving them vulnerable to violence, exploitation, and discrimination. Furthermore, she said the lack of political cohesion and effective leadership obstructs the implementation of gender-sensitive policies, while delays in elections create uncertainty and further marginalize women's participation in decision-making. Political infighting also heightens social tensions, increases the risk of gender-based violence, and undermines efforts to protect and empower women in both public and private spheres (interview conducted by the author, December 20/ 2024).

Also, the 2017 withdrawal of Kurdish forces from Kirkuk illustrates how political party control over the military sector has endangered the national

security of the Kurdistan region. Hama contended that "the ongoing deep partisan divisions in the Kurdistan Region may persist unless the Kurdish Peshmerga unify under a national military force" (Hama & Abdulla, 2019, pp. 380-381). To move beyond its current state, the Kurdistan Region needs to resolve this issue by uniting the military sector into a national force under the KRG instead of political parties. Due to this situation, the Peshmerga is a less potent combat force in military operations and presents evident command and control difficulties. From the feminist security idea, the disunity within the Peshmerga forces can pose a significant threat to women, making them more vulnerable as victims of war, particularly in situations where territorial control is lost, as witnessed during the rise of ISIS (Daesh). When military forces lack cohesion, it undermines their ability to defend territories effectively, leaving communities, especially women, exposed to the horrors of conflict, displacement, and violence. The fragmentation of the Peshmerga contributed to the region's inability to present a unified defense, which in turn led to the fall of territories where women faced severe atrocities, including kidnapping, sexual violence, and exploitation. Without a unified military force, the security vacuum creates conditions where women become prime targets during conflicts, further marginalizing them and threatening their safety and well-being

1.5 Conclusion

This chapter analyzed military security in the Kurdistan Region of Iraq (KRI) using Copenhagen and feminist security perspectives. We looked at the structure and activities of the KRI's military forces, particularly the Peshmerga, and their reactions to major military threats such as ISIS. Furthermore, we applied feminist security criticisms to investigate gender roles within the armed forces, the use of Sexual assault as a war tactic, and the contributions of women in the Peshmerga. Our comprehensive analysis has revealed several critical insights:

1. Copenhagen School Perspective:

- Peshmerga and Political Parties: The Peshmerga forces are closely linked with political parties in the KRI, significantly influencing their operations and political stability. This relationship has strategic benefits but also introduces risks, such as the politicization of military actions and potential internal conflicts.

- Response to ISIS: The KRI's military response to ISIS demonstrated resilience and strategic effectiveness, but highlighted areas needing improvement, such as coordination, resource allocation, and long-term strategic planning.

2. Feminist Security Critique:

- Gender Dynamics within Armed Forces: Male dominance in the KRI's military sector significantly affects operational effectiveness and inclusivity. Structural barriers and gender biases limit the potential contributions of women and create an exclusionary environment.

- Sexual Violence as a War Tactic: The use of sexual violence as a tactic in war remains a critical issue, with profound impacts on both individual victims and the broader security landscape. This practice causes immense suffering and undermines military forces' moral and operational integrity. As seen in the case of Yazidi women in Shingal, who suffered brutal violence at the hands of ISIS, the Kurdistan Region of Iraq (KRI) still lacks specific laws and a comprehensive strategy to address such situations and their potential recurrence. This legal and strategic gap leaves the region unprepared to effectively manage the consequences of similar atrocities in the future.

- Women in the Peshmerga: Despite significant challenges, women have made notable contributions to military efforts. Their involvement in combat and leadership roles is crucial for fostering a more inclusive and effective military

force. The findings of this chapter have several important implications for the KRI's national security:

- **Military-Political Dynamics:** It is crucial to understand the intertwined nature of military and political spheres in the KRI to formulate policies that enhance both military effectiveness and political stability. Efforts to depoliticize military actions and strengthen independent military governance could mitigate some identified risks.

- **Gender-Inclusive Strategies:** Incorporating gender perspectives into military planning and operations can significantly enhance security. Policies that address gender biases, promote the inclusion of women, and combat sexual violence are vital for building a more resilient and effective military force.

- **Holistic Security Approaches:** Integrating feminist security critiques provides a broader understanding of security. Recognizing the multifaceted nature of security threats, including those related to gender dynamics, is essential for developing holistic and sustainable security strategies.

The information presented in this study adds significantly to the main argument of this work, which stresses the importance of inclusive and multifaceted security approaches in the KRI. By combining traditional and feminist security perspectives, we have emphasized the intricate interaction of factors that affect military security. This all-encompassing approach underscores the significance of dealing with traditional and non-traditional threats to improve security and stability.

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روانگهی فیمینیستی سهبارهت به ئاسایشی سهربازی له ههریمی کوردستانی عێراق

- ناوی توێژەر شهله صالح عبدالله/ مامۆستا/ زانکۆی سۆران/ فاکهلتی یاسا، زانسته سیاسیهکان و بهرپوهبردن/ بهشی سیاسهت و پهيوهندییه نۆودهوڵهتییهکان
- به سهپرپرشتی: شوکر ئهوبهکر/ مامۆستا/ زانکۆی سۆران/ یاسا، زانسته سیاسیهکان و بهرپوهبردن/ بهشی سیاسهت و پهيوهندییه نۆودهوڵهتییهکان

پوخته

ئهم توێژینهوهیه له سیكتهری ئاسایشی سهربازی ههریمی کوردستان دهکۆلێتهوه به تیکهڵکردنی چوارچۆیهی ئاسایشی قوتابخانهی کۆپنهاگن لهگهڵ روانگهی ئاسایشی فیمینیستی. توێژینهوهکه ههولدهات تاوتوێیهکی ڕهخنهگرانه بۆ کارلێکی نێوان پراکتیزه تهقلیدییهکانی ئاسایشی سهربازی و داینامیکی جێندهری پێشکەش بکات، که دهبیته هۆی تیگه‌یشتنێکی وردتر له دۆخی ئاسایشی سهربازی له ههریمی کوردستان. دوو پرسپاری سههرکی توێژینهوه ئهم کاره بهروپیش دهبن که نهوانیش بریتین له:

- ۱- چۆن داینامیکی جێندهری کاریگهری لهسههر پێکهاته و کارکردنی سیكتهری سهربازی له ههریمی کوردستان، بهتایبهت هیزی پێشمههرگه دهکات؟
- ۲- ئایا تیکهڵکردنی روانگهی فیمینیستی له ناو چوارچۆیه تهقلیدییهکانی ئاسایشی سهربازی چۆن دهتوانێت ئاسایشی نهتهوهیی ههریمی کوردستان باشترو بههیزتر بکات؟

توێژینهوهکه بۆ شکردهوهی داتا و زانیاریهکان میتۆدی چۆنایهتی بهکاردههێنیت، لهوانهش چاوپێکهوتن لهگهڵ کهسانی پهيوهندیدار، ههروهها بهکارهێنانی شیکردنهوهیهکی ڕهخنهگرانه به نهدهبیاتی بهردهست له ڕینگای شیکاری بهلگهنامه فهرمییهکان، و توێژینهوهی کمیس ستهدی (توێژینهوهی حالهت). ههروهها ئهم توێژینهوهیه له لایهک ڕیبازی ئاسایشی قوتابخانهی کۆپنهاگن بۆ ههڵسهنگاندنی کهرتی سهربازی له ههریم لهرووی ههیکهلییهی کهرتهکهو چۆنیهتی کارکردن و ڕیکخستن بهکاردههێنیت، لهلایهکی تر روانگهی ئاسایشی فیمینیستی بۆ ڕهخنه گرتن له تیگه‌یشتنی کۆپنهاگن سهبارهت به ئاسایشی سهربازی دهگرت بهوهی که داینامیکی جێندهری له شیکردنهوهکانی وهلا ناوه.

دهرهناجه سههرمکییهکان دهڕیدهخهن که پارتیه سیاسیهکان کاریگهریهکی بهرچاویان لهسههر توانای سهربازی و سهقامگیریی سیاسی له ههریمی کوردستان ههیه، ئهم کهرته کهوتۆته ژێر کاریگهری و کۆنترۆلی حیزب نهوهک حکومهت. بۆ نموونه وهلامدانهوهی ههریم بۆ داعش خۆراگری و لیهاتوویی پێشمههرگه نیشان دهات، بهلام له ههمان کاتدا چهندین جیگای تییینه که پێویستیان به باشتکردنه، وهک ههماهنگی و پلاندانانی ستراتیژیی درێزخایهن و دروستکردنی هیزیکی نێزانی یهکگرتوو. له

روانگه‌یه‌وه شیکارییه فیمنیستییه که نایه‌کسانی جینده‌ری له‌ناو سیکتری سهربازی هه‌ریمی کوردستاندا دهرده‌خات، که تییذا زالبوونی و بالادهستی پیاوان پارتیه سیاسییه‌کان و نایه‌کسانی دابه‌شکاری پۆسته بالاکان، به‌شداری و کاریگه‌ری ژنان سنوورداری ده‌کات. هه‌رچه‌نده ئه‌م توژی‌ینه‌ویه ئامازیه به‌وش داوه که ئامانج نابیت ته‌نها زیاده‌کردنی ریزه‌ی ژن بیت له‌کهرتی سهربازی به‌لکو ده‌بیت ژنان له‌سه‌ر به‌نهای لیه‌اتووی و کوالیتی به‌دهنی دابدرین، چونکه ئه‌مه هه‌ره‌شه له‌سه‌ر ئاسایشی نیشتمانی کوردستان له‌هه‌گه‌ری رووبه‌رووبه‌وه سهربازییه‌کان دا دروست ده‌کات. سه‌ره‌رای ئه‌مه، توژی‌ینه‌وه‌که باس له‌به‌کار هینانی توندوتیژی سیکسی وهک تاکتیکی جه‌نگ ده‌کات له‌شینگال له‌لایه‌ن دا‌عه‌شه‌وه به‌کار هیندرا که دهره‌نجامی مه‌ترسیداری بو هه‌ردوو قوربانی تاکه‌که‌سی و ئاسایشی گشتی هه‌یه، که هه‌چ چوارچینه‌یه‌کی یاسایی ریکه‌راوی نیه. سه‌ره‌رای ئه‌م ئاسته‌نگانه، ژنان له‌هه‌ز مه‌کانی پێشمه‌رگه‌دا رۆلی گرنگیان گیراوه، به‌لام روانگه‌ی مینه له‌کاری و سیاسه‌تی سهربازی گشتیدا پشگۆی خراوه.

توژی‌ینه‌وه‌که به‌باسکردنی کاریگه‌رییه‌ فرانه‌کانی بو سه‌ر ئاسایشی نیشتمانی هه‌ریمی کوردستان به‌وه‌ دهره‌نجامه ده‌کات که پشتیوانی له‌تیکه‌له‌کردنی دیدگا جینده‌رییه‌کان ده‌کات له‌ناو پلاندانان و ستراتیژی سهربازی وهک ئامرازیک بو به‌هه‌زکردنی ئاسایشی گشتی. شیکارییه‌که پێشنیاری ئه‌وه ده‌کات که ریبازیکی هه‌مه‌لایه‌نه، که هه‌م نیگه‌رانییه ئه‌منیه ته‌قلیدییه‌کان و هه‌م جینده‌رییه‌کان له‌به‌رچاو به‌گریته، ده‌توانیت ببیت هه‌وی دارشتنی ستراتیژی ئه‌منی کاریگه‌رتر و به‌رده‌وامتر و دروستکردنی هه‌زیک سهربازی یه‌که‌گرتووی فره دیدگه که هه‌ردوو روانگه‌ی ژنانه‌و پیاوانه له‌خۆبه‌گریته.

المنظور النسوي حول الأمن العسكري في إقليم كردستان / العراق

الباحثة: شعله صالح عبدالله، أستاذة محاضرة، جامعة سوران، قسم القانون والعلوم السياسية والإدارة، قسم السياسة والعلاقات الدولية.

بإشراف: شكر أبو بكر / محاضر / جامعة سوران / قسم القانون والعلوم السياسية والإدارة / قسم السياسة والعلاقات الدولية

ملخص

تتناول هذه الدراسة قطاع الأمن العسكري في إقليم كردستان من خلال دمج إطار مدرسة كوبنهاغن الأمني مع منظور أمني نسوي. يسعى البحث إلى تقديم دراسة نقدية للتفاعل بين الممارسات الأمنية العسكرية التقليدية وديناميكيات النوع الاجتماعي (الجندر)، مما يؤدي إلى فهم أكثر دقة للوضع الأمني العسكري في إقليم كردستان العراق. هناك سؤالان بحثيان رئيسيان يدفعان هذه الدراسة إلى الأمام:

1. كيف تؤثر ديناميكيات النوع الاجتماعي (الجندر) على هيكل وعمل القطاع العسكري في إقليم كردستان، وخاصة قوات البشمركة؟
2. كيف يمكن لدمج وجهات النظر النسوية ضمن الأطر الأمنية العسكرية التقليدية أن يحسن ويعزز الأمن القومي لإقليم كردستان؟

يستخدم البحث أساليب كيفية و منهج النوعي لتحليل البيانات والمعلومات، بما في ذلك المقابلات مع الأفراد المعنيين، والمراجعة النقدية للأدبيات الموجودة من خلال فحص الوثائق الرسمية، ودراسات الحالة. من ناحية، تستخدم هذه الدراسة نهج مدرسة كوبنهاغن الأمني لتقييم القطاع العسكري في الإقليم من حيث هيكله وعمله وتنظيمه. ومن ناحية أخرى، تستخدم المنظور الأمني النسوي لفهم مدرسة كوبنهاغن للأمن العسكري لإهمالها ديناميكيات النوع الاجتماعي في تحليلاتها.

تكشف النتائج الرئيسية أن للأحزاب السياسية تأثيراً كبيراً على القدرة العسكرية والاستقرار السياسي في إقليم كردستان؛ فهذا القطاع يخضع لنفوذ وسيطرة الأحزاب بدلاً من الحكومة. على سبيل المثال، تُظهر استجابة الإقليم لداعش صمود وقدرة البشمركة، لكنها في الوقت نفسه تسلط الضوء على عدة مجالات تحتاج إلى تحسين، مثل التنسيق والتخطيط الاستراتيجي طويل الأمد، وإنشاء قوة عسكرية موحدة ومنظمة. من وجهة النظر هذه، يكشف التحليل النسوي عن عدم المساواة بين الجنسين داخل القطاع العسكري في إقليم كردستان، حيث تحد هيمنة الرجال والأحزاب السياسية والتوزيع غير المتكافئ للمناصب العليا من مشاركة وتأثير النساء. ومع ذلك، تشير الدراسة أيضاً إلى أن الهدف لا ينبغي أن يكون مجرد زيادة عدد النساء في القطاع العسكري، بل يجب تعيين النساء على أساس الكفاءة والمؤهلات البدنية، لأن عدم القيام بذلك قد يشكل تهديداً للأمن القومي لكردستان من خلال المواجهات العسكرية. علاوة على ذلك، تناقش الدراسة استخدام العنف الجنسي كتكتيك حربي، كما استخدمته تنظيم داعش في سنجار، مما له عواقب وخيمة على كل من الضحايا الأفراد والأمن العام، ومع ذلك لا يوجد إطار قانوني منظم له. على الرغم من هذه التحديات، لعبت النساء في قوات البشمركة أدواراً مهمة، ولكن ليس إلى الحد الذي ينبغي، وقد تم إهمال المنظور الأنثوي في الأداء والسياسة العسكرية الشاملة.

تختتم الدراسة بمناقشة التداعيات الأوسع على الأمن القومي لإقليم كردستان، مؤكدة على أهمية دمج وجهات نظر النوع الاجتماعي (النحدر) في التخطيط والاستراتيجية العسكرية كوسيلة لتعزيز الأمن الشامل. يشير التحليل إلى أن النهج الشامل، الذي يعالج المخاوف الأمنية التقليدية والمتعلقة بالجنس على حد سواء، يمكن أن يؤدي إلى صياغة استراتيجيات أمنية أكثر فعالية واستدامة وإنشاء قوة عسكرية موحدة ومتعددة وجهات النظر تدمج وجهات نظر الإناث والذكور معاً.