

KURDISTAN REGIONAL GOVERNMENT

Council of Ministers

Office of the Coordinator for  
International Advocacy



حکومه‌تی هه‌ریمی کوردستان - عێراق

هه‌نجومه‌نی وه‌زیران

هه‌وێنه‌ی رێکخه‌ری  
هه‌سپاره‌ نیوده‌وله‌تیه‌کان

November 26, 2021

Statement by KRG Office of the Coordinator for International Advocacy (OCIA)

### **KRG Embraces the Legitimate Demands of the Students that are Rallying for the Reinstatement of their Monthly Stipends**

University students have stormed the streets of several cities in the Kurdistan Region in the past four days, demanding the reinstatement of student allowances that have been suspended since 2014 parallel to austerity measures following the dismal economic challenges and the fight against ISIL. Some international organizations and media, including the Christian Peacemakers Team (CPT), The American Enterprise Institute (AEI), the Cradle, MSN, Shafaq News, and Workers Against Sectarianism, highlighted the demonstrations in their reporting.

There are roughly 150,000 students who are eligible for the monthly allowances. Before the austerity measures, the government allocated IQD 60,000 for dormitory and IQD 40,000 for non-dormitory students.

The Kurdistan Regional Government (KRG) embraces the legitimate demands of the students that are rallying for the reimbursement of their monthly stipends. According to official sources from the related provincial councils, to this point, the protests have resulted in burning and damaging several public buildings, including a library, and several political parties' headquarters. Wounded protesters and riot police officers have been reported and accordingly received medical treatment. Nevertheless, few damages to the public properties and no injuries have occurred in Erbil and Halabja.

The protests primarily targeted Sulaimani province, Halabja, as well as Koya, Raparin, and Garmian. As the protests erupted and spread to other cities, main roads were blocked and universities faced temporal closure.

In its regular meeting on November 24, 2021, the KRG Council of Ministers approved the allocation of a budget to the Ministry of Higher Education to reinstate the students' allowances and to provide services for the dormitories.

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Students who practice their basic rights by taking part in the demonstrations have conveyed their demands to the authorities and have resorted to peaceful means in expressing their grievances. Nevertheless, some people who are not students diffused into the masses, fueling violence by assaulting the riot police officers and incurring damages on public properties. Still, no one has been arrested since the protests erupted.

A committee has been formed to assess the damages and to follow-up on the students' legitimate demands in order to reach an equitable outcome that benefits the students. Certain individuals who committed violence against the protesters have been arrested.

KRG and the related provincial councils are reiterating that the righteous demands of the students will be met in a timely manner. However, the protester should refrain from obstructing the daily activities of their fellow citizens, assaulting law-enforcement officers, and damaging public and private properties.