

Al-Adhamyah and Al-Kadhmea Focus group (21,22 April)

TOPIC ONE

Q) Who here has been personally impacted by the recent problems in Baghdad? And how?

Adhamyah:

In general all of them mentioned that events happened in Falujah, Sadder city and other parts in Iraq impacted them.

Personally, the breaking in to the houses In Al-Adhamiyah and the American soldiers rub money they find in these houses, the detention of people when they are walking in the street .(that happened to three out of ten and the rest heard or saw something happened).

All of them considered the breaking into Abo-Haneffah mosque something affected them.

Kadhimiya: In general all of them mentioned that events happening in Falujah, Sadder city and other parts in Iraq impacted them (like Adhamyah)

All of them agreed that they were influenced because roads were closed and this hinders them from going to their jobs, even when someone needs to go to the hospital they could not take him.

Q) What areas of the city do you think are most dangerous?

Adhamyah: they said all Iraqis now are in danger because American is taking the civilians as humane shields to protect themselves.

Kadhimiya: Al-Adhamyah, Najaf, Kufah, Sadder city (If some one we know dies in AlSadder city, we can't go to console his family), AlFalujah, AlKaradah cause there are a lot of Americans their, cause the Americans always fire randomly in Al-Shu'laa and Ba'aqobah.

Q) What areas of the city do you think are most safe?

Adhamyah: Al Hurryah

Kadhimiya: Al Hurryah ,Hai Al Jameah, Al-Kadhimiya

There were some opinions that there are no safe areas in Iraq now and the reason is the American existence.

Q) How long do you think these problems will last?

Adhamyah and Kadhimyah:

We can find the same opinion in both of the groups. They think these events will never stop or end until liberating Iraq and getting rid of the Americans and they think even if there is a new president or government, this will not stop the resistance, unless the Americans depart. (Americans are adopting the same plan they adopted with Afghanistan before. They promised them to let them elect their president but in fact, they appointed Karadhy even when the Afghan people didn't want him. So we will not wait them to choose our president .man Adhamyah focus group)

TOPIC TWO

Q) Has anybody heard about the detention and release of one of Moqtada al-sadder's assistants recently?

Adhamyah: all of them heard about it.

Kadhimyah: 9 out of 10 heard about it.

Q) What have you heard?

Adhamyah and Kadiamyah: they heard about Hazim AL-A'aragy detention when he attended the meeting of Iraqi tribes' sheiks in AL-Shiraton hotel and the American took him to Baghdad airport and left him for hours without questioning and they just released him after hours. They think that Americans sent a message to Moqtada AL-Sadder to make him fear them cause they can arrest him in any time they want but that didn't work with Moqtada because he knows they boast their power.

Q) From where did you get your information?

Adhamyah: All of them got it from AL-Jazeera and AL-Arabia. (We take our information from the media, we do not trust in this media like AL-Jazeera, and Iraqiya they do not have transparency. man, Adhamyahh)

Kadhimyah: seven out of ten got information from Manar channel, others from Iraqiya, AL-Jazeera and AL-Arabia.

Q) How do you think this affected al-Sadr's popularity?

Adhamyah and Kadhimyah: it did not affect his popularity, on the contrary, it made Iraqis support him because all Iraqis now believe American wants to weaken him but now they cannot. In addition, he became stronger than before and the evidence his followers are fighting until now.

Q) Does this improve or detract from the Coalition's standing in the eyes of Iraqis like you?

Adhamyah: It influences the Iraqis negatively, the American don't know our traditional and they can't understand the Iraqis, when they started to detain women, all Iraqis especially their families and relative want to revenge upon them. Therefore, the Americans can't know the Iraqis traditional and deal with them according to this tradition until now.

Kadhumayah: sure it is negative cause when they detain this religious person they want to show their power but they don't understand that Iraqis despise them more than before after this silly action.

TOPIC THREE

Q) Do you think that the recent situation has improved or detracted from the chances for a smooth handover of sovereignty to Iraqis on June 30th?

Adhamyah: They said we never believe even before this event that American will hand authority to Iraqis and this event will not detract for a handover of sovereignty to Iraqis because they are planning to appoint an Iraqi president and he will be like toy in their hands.

Kadhumayah: They believe that American wants all this to happen now; they created this event to delay the handover of sovereignty to Iraqis.

Q) What do you expect to happen on June 30th? What do you think will be different in Iraq on July 1?

Adhamyah: they expect Americans will open their embassy and appoint another people instead of G.C and these people will be without any authority like G.C so they don't think any changes will happen in this day (we don't expect any differences on 30th July. We are sure the differences will happen when Iraqis elect their constitution and their president).

Kadhumayah: They believe Iraqis can't make election in that date, so American will choose the new kind of ruling council instead of G.C and the Iraqis will protest when nothing will change.

Q) If coalition forces are still on the streets of Baghdad on July 1, do you think this will improve or detract from the security environment?

Adhamyah and Kadhumayah: if the American won't give it to Iraqis, the security will be worse than it is now. Both of these groups believed that the Americans should let the former policemen and others security departments work again and, they think that saddam can keep the security because he had this experiences and the cooperation between this department.

Topic Four:

Q-who here has heard about the TAL

Adhamyah and Kadhumayah: All of them heard about the TAL.

Q: what can u tell me about the TAL?

Adhamyah:

- 1- TAL will give the Jews the right to come back to Iraq (citizenship).
- 2- Police cannot arrest any body with out a warrant; the convicted should have an advocate to defend him.
- 3- Federalism to the Kurds.

Kadhumayah:

- 1- federalism and the independent government.
- 2- The article of the freedom of expression and maintaining the private rights.
- 3- The election of the advisory councils.
- 4- In this focus the referred that Sistani had many reservations concerning the TAL and he published them referring to these gaps.

Q- From where did u get your information?

Adhamyah and Kadhumayah:

few of them heard about the TAL from IMN.

The rest say that there was not enough advertising about the TAL to the degree that the simple citizen cannot know any thing about it. They know throughout the religious authorities, (Sunni and Shiite).

How long the TAL will be in affect, is it permanent or just temporary?

Adhamyah and Kadhumayah:

Temporary, because it doesn't serve the good of the Iraqi people, so that the GC or US Government cannot approve it as permanent.

Q-does it make difference for u to know that the TAL can be changed by unelected Iraqi government after Jan of next year?

Adhamyah and Kadhumayah:

Yes, it does make difference, because people will replace unelected constitution with an elected one.

Q-has your opinion about the TAL changed during the previous couple of weeks?

Adhamyah and Kadhumayah:

None of them changed their mind during these couple of weeks. (as far as the GC wrote the TAL, so we will not change our opinions as far as the GC is still existing).

Q-Do you know people who have changed their minds about the TAL during the previous couple of weeks?

None of them knows people changed their minds during these couple of weeks.

Q- Has any one seen commercials about the TAL on TV lately?

Adhamyah: at the beginning, all of them said no, we did not see any commercials. After the moderator explained both of the commercials, six out of ten mentioned that they saw these commercials but they didn't know that these commercials are about the TAL.

Kadhumayah: at the beginning, only one out ten said that he saw them on IMN. After he mentioned what he has seen, three out of nine said they did not know that these commercials are about the TAL.

Q- Can you describe them?

Adhamyah: 4 out of 6 saw the commercial of the boy with the stick. The remaining two saw both of them.

(The boy recited the old national anthem in a very sad tone. The boy hopes that the country will not be divided).

(When the child is crying, the mother embraces him and recites the old national Anthem in a sad tone. The child represents Iraq, who is suffering now. The mother is the Arab Nation who will embrace Iraq).

Kadhumayah: all of them saw both of the commercials. (The kid unites all Iraq when he draws the map of Iraq) (When the mother recites the Anthem, she teaches her son patriotism).

On what channel did you see them?

We saw them on Arbia, Jazeera, LBC and Abu Dhabi.

Q- What did you and your families think of the commercials?

Adhamyah and Kadhumayah: Basically, we did not know that they were about the TAL, generally we like them.

Did they make you more supportive of the TAL?

All of the said that the Iraqi people cannot be affected by commercials, especially when it deals with some thing very crucial like that.

Q- who in Iraqi society will be more supportive if the TAL based on these commercials?

A very small slice of the Iraqi people can be affected by them.

During this time when we have troubles in Khadamiya, Sader City, Fallujah, Najaf, etc. Are these commercials helpful in making Iraqis more supportive of the TAL?

Adhamyah and Kadhumayah:

These commercials are not appropriate to be shown in these circumstances and they will not make Iraqis more supportive.

Q- Would it be more appropriate to air them on Iraqiya only?

Why?

Adhamyah and Kadhumayah: All of them said that no one watches Iraqiya, they watch the satellites. Because the Americans run this channel and they don't have authenticity.

Q-Which channel you suggest to air these commercials?

Adhamyah and Kadhumayah: we suggest Sharqiya and Al-Hurra. Also Arbia and Jazeera because most of the Iraqi people watch them. We suggest airing them on Manar, because Shiite people watch this channel.

Since the elections cannot be held prior to June 30th, who should the CPA hand power to?

Adhamyah: they mentioned many figures that can take power during this period. (Adnan al_bachachi, Maso'od al-Barazani, Dr. Mohsin Abd-Al-Hameed, Sharif Ali Abn Al-Hussien. Or the UN.

Kadhumayah: an elected council represents the politicians (it should not include any of the GC members but Ibraheem Al-Ja'afari). It should be elected by the Advisory Councils and functions according to the Religious Authority.

Any government that we have on June 30th is not going to be elected since they are not elected. Does this make them less legitimate?

Adhamyah and Kadhumayah: it is true that it is not legitimate, but we are in need for it currently, if authentic people we trust like Hawza or Local Councils elects it.

Should we wait until we can have elections in Jan 30th 2005 for the Coalition to hand over power to a legitimate elected government?

Adhamyah and Kadhumayah: no, it must be handed over by 30 Jun. to restore stability to some degree, and to prepare for the next elections.

Q- If we cannot have elections, then some one has to appoint the government. Who should appoint the government?

Adhamyah: an envoy of the UN, the head of the Islamist Party, Al-Barazani and Bachachi.

Kadhumayah: A Council represent both of the religious clerks (Sunni and Shiite), or the UN.

Probe: religious leaders

Probe: UN

Adhamyah: 7 out of 10 said religious men.

Kadhumayah: 5 out of 10 said religious men.

Adhamyah and Kadhumayah: three out of ten said the UN

Let us talk about some scenarios for finding the transitional government, let us say that we have a council of notable people from each governorate come to Baghdad and vote on who should be members of the transitional government. The government that will be in charge of Iraq after Jun 30 and until elections can be held in Jan of next year. For instance let us say 300 people from all over Iraq representing Iraq's different regions come to Baghdad and vote to elect a prime minister. The prime minister would then appoint a government ministers and other important positions.

In general, would this be acceptable for the Iraqi people?

Adhamyah and Kadhumayah: it will be acceptable if they were elected authentically and honestly regardless of personal interests.

Q what would make it more acceptable?

Adhamyah and Kadhumayah: it should represent all the slices of the Iraqi people. They should be elected freely.

Probe:

Would it be more acceptable if a group of notables voted for the minister?

Adhamyah and Kadhumayah: as we trust the Prime Minister, so we trust his choice of choosing his Cabinet.

Q- Who should appoint the people in each governorate who come to Baghdad to vote on the government?

Probe: Local Councils.

Probe: CPA.

Probe: UN.

Probe: GC.

Probe; religious leader.

Adhamyah : they said that Local Councils because these Councils were elected. So they are trustful.

Kadhumayah: we suggest a mutual commission from Local council, tribes' sheiks. They should supervised by the religious authority and UN.

Q- What if each of this group had for example three choices from each governorate. Would this be fair?

Adhamyah and Kadhumayah: all of the said (not fair).

Q-should the number from each governorate be the same or should it be proportional to the approximate number of people in the governorate? For instance, should Al-Anbar Governorate will be given the same number of people to elect the government as Babil or diwaniya?

Adhamyah and Kadhumayah: it would be better if it were equal.

Q- should the GC be permitted to serve in this body?

Adhamyah: all of them said they do not want the GC because we would not trust it if the GC participate in next government.

Kadhumayah: 8 out of 10 said that the GC should participate in the next government. Because Willy nilly, they represent the government now if the religious authority and the UN participate with them.

Q-Should the members of the body be eligible to be elected for prime minister or should they only be allowed to vote for people outside the body?

Adhamyah and Kadhumayah: they should not be candidates in order not to make use of their position for personal interests.

Q- Regardless of how the government is formed, would it be better for them to be eligible to stand for elections or should the members of the government not be allowed to stand for election in 2005?

Adhamyah and Kadhumayah: if they are honest and qualified, they have the right to be candidates, like it is the right of any Iraqi to be a nominee. The Iraqis will decide whom to elect.

Topic Seven:

When a sovereign Iraqi government takes charge, will it make a difference in the number of attacks?

Adhamyah: they said it would decrease, because when we have an elected government represent us, it will negotiate with the Americans to depart the country and end occupation.

Kadhumayah: it will increase, because they will gather in oblivious military bases, so they will become easy target.

Q- can the Iraqi security forces maintain order with out the CF?

Adhamyah and Kadhumayah: it is possible if they increase their number and afford them good supplies and if they make use of the former experiences.

Probe: I have heard in news that many Iraqi soldiers and police fled in the face of the Mahdi Army, who has heard that?

Adhamyah and Kadhumayah: all of them heard about it. This is not because they were coward, but because they do not want to confront each other because all of them are Iraqis.

Q- Can we trust these groups to maintain order against religious and political party militias?

Adhamyah and Kadhumayah: no, they don't trust in these groups. But after establishing a government with a law, the Iraqis will be able to maintain order.

Topic Eight:

Finally tell me which media outlets do the Iraqi trust to give them factual, objective news regarding the current situation with Al Sadr and US military response? Why?

Kadhumayah: we trust in Al-Manar, because it shows the merits and demerits happen in the country not like Jazeera and Arabia who focus on the demerits.

Adhamyah: Jazeera and Arabia because they were along side with the Iraqi people in the past and in the present.

What kind of falsehood have you seen on Jazeera and Arabia?

Kadhumayah: they often interview simple people and try to exaggerate his opinion and speak in his mouth.