

**COUNTER
EXTREMISM
PROJECT**

IRAQI ISLAMIC PARTY (IIP)

Year of Origin: 1960¹

Founder(s):

- Shaykh Muhammad Mahmud al-Sawwaf
- Shaykh Amjad al-Zahawi

Place(s) of Operation: Iraq

Key Leaders:

- Usama Tawfiq al-Tikriti: Leader²
- Ayad al-Samarrai: Secretary General³
- Mohsen Abdel Hamid: Former leader⁴
- Farouk al-Ani: Leader⁵
- Basim al-Adhami: Leader⁶
- Fareed Sabri: Spokesman⁷

Associated Organization(s):

- Iraqi Islamic Party⁸
- Islamic Brotherhood Society⁹

¹ Katherine Blue Carrol, "Not Your Parents' Political Party: Young Sunnis and the New Iraqi Democracy," Middle East Policy Council, Fall 2011, v.18, n.3, <http://www.mepc.org/journal/middle-east-policy-archives/not-your-parents-political-party-young-sunnis-and-new-iraqi-democracy?print>.

² Dr. Alan Godlas, "The Muslim Brotherhood in Iraq Until 1991," University of Georgia, accessed September 27, 2016, http://islam.uga.edu/muslim_brotherhood_iraq.html.

³ Moustafa Amara, "Iraqi Islamic Party Calls for Change in Maliki Government," Al Monitor, February 19, 2016, <http://www.al-monitor.com/pulse/politics/2013/02/secretary-general-iraqi-islamic-party.html>.

⁴ Katherine Blue Carrol, "Not Your Parents' Political Party: Young Sunnis and the New Iraqi Democracy," Middle East Policy Council, Fall 2011, v.18, n.3, <http://www.mepc.org/journal/middle-east-policy-archives/not-your-parents-political-party-young-sunnis-and-new-iraqi-democracy?print>.

⁵ Dr. Alan Godlas, "The Muslim Brotherhood in Iraq Until 1991," University of Georgia, accessed September 27, 2016, http://islam.uga.edu/muslim_brotherhood_iraq.html.

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⁷ Mahan Abedine, "Politics and Violence in Iraq: An Interview with Fareed Sabri," Jamestown Foundation, May 23, 2005, <https://jamestown.org/interview/politics-and-violence-in-iraq-an-interview-with-fareed-sabri/>.

⁸ Katherine Blue Carrol, "Not Your Parents' Political Party: Young Sunnis and the New Iraqi Democracy," Middle East Policy Council, Fall 2011, v.18, n.3, <http://www.mepc.org/journal/middle-east-policy-archives/not-your-parents-political-party-young-sunnis-and-new-iraqi-democracy?print>.

⁹ "Iraqi Islamic Party," Global Security, accessed September 27, 2016, <http://www.globalsecurity.org/military/world/iraq/iip.htm>.

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The Iraqi Islamic Party (IIP) is the Iraqi branch of the [Muslim Brotherhood](#) (i.e., the Brotherhood). Established in 1960, the IIP was swiftly banned by Iraqi nationalists and remained outlawed under the regime of former Iraqi President Saddam Hussein (1979-2003).¹⁰ The IIP resurfaced after Hussein's fall from power in 2003, and has since grown to become the largest Sunni political party in Iraq.¹¹ While the IIP does not formally call itself a Brotherhood outfit, the party has acknowledged its longstanding ideological ties to the Brotherhood and continues to provide rhetorical support for the movement in Egypt.¹² The IIP is perceived as a sectarian party and has been accused of nurturing the wave of sectarian violence that swept the country in the mid-2000s.¹³

The IIP was founded in 1960 as the Iraqi branch of the Muslim Brotherhood. Banned by Iraq's nationalist strongman General Abd al-Karim Qasim soon after its inception, the party was forced to move underground.¹⁴ When the Ba'ath party took power in Iraq in 1968, the government began to systematically arrest and execute IIP members, prompting some of the group's members to flee the country.¹⁵ As a scattered organization operating both underground and in

¹⁰ Tallha Abdulrazaq, "The Iraqi Islamic Party: Failing the Sunnis," *Middle East Eye*, Mary 27, 2015, <http://www.middleeasteye.net/columns/failing-sunnis-iraqi-islamic-party-681053448>; "Sunni Arabs," PBS Frontline, accessed March 22, 2017, http://www.pbs.org/wgbh/pages/frontline/shows/beyond/etc/pop_sunni.html.

¹¹ Katherine Blue Carrol, "Not Your Parents' Political Party: Young Sunnis and the New Iraqi Democracy," *Middle East Policy Council*, Fall 2011, v.18, n.3, <http://www.mepc.org/journal/middle-east-policy-archives/not-your-parents-political-party-young-sunnis-and-new-iraqi-democracy?print>; "Iraqi Islamic Party," *Global Security*, accessed September 27, 2016, <http://www.globalsecurity.org/military/world/iraq/iip.htm>.

¹² Mahan Abedine, "Politics and Violence in Iraq: An Interview with Fareed Sabri," *Jamestown Foundation*, May 23, 2005, <https://jamestown.org/interview/politics-and-violence-in-iraq-an-interview-with-fareed-sabri/>; Joscelyne Cesari, *The Awakening of Muslim Democracy: Religion, Modernity, and the State* (New York, New York: Cambridge University Press, 2014) 153,

https://books.google.com/books?id=WgFeAwAAQBAJ&pg=PA153&lpg=PA153&dq=iraqi+islamic+party+1960&source=bl&ots=60eAi_YbNU&sig=X8BqsIWzbuzAEYjFbgrghrVD6Gg&hl=en&sa=X&ved=0ahUKEwi24r2un-rSAhXqxIQKHxIPDGy4ChDoAQg3MAY#v=onepage&q=iraqi%20islamic%20party%201960&f=false.

¹³ Katherine Blue Carrol, "Not Your Parents' Political Party: Young Sunnis and the New Iraqi Democracy," *Middle East Policy Council*, Fall 2011, v.18, n.3, <http://www.mepc.org/journal/middle-east-policy-archives/not-your-parents-political-party-young-sunnis-and-new-iraqi-democracy?print>.

¹⁴ Edward Wong, "The Struggle For Iraq: Politics; Falluja Role Gives Stature to Islamic Party," *New York Times*, May 1, 2004, http://www.nytimes.com/2004/05/01/world/the-struggle-for-iraq-politics-falluja-role-gives-stature-to-islamic-party.html?_r=0; Tallha Abdulrazaq, "The Iraqi Islamic Party: Failing the Sunnis," *Middle East Eye*, Mary 27, 2015, <http://www.middleeasteye.net/columns/failing-sunnis-iraqi-islamic-party-681053448>.

¹⁵ "Iraqi Islamic Party," *Global Security*, accessed September 27, 2016, <http://www.globalsecurity.org/military/world/iraq/iip.htm>.

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exile, the IIP was able to maintain a network of supporters but was unable to establish public social welfare institutions like the Egyptian Muslim Brotherhood.¹⁶

The IIP and other Iraqi Islamist groups were granted nominal freedoms in 1993, when Saddam Hussein initiated the Faith Campaign in pursuit of an Islamist agenda. Under the campaign, the IIP was permitted to build mosques and publish religious books and visual media. Despite these freedoms, however, the group was still prohibited from operating as a political party.¹⁷

After the fall of the Saddam Hussein regime in 2003, the transitional government lifted the ban on opposition political organizations, including the IIP. Reestablished as a formal political party in the summer of 2003, the IIP elected its new party president, formerly imprisoned Professor Mohsen Abdel Hamid. Given its early participation in Iraqi politics and decades of operation as an underground and exiled movement, the IIP was able to quickly reorganize and begin constructing offices, mosques, medical clinics, and media stations—becoming the largest Sunni political party in Iraq.¹⁸ IIP president Mohsen Abdel Hamid later served as the president of the Interim Iraq Government Council in February 2004.¹⁹

The IIP did not participate in Iraq's first national elections in January 2005 following the fall of the Hussein regime. The party did, however, run in several of the provincial races in December of that year, winning 15 percent of the seats in the new Iraqi parliament.²⁰ In the mid-late 2000s, however, younger IIP members—frustrated by the group's strict hierarchy and lack of opportunity for younger members—began to split off from the group, officially forming the Sunni political party Iraqi National Tribal Grouping (INTG) in February 2008.²¹ The IIP's decline in membership-caused the party to perform poorly in Iraq's 2009 provincial elections. In

¹⁶ Katherine Blue Carrol, "Not Your Parents' Political Party: Young Sunnis and the New Iraqi Democracy," Middle East Policy Council, Fall 2011, v.18, n.3, <http://www.mepc.org/journal/middle-east-policy-archives/not-your-parents-political-party-young-sunnis-and-new-iraqi-democracy?print>.

¹⁷ "Iraqi Islamic Party," Global Security, accessed September 27, 2016, <http://www.globalsecurity.org/military/world/iraq/iip.htm>.

¹⁸ Katherine Blue Carrol, "Not Your Parents' Political Party: Young Sunnis and the New Iraqi Democracy," Middle East Policy Council, Fall 2011, v.18, n.3, <http://www.mepc.org/journal/middle-east-policy-archives/not-your-parents-political-party-young-sunnis-and-new-iraqi-democracy?print>; "Iraqi Islamic Party," Global Security, accessed September 27, 2016, <http://www.globalsecurity.org/military/world/iraq/iip.htm>.

¹⁹ "Iraqi Islamic Party," Global Security, accessed September 27, 2016, <http://www.globalsecurity.org/military/world/iraq/iip.htm>.

²⁰ Katherine Blue Carrol, "Not Your Parents' Political Party: Young Sunnis and the New Iraqi Democracy," Middle East Policy Council, Fall 2011, v.18, n.3, <http://www.mepc.org/journal/middle-east-policy-archives/not-your-parents-political-party-young-sunnis-and-new-iraqi-democracy?print>; "Iraqi Islamic Party," Global Security, accessed September 27, 2016, <http://www.globalsecurity.org/military/world/iraq/iip.htm>.

²¹ Katherine Blue Carrol, "Not Your Parents' Political Party: Young Sunnis and the New Iraqi Democracy," Middle East Policy Council, Fall 2011, v.18, n.3, <http://www.mepc.org/journal/middle-east-policy-archives/not-your-parents-political-party-young-sunnis-and-new-iraqi-democracy?print>.

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the 2010 parliamentary elections, the IIP and the INTG lost a number of parliamentary seats to Iraq's popular Shiite al-Iraqiya List party.²²

In late 2010, at the start of the Arab Spring movement, the IIP sought to garner support among Sunnis by highlighting the Muslim Brotherhood's victories across Arab League nations.²³ The IIP organized a series of demonstrations throughout Iraq's Sunni neighborhoods, attracting thousands of supporters. During these demonstrations, the IIP deployed Islamist clerics and speakers to rally the crowds in support of the party's Islamist messaging.²⁴ In 2012, the party congratulated the Egyptian Brotherhood on its rise to power, calling that group "our brothers in Egypt."²⁵

In 2014, the IIP reportedly lost some credibility among Iraqi Sunnis when IIP leaders allied with Shiite Prime Minister Haider al-Abadi.²⁶ Many Iraqi Sunnis reportedly saw the alignment as a political betrayal and even as a sign of corruption.²⁷ Today, several IIP-affiliated politicians hold leadership roles in the Iraqi government. IIP member Salim al-Jabouri, for example, is the speaker of the parliament. Another IIP member, Suhaib al-Rawi, served as governor of the Anbar province from December 2014 to August 2016.²⁸

According to IIP spokesman Fareed Sabri, tensions between Iraqi Sunnis and the Shiite government have since heightened, in large part stemming from the dangers posed by [ISIS](#) in Iraq and the resulting human rights violations from Shiite militias [Asaib Ahl al-Haq](#), [Kata'ib Hezbollah](#), and the [Badr Organization](#). Sabri attests that many Sunnis in Iraq are afraid of their

²² Mustafa Al-Kadhimi, "Iraq Protests Present Muslim Brotherhood With Opportunity," January 9, 2013, <http://www.al-monitor.com/pulse/originals/2013/01/muslim-brotherhood-iraq.html>.

²³ Mustafa Al-Kadhimi, "Iraq Protests Present Muslim Brotherhood With Opportunity," January 9, 2013, <http://www.al-monitor.com/pulse/originals/2013/01/muslim-brotherhood-iraq.html>.

²⁴ Katherine Blue Carrol, "Not Your Parents' Political Party: Young Sunnis and the New Iraqi Democracy," Middle East Policy Council, Fall 2011, v.18, n.3, <http://www.mepc.org/journal/middle-east-policy-archives/not-your-parents-political-party-young-sunnis-and-new-iraqi-democracy?print>; Mustafa al-Kadimi, "Iraq Protests Present Muslim Brotherhood With Opportunity," Al Monitor, January 9, 2013, <http://www.al-monitor.com/pulse/originals/2013/01/muslim-brotherhood-iraq.html>.

²⁵ Joscelyne Cesari, *The Awakening of Muslim Democracy: Religion, Modernity, and the State* (New York, New York: Cambridge University Press, 2014) 153, https://books.google.com/books?id=WgFeAwAAQBAJ&pg=PA153&lpg=PA153&dq=iraqi+islamic+party+1960&source=bl&ots=60eAi_YbNU&sig=X8BqsIWzbuzAEYjFbgrghrVD6Gg&hl=en&sa=X&ved=0ahUKEwi24r2un-rSAhXqxIQKHxiPDGY4ChDoAQg3MAY#v=onepage&q=iraqi%20islamic%20party%201960&f=false.

²⁶ Renad Mansour, "The Sunni Predicament in Iraq," Carnegie Endowment For International Peace, March 3, 2016, <http://carnegieendowment.org/2016/03/03/sunni-predicament-in-iraq-pub-62924>.

²⁷ Renad Mansour, "The Sunni Predicament in Iraq," Carnegie Endowment For International Peace, March 3, 2016, <http://carnegieendowment.org/2016/03/03/sunni-predicament-in-iraq-pub-62924>.

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Shiite-majority government: “This is the real irony – when people see ISIS [as] less harmful than the [Iraqi] government,” Sabri told Public Radio International.²⁹ Though still holding the largest membership of any Sunni political party, the IIP has struggled to return to the forefront of Iraqi politics, in part due to the widespread perception of the party as anti-Shiite.³⁰

On May 12, 2018, Iraq held its first parliamentary elections since the defeat of ISIS in the country. IIP candidates ran individually rather than under the IIP umbrella. According to IIP, its candidates won 14 seats in Iraq’s 329-seat parliament.³¹ Following the elections, IIP’s Nuri al-Dulaimi became Iraq’s planning minister.³²

History:

- **1960:** The IIP is formed as the Iraqi branch of the Muslim Brotherhood. It is swiftly banned by Iraqi nationalist strongman General Abd al-Karim Qasim³³
- **1968-2003:** The incoming Ba’ath party begins to arrest IIP members, many of whom flee the country or move underground.³⁴
- **1993:** Saddam Hussein’s Faith Campaign grants the IIP permission to construct mosques and publish books. The IIP remains banned from operating as a political party.³⁵

²⁹ Matthew Bell, “Sunni Muslims in Iraq are caught between violent militants and violent government troops,” Public Radio International, June 17, 2014, <http://www.pri.org/stories/2014-06-16/sunni-muslims-iraq-are-caught-between-violent-militants-and-violent-government>.

³⁰ Katherine Blue Carrol, “Not Your Parents’ Political Party: Young Sunnis and the New Iraqi Democracy,” Middle East Policy Council, Fall 2011, v.18, n.3, <http://www.mepc.org/journal/middle-east-policy-archives/not-your-parents-political-party-young-sunnis-and-new-iraqi-democracy?print>.

³¹ Ben Wedeman and Laura Smith-Spark, “Polls close in first Iraqi elections since the defeat of ISIS,” CNN, May 12, 2018, <https://edition.cnn.com/2018/05/12/middleeast/iraq-elections-intl/index.html>; Omar Sattar, “Iraq’s Sunni lists approach coalition as one bloc,” Al-Monitor, May 24 2018, <https://www.al-monitor.com/pulse/originals/2018/05/iraq-sunni-coalition-election.html#ixzz5Ix8IDZJJ>; Muhanad Seloom, “An Unhappy Return: What the Iraqi Islamic Party Gave Up to Gain Power,” Carnegie Middle East Center, November 19, 2018, <https://carnegie-mec.org/2018/11/19/unhappy-return-what-iraqi-islamic-party-gave-up-to-gain-power-pub-77747>.

³² “Iraq fails to fill key ministerial posts seven months after election,” Middle East Eye, December 18, 2018, <https://www.middleeasteye.net/news/iraq-fails-fill-key-ministerial-posts-seven-months-after-election>.

³³ Edward Wong, “The Struggle For Iraq: Politics; Falluja Role Gives Stature to Islamic Party,” *New York Times*, May 1, 2004, http://www.nytimes.com/2004/05/01/world/the-struggle-for-iraq-politics-falluja-role-gives-stature-to-islamic-party.html?_r=0; Tallha Abdulrazaq, “The Iraqi Islamic Party: Failing the Sunnis,” Middle East Eye, May 27, 2015, <http://www.middleeasteye.net/columns/failing-sunnis-iraqi-islamic-party-681053448>; “Sunni Arabs,” PBS Frontline, accessed March 22, 2017, http://www.pbs.org/wgbh/pages/frontline/shows/beyond/etc/pop_sunni.html.

³⁴ “Iraqi Islamic Party,” Global Security, accessed September 27, 2016, <http://www.globalsecurity.org/military/world/iraq/iip.htm>.

³⁵ “Iraqi Islamic Party,” Global Security, accessed September 27, 2016, <http://www.globalsecurity.org/military/world/iraq/iip.htm>.

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- **2003:** The IIP reorganizes after the fall of the Hussein regime.³⁶
- **December 2005:** The IIP wins 15 percent of seats in Iraq's first parliament.³⁷
- **2009:** The IIP splits into two separate political parties after losing ground in the 2009 local elections.³⁸
- **2010:** Younger IIP members split off to form the INTG.³⁹
- **December 2010:** IIP leaders attend Arab spring demonstrations to promote the party by highlighting the Brotherhood's victories across Arab League nations. During demonstrations in Iraq, the IIP deploys Islamist clerics to promote Brotherhood messaging.⁴⁰
- **2011:** The group organizes protests against Shiite Prime Minister Nouri al-Maliki.⁴¹
- **2014:** IIP leaders cooperate with the government led by Shiite Prime Minister Haider al-Abadi.⁴²
- **March 2017:** The IIP participates in closed-door meetings with other Sunni Iraqi parties to discuss roadmaps for post-ISIS Iraq.⁴³
- **May 12, 2018:** Iraq holds its first parliamentary elections since the defeat of ISIS in the country. IIP candidates run individually rather than under the IIP umbrella. According to IIP, its candidates win 14 seats in Iraq's 329-seat parliament. Following the elections, IIP's Nuri al-Dulaimi becomes Iraq's planning minister.⁴⁴

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³⁷ Katherine Blue Carrol, "Not Your Parents' Political Party: Young Sunnis and the New Iraqi Democracy," Middle East Policy Council, Fall 2011, v.18, n.3, <http://www.mepc.org/journal/middle-east-policy-archives/not-your-parents-political-party-young-sunnis-and-new-iraqi-democracy?print>.

³⁸ Mustafa Al-Kadhimi, "Iraq Protests Present Muslim Brotherhood With Opportunity," January 9, 2013, <http://www.al-monitor.com/pulse/originals/2013/01/muslim-brotherhood-iraq.html>.

³⁹ Mustafa Al-Kadhimi, "Iraq Protests Present Muslim Brotherhood With Opportunity," January 9, 2013, <http://www.al-monitor.com/pulse/originals/2013/01/muslim-brotherhood-iraq.html>.

⁴⁰ Mustafa Al-Kadhimi, "Iraq Protests Present Muslim Brotherhood With Opportunity," January 9, 2013, <http://www.al-monitor.com/pulse/originals/2013/01/muslim-brotherhood-iraq.html>; Katherine Blue Carrol, "Not Your Parents' Political Party: Young Sunnis and the New Iraqi Democracy," Middle East Policy Council, Fall 2011, v.18, n.3, <http://www.mepc.org/journal/middle-east-policy-archives/not-your-parents-political-party-young-sunnis-and-new-iraqi-democracy?print>.

⁴¹ Renad Mansour, "The Sunni Predicament in Iraq," Carnegie Endowment For International Peace, March 3, 2016, <http://carnegieendowment.org/2016/03/03/sunni-predicament-in-iraq-pub-62924>.

⁴² Renad Mansour, "The Sunni Predicament in Iraq," Carnegie Endowment For International Peace, March 3, 2016, <http://carnegieendowment.org/2016/03/03/sunni-predicament-in-iraq-pub-62924>.

⁴³ Omar Sattar, "Iraq's Sunnis eye post-IS future under regional cover," Al-Monitor, March 22, 2017, <http://www.al-monitor.com/pulse/originals/2017/03/arab-sunni-iraq-mosul-turkey-saudi.html>.

⁴⁴ Ben Wedeman and Laura Smith-Spark, "Polls close in first Iraqi elections since the defeat of ISIS," CNN, May 12, 2018, <https://edition.cnn.com/2018/05/12/middleeast/iraq-elections-intl/index.html>; Omar Sattar, "Iraq's Sunni lists approach coalition as one bloc," Al-Monitor, May 24 2018, <https://www.al->

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Violent Activities: Not determined.

Ties to Extremist Groups: Not determined.

Designations by Governments and Organizations: Not determined.

In Their Own Words:

May 12, 2005

IIP spokesman Fareed Sabri:

“Yes, [turning Iraq into an Islamic state] was indeed the core objective [of the IIP]. It is an objective that is as applicable today as it was in 1960. The party wants Iraq to adopt Islam as a way of life.”⁴⁵

May 12, 2005

IIP spokesman Fareed Sabri:

“We don’t deny that many of our early members were either members of the Muslim Brotherhood or were at least heavily influenced by their ideology.”⁴⁶

May 12, 2005

IIP spokesman Fareed Sabri:

“We were not completely distinct [from the Muslim Brotherhood]. Our ideas, for instance, are a continuation of the ideas developed by the Brotherhood.”⁴⁷

[monitor.com/pulse/originals/2018/05/iraq-sunni-coalition-election.html#ixzz5lxz51xBIDZJJ](https://www.monitor.com/pulse/originals/2018/05/iraq-sunni-coalition-election.html#ixzz5lxz51xBIDZJJ); Muhanad Seloom, “An Unhappy Return: What the Iraqi Islamic Party Gave Up to Gain Power,” Carnegie Middle East Center, November 19, 2018, <https://carnegie-mec.org/2018/11/19/unhappy-return-what-iraqi-islamic-party-gave-up-to-gain-power-pub-77747>; “Iraq fails to fill key ministerial posts seven months after election,” Middle East Eye, December 18, 2018, <https://www.middleeasteye.net/news/iraq-fails-fill-key-ministerial-posts-seven-months-after-election>.

⁴⁵ Mahan Abedine, “Politics and Violence in Iraq: An Interview with Fareed Sabri,” Jamestown Foundation, May 23, 2005, <https://jamestown.org/interview/politics-and-violence-in-iraq-an-interview-with-fareed-sabri/>.

⁴⁶ Mahan Abedine, “Politics and Violence in Iraq: An Interview with Fareed Sabri,” Jamestown Foundation, May 23, 2005, <https://jamestown.org/interview/politics-and-violence-in-iraq-an-interview-with-fareed-sabri/>.

⁴⁷ Mahan Abedine, “Politics and Violence in Iraq: An Interview with Fareed Sabri,” Jamestown Foundation, May 23, 2005, <https://jamestown.org/interview/politics-and-violence-in-iraq-an-interview-with-fareed-sabri/>.