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Why the defeat of ISIS is not the end of the crises in Syria and Iraq

On 29th June 2017 the Iraqi authorities declared that they had reconquered almost all of Mosul, the symbolic capital of the Islamic State in Iraq. The military campaign that involved, with different goals, the United States, the Peshmerga, the Iraqi Army and the Shia militias, lasted approximately three years.

In these years Mosul was the ISIS headquarters for, training, propaganda and terrorist activities in Iraq and abroad; thousands of aspiring foreign fighters from all over the world travelled to Mosul, between 2014 and 2015, to join and fight for the Islamic State.

Today's new challenges for the Iraqi Government and the International Community are the establishment of an inclusive, political and confessional representation of all the Iraqi communities, in order to avoid history repeating itself.

Many NGO representatives believe that one of the key factors necessary to establish the productive coexistence of Iraqi communities is the development of a sense of Iraqi citizenship rather than the divisive logic of confessional minorities.

The complete defeat of ISIS is related to the Syrian battlefield, where the number of international players and non state actors is greater than Iraq. Even if Raqqa, the Syrian capital of ISIS, is under siege by Arab and Kurdish militias (SDF), coordinated by the US, and by the Syrian troops, supported by Russia, Iran and Hezbollah, the scenario is extremely complex.

The reconquest of Raqqa would be a strategic result both for the Assad regime and his allies, and also for SDF, Turkey and the US. For the former, the liberation of Raqqa would mean a return of most of the Syrian territory, lost in recent years, under the control of the regime and the possible end of the Syrian insurgency.

For the latter, a free Raqqa would represent a tool to put pressure on the Assad regime and Iran in order to limit the Shia influence in the Middle East and Russia too. However the position of the US regarding the Kurdish militias in Raqqa and in general in the North of Syria, considered by Turkey as terrorist groups, would be a strategic challenge in the relations between the US and Turkey in the future.

Therefore the scenario of the Syrian crisis has been evolving since it began in 2011, it underwent several changes in dynamics from local to regional to international over the years, and will continue to involve both international and local players without reaching an acceptable compromise for all sides.

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