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**POLITICAL DIVISIONS, RIVALRIES LIKELY TO FESTER AMONG SHIITE PARTIES IN IRAQ**

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Fadhel al-Nashmi

Rife divisions pitting Shiite parties against each other in Iraq are set to escalate as the Levantine country moves closer to holding elections next June. Despite having existed for long, intra-Shiite disputes have exacerbated to touch on all aspects of state management.

Shiite parties are in great disagreement over the issue of foreign presence in the country and the attacks launched by pro-Iranian groups against US interests and international coalition forces.

Rivalry between Moqtada al-Sadr and his Sadrist Movement, on the one hand, and pro-Iran factions, on the other hand, over the issue of foreign presence in Iraq continues to threaten stability among Shiite parties.

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