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Jalal Talabani



Masrour Barzani

**"The development  
of democracy  
in the region  
is in our interest"**

In a recent interview, Masrour Barzani speaks about the Kurdish state, the opposition, corruption and recent events in the region. He says "Establishing a Kurdish state is a natural right. The question is not whether or not we should declare it, the question is rather how we can protect it."



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# Revisiting 1991 National Uprising and its lasting legacy

On March 5, 1991, a spontaneous mass uprising took place in southern Kurdistan against the Baathist Regime of Iraq and continued throughout the month until the Kurds seized almost all the Kurdish territories from the Iraqi state apparatus and forces. A de facto, semi-independent Kurdistan was established as a result. It was a historic period as the Kurds became the maker of their own history. What is crucial to emphasize is the spontaneity of the movement and its democratic character. It was the mass-mobilized people who took control and rid their land off the oppressive Baath Regime; it was not the vanguard parties and their fighters who liberated the nation. The nation liberated itself from tyranny and became a nation for itself, not a nation in itself. This is not to deny the crucial role played by political and military struggles of the two main Kurdish parties, the Kurdistan Democratic Party and the Patriotic Union of Kurdistan. The 1991 Uprising was the symbiosis of the Peshmarga forces and a nation in search of freedom and independence.

The 1991 Uprising is one of the most historic moments in modern political history of the Kurdish nation, as it indicated that national liberation and freedom could be realized through mass participation rather than party-led vanguard guerrilla warfare. It is this character of the uprising and its achievements that should provide a roadmap for the national liberation movements of other parts of Kurdistan, most urgently in Syrian Kurdistan.

Kurdistan's de facto political situation was transformed into a federal political entity with its own government, Parliament and security forces within a federal Iraq in post-Saddam by the formation of a new Iraqi federal government and Iraqi Constitution as a result of the US invasion in March 2003, with active participation of the Kurdish Peshmarga forces alongside the Coalition Forces. Today, Kur-



KDP Leader Massoud Barzani giving a speech to a gathering of people during the 1991 uprising.

istan Region is the safest and most stable region in Iraq and has a vibrant and flourishing economy.

For some circles, the 1991 Uprising was a by-product of the US conflict with Iraq during the First Gulf War. This rudimentary discernment articulated that the Kurdish Uprising along with the Shiites' uprising against Saddam's regime was a result of the then US President George Bush's calling on them to rise against the Iraqi central government. Such perception reduces the 1991 Kurdish National Uprising from a spontaneous movement for freedom to a foreign plot and provocation.

What really happened in 1991 in Kurdistan is now taking place on a larger scale throughout the Arab continent; namely the Arab Spring. The 1991 Uprising, like that of the Arab Spring, had regional and international connotations. It is certainly true that the US-led coalition war on Iraq upon Saddam's invasion of Kuwait in 1991 had a serious impact on the Kurdish Uprising in terms of timing. The conflict between Iraq and the international

community led by the US had only provided the right moment and a golden opportunity for the Kurds to end decades-long Iraqi oppressive rule in Kurdistan.

Squeezed within the established balance of powers in the Middle East in particular and in the world in general during the Cold War period, the Kurdish national movement—in spite of its intensified struggle—failed to establish a Kurdish political entity. The right to self-determination of the Kurds had always been ignored or resisted by regional and global powers. Like that of the Arab Spring today, political and military developments in 1991 indicated that political alterations in the Middle East in general and in Kurdistan Region in particular were closely related to global changes and power struggles. With the collapse of the Soviet Union and the entire so-called Eastern Bloc, the established status quo between Capitalist and Socialist blocs left its place to an unpredictable and mostly chaotic world situation. The region of the Middle East, due to its rich energy resources and corridors as well as

its geo-politics, felt this turmoil more intensively than any other place in the world.

Thus it was not a coincident that only after such global turmoil following the end of the Cold War and ensuing power struggle over the Middle East that the Kurds successfully managed to seize opportunity out of turmoil to run their own affairs. Turmoil in the Middle East itself did not bring self-determination for the Kurds; however, it provided a break in the chain and a chance for the Kurds to gain their freedom. This chance could have only been properly exploited through the national mass movement, and this was exactly what the Kurds did. The 1991 National Uprising therefore should be remembered as a guide for future developments and success. The year 1991 was a beginning; on this strong foundation, the nation must head further toward independence and freedom, and on this historic foundation the nation must establish a democratic, free and vibrant civil society in Kurdistan. It is because of the legacy of the 1991 Uprising in Kurdis-

tan that the political system that arose upon it fortunately has not evolved toward a dictatorial regime, despite the fact that it has shortcomings and mismanagement.

As I mentioned above, the 1991 Uprising should be used as a roadmap most urgently for Syrian Kurdistan as Syria passes through a serious regime crisis and its collapse is almost inevitable. Like that of Iraqi Baathism, the regime in Syria has no way left but the dustbin of history. The Kurdish political parties in Syrian Kurdistan, with the support and backing of their brethren and sisters of other parts of Kurdistan—particularly the Kurdistan Region due to its political position and independent status—should prepare day and night for the day the regime collapses. During the collapse of the regime, a mass-mobilized, National Uprising in Syrian Kurdistan should be carried out in order for Syrian Kurds to be categorized as a nation for itself and thus grasp its national democratic rights.

The 1991 Uprising should also provide a roadmap for the PKK. As has been reiterated time and time again for the millions of Kurds in north Kurdistan (Kurdistan of Turkey), to obtain their national-democratic rights, the PKK's outdated vanguard guerrilla warfare has to be put aside. It has never worked and will never bring any chance for the Kurds to get anything. The PKK's petty military vanguard-style struggle does not allow the nation to take initiative in its own hands to determine its own destiny.

The 1991 Uprising contains rich experiences for the entire Kurdish national liberation movement(s) from which to extract lessons. The most crucial one to stress is that the liberation of the nation will be the act of the nation. Political parties and their struggles are only the means and not the end.

Azad Amin



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# New KRG cabinet to form in coming weeks



Kurdistan President Massoud Barzani assigned Nechirvan Barzani and Imad Ahmed to form the new cabinet, Wednesday, March 7.

President of Kurdistan Region Massoud Barzani has officially assigned incoming Prime Minister Nechirvan Barzani and his Deputy Imad Ahmed to form the seventh cabinet of the Kurdistan Regional Government.

Tasked on March 7, Barzani and Ahmed will

have 30 days to announce the names of their new cabinet ministers, replacing Barham Salih's outgoing government for the next two years.

The rotation comes as per a strategic bilateral agreement between the two governing parties of the Kurdistan Demo-

cratic Party (KDP) and the Patriotic Union of Kurdistan (PUK). After the resignation of Barham Salih of the PUK in September 2011, Nechirvan Barzani of the KDP will take the post for the remaining two years of their 4-year term.

In an extraordinary ses-

sion on 16 February, the Kurdistan Parliament voted for Barzani and Ahmed as nominees of the majority bloc of the Kurdistan Alliance to fill the posts of Prime Minister and Deputy Prime Minister respectively.

On February 2nd, President Massoud Bar-

zani approved outgoing Prime Minister Salih's resignation, five months after the resignation was presented to him.

According to the post rotation, KDP's Kamal Kirkuki stepped down as Speaker of Parliament and his Deputy Arsalan Bayiz of the PUK took

over the post. The Parliament also voted for KDP's Hassan Soor as the new Deputy Speaker.

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## KIU leader to step down



GLOBE PHOTO/ Safin Hamed

The Kurdistan Islamic Union (KIU) Secretary General Salahaddin Bahaddin

The Kurdistan Islamic Union (KIU) Secretary General Salahaddin Bahaddin announced his willingness to step down and become the first Kurdish party leader to hand over a top post.

Bahaddin's announcement on March 4 came ahead of KUK's sixth party convention scheduled for next May. He has held the position of Secretary General since the KIU's foundation in June 1994.

No one has been officially nominated to take the position yet, stated KIU politburo member Mohammad Faraj. According to KIU's internal program, any current or former member

of the politburo or the leadership council can nominate himself for the post.

Local reports pointed to politburo members Hadi Ali and Mawloud Bawa Murad as possible candidates. But the party's spokesman, Salahaddin Babakir, who confirmed that nominations open only when the new congress issues the party's internal program, rejected this.

Ali withdrew after he announced his nomination for KIU Secretary General in the fifth convention in 2008. He declined to comment on whether he would enter the competition in the next party con-

vention.

In his announcement, Bahaddin declared he has sought opportunity to hand over the post since 2005, but was delayed for different reasons several times. "Now that the party convention is near, I will not run for the Secretary in the sixth term," said Bahaddin, noting that now is the time to step down as the "KIU is doing well...and has overcome obstacles."

Bahaddin did not clarify what position he will take afterwards, but noted he would take care of his personal and social affairs that he has put on hold for the last 30 years.



# Talabani puts time limit on his PUK position

## Iraqi President says change crucial to PUK relevance

Corruption in Kurdistan Region is "fatal," but Iraqi Kurds have to continue their struggles for "the essential goals" of maintaining their rights and freedoms, stated Jalal Talabani, Secretary-General of the Patriotic Union of Kurdistan (PUK).

Iraqi President Talabani touched on several issues concerning his party and Kurdistan Region in a two-part interview with the Sulaimaniya-based newspaper Hawlati published last week. Urging his party to make changes, Talabani spoke about wings that have since separated from the PUK. He urged the presidents of the Kurdish parties not to remain in top posts for long periods of time.

President Talabani deemed his remaining in the top post since the June 1975 foundation of the PUK a "necessity" because the PUK was established as a combination of three parties and "they agreed only on me to be Secretary-General."

Kurdish socialists were the first to split from the PUK, followed by the departure of the Alay Shorish Party. The last separation occurred in 2007 when Nawshirwan Mustafa, founder of Komalay Ranjbaran – a PUK wing – and other leaders left the PUK to found the Gorran (Change) Movement, which now acts as the Region's largest opposition party in the Kurdistan Parliament. Although the three original components of the PUK have left the party, the PUK—with Talabani still in the top post—still governs the Region along with the Kurdistan Democratic Party (KDP). Both are tied together in a strategic agreement that has lasted for nearly seven years.

Talabani rejected the common phrase "the PUK equals Talabani and Talabani equals the PUK" as being



Iraqi President and PUK Secretary General Jalal Talabani

representative of the party's future after his departure. He said, "If they cannot survive without me, then [the party] doesn't deserve to exist and the sooner they leave it, the better."

"I support the issuance of a decree that forces presidents to step down after two rounds. I myself have done

it for several rounds; I think I should be the Secretary-General for only [one more] round," says Talabani, noting that he will suggest this in his party's fourth convention.

The PUK can remain an influential party if it conducts internal changes and accommodates current

circumstances, explained Talabani, who wished for the PUK "to really become a Social Democrat" party. "The PUK should go back to the clay houses," he stated, asking his party to deepen relations with the people as one of the necessary changes.

Talabani spoke about a

**"If they cannot survive without me, [the party] doesn't deserve to exist and the sooner they leave, the better."**

**—Jalal Talabani**

reform project he suggested for the PUK that was followed by the "great separation" by the Gorran Movement.

"We had decided on reforms within the PUK and formed committees for it. The fellows who separated mostly led those committees. Instead of making the changes, they decided to separate," says Talabani, admitting the event's influence over the PUK's third convention on June 1, 2010. Nevertheless, that convention brought about changes; out of the elected 45 members of the leaderships, 23 of them were new leaders, said Talabani.

As Secretary-General, he admitted he did not completely fulfill his duties in making decisions because "the fellows left some issues for me to settle," said Talabani. He added he did not "fight the corruption well, not only within the leadership but inside all of the PUK."

Talabani described corruption as an outcome of the rapid economic and social changes witnessed in Kurdistan Region. "Corruption is a fatal disease; I think [securing] Kurdistan's [democracy and freedom] hasn't been accomplished, yet. I think the main goal of the Kurds has not yet been achieved," says Talabani, explaining that corruption

is a serious internal problem, but there are external enemies that the Kurds should be much more careful about. Priorities, stated the President, must be for the benefit of protecting hard-won rights that the Kurds have gained and to achieve rights that have so far been denied.

Talabani emphasized maintaining good relations with other Kurdish parties. On relations between the PUK and Gorran, he said that the two parties have many points in common and don't differ on essential issues. It is possible for both parties to work together for the common goals such as conducting reforms, and this could be based on agreements or alliances, says Talabani. But he rejects the notion that the PUK and Gorran will merge anytime soon.

Talabani also praised the strategic agreement linking the PUK and the KDP together, despite the fact that some leaders in his party are unhappy about his compromises. "This strategic agreement has [worked] well for Kurds, and without it, Kurdistan Region would not be where it is now," stated Talabani. "If relations between the PUK and the KDP go wrong, everything in Kurdistan will go wrong."

## Heritage Oil commences exploratory drilling

The British Heritage oil company announced Thursday that it will begin drilling the first well in Miran East area near Suleimaniya following promising drills in the western part. The operation will increase significant hydrocarbon resources, officials say.

"Our work program in Kurdistan continues with the spudding of the Miran East-1 exploration well.

The large, undrilled Miran East structure has the potential to add significant hydrocarbon resources at all of the multiple reservoir intervals," said Tony Buckingham, Chief Executive Officer of British Heritage.

The operation "is the first well to be drilled on the highly prospective eastern structure, which has an area of approximately 130 square kilometers," an-

nounced Heritage Oil in a statement on its website.

While drilling to a depth of 4,000 meters will require nearly seven months, British Heritage intends to test and evaluate multiple interval targets.

The operations at Miran Block west of Suleimaniya, which has an area of 1,015 square kilometers, are manned by Heritage, which holds a 75 percent interest. Turkish-British

Genel Energy holds the remaining 25 percent.

The two companies will undertake an "extensive" exploration program over the next 12 months in Kurdistan Region with goals to "add some 700 million barrels" to their resource base, according to a statement by Tony Hayward, Genel Energy CEO.

A few days earlier, British Heritage confirmed gas bearing at the Miran

West area as they reached a depth of 2,910 meters in the third well. Drilling this well continues to the Jurassic target below 3,000 meters, and is expected to wrap up in a couple of months.

"The Miran West-3 well is providing further information on this large fractured carbonate structure to enable Heritage to better understand the reserves distribution in the field and

confirm volumes for development planning. The degree of fracturing and high pressure encountered in these deeper intervals has meant that the drilling program is taking longer than expected; nevertheless, the data being obtained is vindicating our approach in drilling this deviated well," Buckingham stated.

# Kurds closer to independence

Al-Hashimi's case is not a cause of conflict, but rather an outcome of existing conflicts

GLOBE PHOTO



Masrour Barzani says The development of democracy in the region is in the Kurd's interest.

In an interview with *Khabat*, a Kurdish-language daily newspaper of the Kurdistan Democratic Party (KDP), Director of the Kurdistan Security Agency and KDP Politburo Member, Masrour Barzani speaks about the Kurdish state, opposition, corruption and recent events in the region.

Below is part of the interview translated from Kurdish by the Globe:

**Q:** Starting from the situation of the KDP, how do you assess the current organizational situation of the party, especially after the 13th convention as it went through some structural changes?

**Barzani:** Before addressing your question, I would like to extend my congratulations to us and the entire Kurdish nation on the occasion of the anniversary of the uprising, and also congratulate all women, especially Kurdish women on the occasion of International Women's Day. Regarding your question ... Some changes can be seen in the way the KDP works now, which has improved in many aspects, and in some others, it needs more initiatives and improvements. We hope that internal organizational elections will give more enthusiasm to the party's organizations.

**Q:** The KDP has had a significant role in the achievement of the current multi-party political system in Kurdistan, but sometimes one hears critics saying that the KDP doesn't tolerate anyone except itself. What is your opinion as a politbureau member of this party?

**Barzani:** This is absolutely not true. The KDP has a strong belief in tolerance and has been cooperating with all political groups to make the Kurdish story a success, but the KDP has always been a leading party in Kurdistan and in reaching today's achievements, and indeed it is always eager to protect that.

**Q:** As the Region now experiences change in general, what is the KDP's plan for the future?

**Barzani:** The KDP's efforts have always been toward achieving the national objectives of our nation. Since the 13th Convention, the KDP has raised the slogan of self-determination for the Kurdish nation, and its strategic plan is toward this goal. But we need to step forward very wisely and cautiously.

**Q:** President Barzani talked about a difference of opinions inside the KDP during the 13th Convention, but some interpret that as an indication of an internal problem, what do you think?

**Barzani:** Differences of opinion is natural, we all think and express our thoughts freely, but in the end, all of us follow the unanimous decisions.

**Q:** How do you see the regional changes, and what are the impacts on Kurdistan's future?

**Barzani:** We are part of the Middle East and whatever happens there will impact us. We need to be very careful and plan very wisely. We must prepare for the worst case scenario and seize every opportunity. The development of democracy in the region is in our interest, and we need to support the rights of the nations. Besides, there will be impacts on the

security situation. If the changes lead to more stability, there will be a safer climate for all of us, but if it proves the opposite, we will face more security and stability issues and we need to prepare for it from now.

**Q:** How do you see the situation of Iraq and the possible results of the national conference?

**Barzani:** I don't think it is an issue that can be solved through a mere conference. I hope the conference will be able to calm situations down, but as long as the core issues remain unresolved, such crises will repeat themselves frequently. Some ways to reach solutions include following the constitution, power-sharing, providing services to the public, uprooting terrorism, corruption, and most importantly, distrust and fear among the Iraqi groups.

**Q:** Some groups do not want to follow the agreement that resulted from President Barzani's initiative for establishing the Iraqi government. What is your opinion?

**Barzani:** The principles of the Erbil Conference can't be ignored or denied. Those who want to ignore them are not eager about finding fundamental solutions.

**Q:** As tensions rise in Iraq, the political crisis deepens. How do you assess the Kurds' stance in this respect?

**Barzani:** The Iraqi Constitution sets the governing model of the country, and overlooking the constitution leads to various problems; this is the reason be-

ated: The Shiites fear they might face the oppressions of the past; the Sunnis are afraid of facing revenge in the future; and the Kurds are afraid of the miseries of their past and don't see a guarantee this would not happen again in the future. So everybody is trying to protect themselves, something that brings about fear and distrust. This has been the core reason behind most of the problems, and if these groups do not reach an assurance about a bright, shared future, the problems could not be solved.

**Q:** The Kurds have acted as mediators, but Kurdish media claim that this has harmed the Kurds a lot.

**Barzani:** The Kurds have been playing an important role in solving the issues after the fall of the Baath regime, but sometimes we have lost our rights in the process. We should continue to play this positive role, but we should push for our rights in parallel. Generalization is not good. We have good friends among the Shiites as well as the Sunnis, and I don't think they plan to harm the Kurds, but I reiterate that the main source of power to avoid such threats is our internal unity.

**Q:** How do you see the situation of Kurdistan in the region?

**Barzani:** Currently, Kurdistan has its status in regional as well as international political equations. There are numerous diplomatic representatives in Erbil, proving this fact. We have always tried to

**"Establishing a Kurdish state is a natural right. The question is not whether or not we should declare it, the question is rather how we can protect it."**

hind the tensions we are talking about. Kurdistan has followed the constitution more than anyone else. However, unfortunately some groups have not been able to completely abandon the totalitarian thinking and accept federalism and democracy as principles. In general, I think following the constitution or not will determine the stance of Kurdistan.

**Q:** Tariq Al-Hashimi's issue changed the direction of the Iraqi political problems and is viewed to have increased the possibility of a break-up. How do you see the future of this case in Iraq?

**Barzani:** Tariq Al-Hashimi's issue is not a factor for conflicts, but a result of conflicts. I think there are bigger issues in Iraq which, if left unresolved, other problems like Al-Hashimi's would repeat in the future. The big problem in Iraq is that none of the main groups in the country trust each other and are even afraid of each other. I have said this earlier, and many other politicians have reiter-

maintain best relations with our neighbors based on mutual respect.

**Q:** A congress was organized in Erbil for the Syrian Kurdish Diaspora with the participation of President Barzani. To what extent can this be a beginning for preparing the Syrian Kurds for the post-change era in Syria?

**Barzani:** As a charismatic leader, President Barzani has always tried to unify all the Kurds and raise the message of peace, democracy, and tolerance. This was an effort to gather all Kurdish groups in Syria, and away from internal conflicts to have more impact on the changes happening in the country, and to show the international community that the Kurdish nation is part of the solution toward achieving a democratic system in Syria.

**Q:** Some people claim the strategic agreement between the KDP and the PUK has narrowed the scope of freedom and democracy. What do you say to that?

**Barzani:** I believe this prevent-

ed so many unwanted events and crises and further implemented democracy. Freedom has its limits as well. You can enjoy your freedom and democratic rights to a point that does not harm or limit the freedom of others. Our alliance with the PUK is a coalition between two parties and is absolutely natural. Since they have won the majority of the votes, they can agree on joint governance. Why does this limit democracy? Doesn't democracy mean the reign of the majority? Although our alliance has not only been limited to the rule of the majority; we have even gone beyond by guaranteeing the rights of the minorities and other factions, and they have even participated in government.

**Q:** What do you think about Kurdistan's opposition?

**Barzani:** All individuals and groups are part of this nation. Existence of an opposition is a healthy way to improve democracy. The opposition is not always right, but the government should hear its voice and concerns. The opposition should respect the will of the majority and the majority should consider the rights of the minority.

**Q:** The issue of Kurdistan's independence is a major topic today. What's your opinion?

**Barzani:** Establishing a Kurdish state is a natural right. The question is not whether or not we should declare the Kurdish state, it is rather how we can protect it. The first prerequisite is that our nation should be prepared to disregard its party and individual interests and to fight for their nation. Whenever our people and the international conditions are ready, then it is a proper time to declare it. However, I believe better conditions and a brighter horizon have emerged for this.

**Q:** What do you have to say about the national conference expected to be held in the near future?

**Barzani:** This would be a good step toward unifying the views and having a united stance and a greater voice in telling the international community about our peaceful message. The conference can apply President Barzani's efforts to put an end to dissunity among the Kurds once and for all.

**Q:** How is progress coming along with President Barzani's anti-corruption initiative?

**Barzani:** Corruption is being addressed for a few years, but this [initiative] is the only practical step in this regard. President Barzani has established a committee to study and follow up on this issue, and as far as I know, besides returning a large number of public property and rights of individuals, they have submitted 150 cases to the government to take action.



# Kurdish groups commemorate Women's Day

Statistics show women's programs are helping

Women's groups around the world commemorated International Women's Day on March 8. In cooperation with the Women Empowerment Organization, the Kurdistan Women's Union took the opportunity to celebrate International Women's Day by honoring men and women for their accomplishments in women's issues.

Kurdish women marked the day with a ceremony at Erbil's Sheraton Hotel. Government officials, representatives from women's organization, and hundreds of women in traditional Kurdish dresses attended the ceremony.

After welcoming the attendees, Director of WEO, spoke about the historical background of the day and women's challenges and achievements. Aref said, "Over the last decade, we, as women's organizations, have been able to persuade government officials to open job centers aiming to encourage women to work outside the home. We found women can do what men do, if opportunities are created for them."

Aref said, "Amending laws which weren't

in women's favor in the Kurdistan Parliament and opening shelters for women are the most valuable goals that we achieved."

With all the attempts made to improve the lives of women, Aref believes Kurdish women still have problems that need to be solved. Since the fall of the Saddam Hussein regime in 2003, many services and organizations started working for women in Kurdistan, putting pressure on the Kurdish government to pay more attention to women's issues.

"People disparage the situation of women in Kurdistan, but I would like to give examples of how we have been implementing changes to improve the situation for women. Our attempts succeeded in amending the Personal Status Law in Parliament, aiming to give women more rights, to stop domestic violence and to curb phone harassment of women," said Ari Rafiq, former Head of the General Directorate of Following Up Violence Against Women.

The Kurdistan Regional Government founded the Directorate in 2007 in Erbil to defend women's



This picture shows activists awarded at International Women's Day Ceremony held in Erbil. GLOBE PHOTO

rights. With its offices in other cities and towns in Kurdistan, the Directorate's statistics indicate that programs by women's organizations and foundations are proving effective, but there still is a lack of social support for women in Kurdistan.

According to the statistics on women, there were 43 murders, 44 suicides, 228 women burned, 123

cases of self-immolation, 990 cases of torture and 109 sexual harassment cases in all the three provinces of Kurdistan Region, including Graminyan, in 2011.

A question raised by many observers, Rafiq noted, is why women still suffer and why self-immolation among women still remains high, despite all the achievements.

Rafiq believes the Parliament has not been able to observe the tasks and duties of executive authorities, and hasn't been able to find out why people don't follow the new rules and amended laws.

"If we want to improve conditions for women, then all sides need to feel responsible. The educational foundations such as universities have to do re-

search on women's issues. The media has to dedicate time to family education. Imams need to address the issues in their Friday sermons," he noted.

The ceremony concluded with presenting awards, honoring members of the legal profession, religious figures, women's activists, journalists and researchers who have defended women's rights.

## Bright Future loans up to \$10,000

13,133 people have borrowed loans

The Bright Future organization (AYENDA), in coordination with the Kurdistan Regional Government, grants loans of up to \$10,000 for small businesses. Its Director, Hoger Faraj, talks to The Kurdish Globe about the organization and its loans program.

**Globe:** When did your organization start offering loans?

**Faraj:** We began offering people small loans soon after we established our office at the end of 2007. The focal point behind the loans was offering some sort of support for those who are in business or wish to start one. The project started during Kurdistan Region's fifth government

cabinet, headed by Nechirvan Barzani at the time. He personally attributed a lot to our organization so our organization could meet its key objectives.

**Globe:** What is the budget allocated to Bright Future?

**Faraj:** The budget allocated is \$8 million, provided by the KRG.

**Globe:** How much interest do you charge?

**Faraj:** When we first started our work, the interest was 17 percent, but we reduced the amount to 10 percent afterwards, because we thought that taking 17 percent was too much. We will try to further drop the interest. I want to clarify why we take this interest;

people may come up with different explanations, but the truth is we pay our employees' salaries, it's just to keep the organization running, because none of our employees receive a salary from the government.

**Globe:** What is the total amount of the loans your organization has granted so far?

**Faraj:** We were able to grant loans to 13,133 people since the end of 2007. The total amount of loans is \$32 million.

**Globe:** And what is the amount of each loan?

**Faraj:** Our loans range from \$100 to \$10,000. The amount of the loan depends on how much the applicant

can pay back each month. So, it depends on their salaries.

**Globe:** Some people consider these loans as haram [religiously forbidden] according to the Islamic law. Has this stopped people from taking out loans?

**Faraj:** To be honest, some still consider the loans haram; however, it has not stopped people from visiting our organization to ask for loans. The figures testify to this: We gave 1,783 loans in 2008; 2,894 in 2009 and 3,858 in 2010. Last year, we gave out 4,000 loans.

Interview by  
Rawaz Koyee



Hoger Faraj, Director of Bright Future Organization

# Kurdish language conference held in Diyarbakir

## Conference covers education, culture and linguistics

The Globe - Diyarbakir  
By Mehmed Sabri Akgönül

Under the motto “Kurdish is a language of democratic civilization” and under the supervision of the Democratic Society Congress (DTK) and the Kurdish Language and Education Movement (TZP-Kurdi), the National Kurdish Language Conference opened in Diyarbakir, Turkey, on March 2.

The conference motto is a reaction against a recent statement by Turkish Deputy Prime Minister Bulent Arinc who said: “Kurdish is a language without civilization.” The three-day conference, which was a platform to discuss problems of the Kurdish language, assembled 300 Kurdish academics, intellectuals, writers and linguists from all parts of Kurdistan, the Caucasus, Europe and Canada.

The conference began with one minute of silence for martyrs for the freedom of Kurdistan followed by the Kurdish national anthem, Ey Raqip. The main issues discussed at the conference included standardization of the Kurdish language through a unified alphabet, the status of the Kurdish language, the historical background of the Kurdish language, the use of Kurdish in primary and higher education, and the establishment of a national Kurdish language institute to discuss the problems of Kurdish language in social, linguistic, political and academic aspects.

Ahmet Turk, DTK co-chair and Member of Parliament for Mardin, Turkey, delivered a speech during the opening ceremony, pointing out to the historical significance of the conference and emphasized that language, culture, and identity cannot be separated from each other. “The Kurdish language should be used in all areas of life. It must be an official language. Otherwise, it will vanish with time,” he said.

Michiel Leezenberg, a professor at the University of Amsterdam, told The Kurdish Globe: “I am very happy to be a panelist at this conference. I think it is very important that intellectuals and linguists from four parts of Kurdistan [Turkey, Iraq, Iran and Syria] came together to discuss the status of the Kurdish language and the Kurdish national identity. I believe that we can improve our studies with an effective dialog.”

Netice Altun, a teacher of the Kurdish language in Diyarbakir, said the conference gives hope that the Kurdish nation is going to get close in cultural, political and linguistic respects and to create a united stance. “There are many specialties and realities of the Kurdish language and it is necessary to analyze them thoroughly.



The board of speakers at the National Kurdish Language Conference opened in Diyarbakir, Turkey, on March 2.

In this regard, I believe that a guiding perspective will occur at this conference,” she told The Globe.

Husamettin Zenderlioglu, an MP of Turkey’s Peace and Democracy Party, said the DTK and TZP-Kurdi made big efforts to prepare the conference and that made the Kurdish people very content. “The east, the west, the south and the north parts of Kurdistan met in Diyarbakir. Kurdistan had been divided by foreign borders, but today these borders have disappeared here, in Diyarbakir. People who study the Kurds and the Kurdish language came together here. This one is also a step towards unity,” he told The Globe.

Fehim Isik, a Kurdish journalist and translator, said the most important thing is that this conference includes representatives from the four parts of Kurdistan. He stated that solving the problems of the Kurdish language is a promising step for the future of the Kurds. “Our hope is to keep following this conference. The continuing success of this conference is tied to hard work. We hope after this conference, an organization can be established that can work on the problems of the Kurdish language. Lots of work and successful steps in language education should be realized,” Isik told The Globe.

Sami Tan, Director of the Istanbul Kurdish Institute, said Kurdish intellectuals from all parts of Kurdistan, who have different beliefs and perspectives but with the same national stance met in Di-

yarbakir. “Today, Kurdish people use the Kurdish language despite all assimilation, genocide and annihilation policies of Turkey, Iraq, Iran and Syria; and they held this conference in Kurdish. At the conference, Kurdish intellectuals use Kurdish — with all dialects — in all discussions, without needing any other language. This situation is a strong reply to those who claim that ‘there are too many Kurds from different places who cannot understand each other.’ In this conference, a Kurd who came from Hakkari [Turkey] spoke with one who came from Horasan [Turkey] and Kurds of Mardin [Turkey] discussed with Kurds of Sulaimaniya [Iraq],” he told The Globe.

The conference aimed to prepare a final declaration about the problems of the Kurdish language, such as the standardization of the Kurdish language through a unified alphabet, the use of Kurdish in primary, secondary and higher education, and the establishment of a Kurdish language institute to submit to the Pan-Kurdish National Conference which will be organized with the participation of Kurdish parties, institutions and organizations from all parts of Kurdistan.

At the conference, articles about the role of language in the national movement, differences among the Kurdish alphabets and dialects, the system of education and the academy of language were presented. Requests and recommendations of delegations of the conference as a result of discussions

and evaluations were presented to the public. In the final declaration of the conference, all Kurds were invited to speak Kurdish and formed a 31-person committee to establish a Kurdish National Language Movement.

However, the reaction in Turkey to the three-day conference was not as positive. Diyarbakir’s chief public prosecutor’s office launched an investigation into the conference and demanded records and video footage of the conference.

### Final declaration of the conference:

1. The dialects of the Kurdish language are the Kurds’ riches. Protection and development of these dialects is a national task.

2. Kurds should have a national program and language politics while the Kurdish National Congress remains on the agenda.

3. The delegation of this conference considers the standardization of each dialect necessary and predicate review of oral literature on the protection of local dialects.

4. There is a need for a single alphabet so Kurds can understand each other and create a national consciousness. Until we achieve this aim, both alphabets should be used in every area of education and life due to the current situation in southern Kurdistan.

5. At this conference, education in the Kurdish language is acknowledged as a national and human right. Therefore, we say that Kurdish should be language of education from kindergarten

to university. And this is possible with an effective political status of the Kurds.

6. A democratic and pluralistic system of education is recommended for happiness and development of humanity.

7. There is a need to establish a language and educational movement in Kurdistan for formation of a national language program that satisfies the needs of Kurdish language.

8. At this conference, all the Kurds are invited to use the Kurdish language in all areas of life.

9. At this conference, we salute and support the struggle of the Kurdish language of our people in the southwestern Kurdistan [Kurds in Syria].

10. At this conference, we support Kurdish political prisoners’ demands to defend themselves in Kurdish at courts.

11. At this conference, we condemn policies and attitudes to Kurdish language and culture of [Turkey’s] ruling Justice and Development Party, and we accept these approaches as continuation of policy of assimilation and denial. Likewise, we condemn similar attitudes towards Kurds of the other regimes.

12. At this conference, we condemn the continued political and military operations against the Kurds. We suggest dialogue and negotiation for the solution.

13. Children are important for development of Kurdish language. For this reason, we should show a special interest in children in the national language program



# New laws may boost manufacturing

## Kurdistan's only exports are used goods

The Kurdistan Regional Government Minister of Trade and Industry Sinan Chalabi says in 2011, the Ministry granted 2,695 import licenses with an approximate total value of \$47 billion. However, only 113 export licenses were issued in the same year, all of which were for exporting used goods to Iran and Turkey for recycling.

Minister Chalabi complained of weak industrial and manufacturing activities in the Region, saying that there is a legal vacuum in this area as Law No. 25 of 1991 is outdated and needs amendment to meet the Region's current needs. "We have requested that Law No. 20 of 1998 and the Investment Law 4 of 2006 be used to encourage investment in manufacturing, as some of these projects are licensed by the Board of Investment," he said. Projects licensed under this Investment Law will be exempt from taxes, intended to encourage businesses to invest capital in Kurdistan Region.

The Ministry of Trade and Industry has requested and encouraged the Council of Ministers and the Parliament to put forward laws that promote the manufacturing sector and domestic production. Legislation includes protecting domestic products, regulating competition, taking anti-monopoly measures, manage-

ment of industrial areas, and quality control laws. The Ministry also wants industrial project owners to be supported and protected by the government.

According to Chalabi, government support can include facilitating access to raw materials at reasonable prices, providing fuel, establishing more industrial areas with services, organizing international trade fairs, giving loans to investors through a government bank with competitive interest rates of 3 and 5 percent, as well as assisting in providing basic services to projects.

Currently, the overwhelming majority of products on the Kurdistan market are imported, mainly from Iran and Turkey. An agreement is expected to be signed between Iraq and Turkey to improve bilateral trade relations and to significantly increase trade volume, specifically the inflow of goods into Iraq from Turkey.

The local manufacturing sector currently neither meets domestic demand nor does it compete with imported goods, which are imported easily and at low prices.

Some believe Kurdistan Region, which is known for its vast fertile lands, water resources and affluent natural resources, could be a self-sufficient economy if the government implemented the right eco-

GLOBE PHOTO/Aiyob Mawloodi



A view of the Bazian Cement Factory, west of Suleimaniya. File Photo of January 19, 2010

nomical plans and policies to support domestic production and protect domestic products against competition from imports.

"If the revenues we receive from oil are used in the right way, we can easily create a robust economy that can produce more than it needs and export to neighboring countries and the whole world," says Hawta Abdulkarim, a university student in an interview with The Kurdish Globe. "We have two choices: Either to spend oil revenues for imports and forget about our economy or use it to strengthen our domestic production and forget about the need for oil money."

Chalabi says the KRG is trying hard to address the issue and this is evidenced by the opening of industrial and agricultural banks, pro-

viding loans to investors.

"This shows the government pays attention to domestic production and increases it every year to reduce imports of foreign products," explained Chalabi to The Globe.

With the help of UNCTAD, the Ministry of Trade and Industry prepared a draft law to encourage competition, as well as protect consumers and domestic production. It was submitted to Parliament in 2009, but not yet approved.

In 2010, the Iraqi Parliament passed three laws regarding competition, consumer rights and domestic production, following which the Kurdistan Parliament approved the Iraqi Consumer Protection Law. It is expected that during 2012, the Parliament will endorse the other two laws as well. However,

there may be some changes in the law, including the transfer of responsibility of enforcing the law from the Council of Ministers to the Ministry of Trade and Industry.

According to the Ministry statistics, there are currently 4,044 licensed factories in the Region; 2,162 in Erbil, 1,360 in Sulaimaniya, and 522 in Duhok. "Of these factories, 2,428 are currently operating and the rest have either halted operation, have conditional operation licenses that are not met, or have not reached production phase yet."

The total invested capital of all these factories is estimated to be approximately 1 trillion Iraqi dinars (approximately \$850 million), creating 15,686 job opportunities.

In addition to the privately owned factories, there

are 20 government factories, most of which are not operating, or have low production.

"The salaries given to their staff are seen as a loss to the government because they do not generate any revenue," says Chalabi. "We have established a committee to study their shortcomings and the steps necessary for resuming production."

Chalabi says his Ministry has submitted a request to the Council of Ministers to give the Ministry of Trade and Industry full authority to reopen these factories and to give them to the private sector to run.

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# Investment laws may need changes

## Kurdistan's first glass factory to be licensed

Director of the Erbil Investment Board Najat Bapir says the Board has received 255 applications from investors for investment projects during the first two months of 2012. The most prominent of these applications is from the US-based Hilton Hotel chain for the construction of a branch in Erbil.

Other important projects include a glass manufacturing plant which, if licensed, will be the first of its kind in the Region as well as an olive oil processing plant.

While the total value of investments licensed by the Kurdistan Regional

Government's Board of Investment under the 2006 Investment Law has so far reached \$17 billion, and is labeled by many as the most attractive investment law in the Region, according to Bapir, the law still needs amendments to better serve investors.

The current composition of the total capital invested in the Region is 10 percent foreign, 6 percent joint and 84 percent local.

Projects submitted for investment licenses are evaluated based on feasibility studies, long-term benefits for the city and its residents, the job opportunities it creates for

locals, and the demand for the goods or services the project will produce.

"Besides, the sector of the project is also an important factor, and we base our decision partly on the government priorities," said Bapir in an interview with The Kurdish Globe. He says out of the more than 200 applications received this year, 24 have already received their licenses.

Among the applications are construction projects to build low-cost residential units for low-income families. The units will be sold with long-term loans and no down payment will

be required.

Because Kurdistan Region's domestic production sector is weak and the Region depends mainly on imports, local investors believe this issue is an important factor for the Region's economic development.

Bapir says Kurdistan Region has a free market, which means imports cannot be banned. "In free markets, competition is based on price and quality," Bapir tells The Globe. "Some of our domestic producers add large markups on the prices of their products, while imported products are less expen-

sive. Then, consumers have the right to buy the less expensive goods."

Domestic producers, says Bapir, should improve the quality of their products and reduce their prices to compete with foreign goods.

The investment laws have several attractive benefits for both local and foreign investors, including land at no cost, tax exemption, and customs fees and duties for 10 years. However, Bapir believes that although it was a good law in 2006 when it was initially approved, the Region has since witnessed numerous political

and economic changes, and the law needs to be amended to meet the current needs of the market and to better serve investors.

"The law that was legislated in 2006 was very good and attracted some \$17 billion in local and international investment, which has significantly improved the infrastructure of the Region. Besides, when a residential project is constructed, it automatically brings schools and health centers with it, easing the burden on the government," said the Director of the Board.



# School struggles to meet American standards

Lack of proper teaching materials and other mishaps questioned



A view of the American School in Erbil.

## Teachers at local American International School criticize its lack of adherence to America's education principles and standards.

An American flag flies over the two-storey school building while a picture of former US President George W. Bush and Kurdistan Region President Massoud Barzani hang on a wall inside. "American International School" is written on a huge blue panel, attracting passers-by on the main Gulan Street.

Following the US-led invasion and the economic boom Kurdistan Region has been witnessing over the last nine years, Kurdish parents seeking to provide better education for their children turned to private schools like the AIS that began flourishing in the Region.

Fourteen-year-old seventh-grader Zana Kakl's

parents pay more than \$4,000US per year for what they assume is a higher quality of education at AIS so that Zana can realize "the Kurdish dream" that previous generations failed to achieve. "I want to learn English and improve my speaking skills," said the seventh-grader in excellent English.

While the AIS receives funding from USAID, a number of American teachers who taught and still teach there are raising complaints about the school's policies and teaching standards.

"In November, textbooks arrived but most were far too advanced for the level of English spoken by most students. No Social Studies books had been ordered, so I was forced to subscribe to an educational Website at my own expense in order to have reading materials for my students," says Bette Hydrick, a former AIS teacher.

Hydrick began teaching at AIS in October 2011, making \$2,500

per month. She resigned on in February 2012 and returned to the US.

A teacher requesting anonymity confirmed Hydrick's statement. "The curriculum is supposed to be an American one which depends on textbooks. But AIS teachers have to depend on the Internet for teaching materials, which they must copy and print. That is not how you teach in America." The teacher added, "The principal is ordering books that he wants but that will not work here."

AIS opened its doors to Kurdish students in October 2011. Currently, some 300 students are enrolled in 10 grades, including kindergarten, and taught by eight American, one Canadian, one South American, and nine Kurdish teachers.

Alarming is the fact that, while the KRG Ministry of Education recommended that the school charge students \$1,500 for enrollment, the school requires

parents to pay \$3,800, which is over twice that amount.

The Globe tried to reach the school principal, Azad Hawrami, for a comment; but he was unavailable.

Shna Shahab (a pseudonym) spoke to The Globe on behalf of the school administration. "We have already discussed the fee [\$3,800] with the Ministry of Education and told them that the extra charge is for school expenses. We pay for teachers' salaries and books that come to us from the US. Their response was that if our excuse is rational and valid, then they will let us continue with the current fee."

Regarding teachers' complaints about the lack of proper schoolbooks, Shahab said that the school has its own books and curriculum. "We don't have any shortages when it comes to books; the books are provided based on the number of students."

## Power outages

Hydrick and other teachers also complained about power shortages and poor cooking facilities. "From the end of October until I left Erbil on February 16, there were daily power outages from around 2:30 p.m. to 5:00 p.m. and from midnight to 7:20 a.m. or 8:00 a.m. Sometimes the power was out for 15 hours. The teachers froze during the night. When these outages occurred, Hawrami would often leave the school and go to his sister's house until the power came back on. When we complained, he'd often remark: 'Well, this is Kurdistan,'" said Hydrick.

She recalled the first day she arrived at AIS. "I was quite shocked to see the accommodations in which I would be living for the next eight months. There was a refrigerator and a microwave but no cooking facilities. The mattress was thin and hard like a rock. I had back and leg aches the entire time

I was there."

Shahab said the American teachers make the shortage of power a bigger issue than it really is. "They are American and unaccustomed to power cuts. I believe it's their right to complain about a shortage of power."

Shahab did not comment further on the extended power outages, but a male employee who also chose to remain anonymous admitted that power outages do occur. He criticized the government for not keeping its promises to provide the school with continuous power.

The school building was originally constructed as a motel. "Even the building is inappropriate; the kids do not have enough room to play," said Hydrick.

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# Government seeks gun restrictions

At least 33 dead and 43 wounded by guns in a two-month period

**KRG issues new instructions concerning firearms in hopes of curbing illegal gun sales and limiting firearms licenses.**

The Kurdistan Regional Government has reacted to the murder case of American gym teacher Jeremiah Small at the hands of student Bayar Sarwar at the private Christian Classical Medes School in Sulaimaniya last week on March 1. The murder drew the attention of local and international media, enough to force the KRG to seek restriction on guns.

Brig. Khalid Abbas, Erbil Governorate's Director of Internal Affairs, said no licenses have been issued yet in 2012, nor have they renewed gun licenses that were approved in previous years. In 2011, at least 220 people bought handgun licenses and another 420 bought licenses for AK-47 assault rifles.

PRESS PHOTO



Number of guns put for sale on a counter.

Based on current laws, anyone who wants to carry a gun must be over 18, a resident of Kurdistan Region, and considered stable by a medical committee. Brig. Abbas said any gun owner must have a logical reason for carrying it; for instance, they must be businesspeople or prove that their life is under threat.

Erbil's gun market includes some 50 sunshades 10km from the city center. Dr. Tariq Nouri, Erbil's Director of Intelligence Forces (Asayish) says they opened an office to monitor the market for illegal selling and handling of guns. Dealers must see identification, ration coupons and a confirmation letter from the courts explaining why

the gun is authorized.

Based on the latest statistics of the Region's General Directorate of Police, some 33 people were murdered and 43 wounded by guns across Kurdistan Region over the past two months.

There are two gun markets in Sulaimaniya, both opened after the 1991 Kurdish National Upris-

ing. However, the one near Sara Square where anti-government protests erupted last year is illegal. Selling guns, whether legally or illegally, is the only source of income for people in the market. According to a Sara shopkeeper who wished to remain anonymous, guns and firearms are hidden within the stores' supplies. He guessed that around 90 percent of people keep guns in their homes. Many found the weapons after the 1991 Uprising and the 1994 civil war.

Another anonymous seller said guns are smuggled into Kurdistan via various sources, including Iran. Yet another gun dealer said many guns come from the middle and southern Iraq.

Sarkawt Ahmed, Sulaimaniya's Director of Combating Crimes, confirmed that guns should not be sold to neighboring countries, but one gun seller assumed some guns have been secretly sold to Syria since the uprising there. He touched upon the government's campaign to

remove unlicensed guns, stating that Police have seized 10 unlicensed guns during night patrols since last week. Ahmed added that the current government campaign to disarm illegal gun owners will raise public awareness of its mission.

Brig. Abdulkhaliq Talat, Erbil's Director of Police, says the government must allocate a sum of money in its 2012 budget to purchase unlicensed guns. Several people have been imprisoned since last month based on the gun law's Provision No. 21. Brig. Talat adds that police disguised in civilian clothing should not carry a gun; if they do, then they should be imprisoned with their arms confiscated. Current laws state that whoever carries an unlicensed gun must be imprisoned for no less than six months.

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## Hypertension rates may be on the rise in Kurdistan

Doctors have expressed concern that the rates of hypertension cases are rising in Kurdistan Region. Hypertension, or high blood pressure, is a risk factor for heart attacks; but Kurdistan Region does not keep accurate figures of the condition.

Cardiologist and internal medicine specialist, Dr. Azad Mantik believes the number of hypertension patients in the Region increases daily.

"If someone wants to keep themselves away from this serious condition, they should care more about their meals; reduce foods high in cholesterol, carbohydrates, saturated fats and salty foods," Dr. Mantik says, advising people to check their blood pressure at age 20 and pay regular visits to their doctors to prevent chronic hypertension.

Dr. Dler Anwar, a specialist in internal medicine and diabetes at Laila Qasim Hospital, says most patients who have diabetes also have hypertension.

"We take the blood pressure of most patients, and I can say that 70 per cent of diabetic patients also have hypertension," Dr. Anwar says.

Both doctors noted that smokers, heavy drinkers, drug addicts and those who are obese are more prone to developing hypertension, adding that the best way for obese people to prevent hypertension is to exercise and do physical activity half an hour a day, five days a week.

The normal range for blood pressure is a systolic measurement between 90 and 140 mm/Hg and a diastolic between 60 and 90 mm/Hg.

Everyone should have their blood pressure checked by their doctors after age 20. Patients must take the medication their doctor prescribes or adhere to lifestyle changes suggested due to risk of heart attack with uncontrolled blood pressure.

By Hangaw Rashadaddin

## Hashimi pushes for international involvement

The Supreme Judiciary Council of Iraq rejected Iraqi Vice President Tariq Al-Hashimi's call to make his case international, claiming the crisis is an internal one and with no legitimate grounds to make it international.

Abdulsattar Baraqadar, the Supreme Judiciary Council spokesman, said Hashimi's statement is irrational and illegal, and the case must be solved in Iraq's courts. He said Al-Hashimi has not committed an international crime and it would be illogical for him to appear in an international court.

In a televised show, Al-Hashimi announced he will work on his case over the next two weeks to make it an international issue by sending it to the High Commission of Human Rights.

Jalal Gailani, an Iraqi Member of Parliament from the Iraqiya bloc and a leader from the Tajdeed list run by Al-Hashimi, said the investigation

commission refused to meet Al-Hashimi's team of lawyers to discuss allegations.

The Iraqi government said it had asked the KRG to hand Al-Hashimi over for trial in Baghdad for allegedly carrying out 150 terrorist attacks and running death squads.

After the US forces withdrew from Iraq last December, it triggered a political crisis in the country and raised the fear of renewed civil war like that of 2006-07, in which tens of thousands of people were killed.

"Upon request from the Supreme Judiciary Council, and after setting a date for the day of the trial, the [central] Interior Ministry has asked its KRG counterpart to issue an arrest warrant against Al-Hashimi and to hand him over to the judicial authorities," read Iraq's Interior Ministry statement.

By Salih Waladbagi



Iraqi Vice President Tariq Al-Hashimi

GLOBE PHOTO/ Safin Hamed



# The British Consul General in Erbil defends UK asylum policy

GLOBE PHOTO



Chris Bowers, the British Consul General in Erbil.

I have to say that there are some Kurds living in Europe who seem to be rather out of touch with what is happening in Kurdistan Region, either that or they are wilfully closing their eyes and blocking their ears.

I am talking of course about those who campaign against European governments' policy of returning people to Kurdistan Region after they have exhausted all legal processes; an issue which The Kurdish Globe continues to report sadly in a rather one-sided way without seeking the views of governments.

These campaigners seem to think that Kurds living in Iraqi Kurdistan are persecuted by the KRG. Why else would they want people to claim asylum in the UK? That, in my book, is an unfair accusation, an insult, against the record of the KRG.

Look around the streets of Erbil, Dohuk and Sulaimaniya. Thousands of diaspora Kurds are returning from Europe to their homeland to start up businesses, buy property or just marvel at the progress here. That is the reality. Activists campaigning against returning illegal migrants seem to think all this progress that ordinary people see around them in Iraqi Kurdistan is some sort of an illusion. Either that or they think that the Kurds have the right to entirely disregard the UK and other European governments' laws and established international practise, in which case, it is the citizens of the UK and Europe who are being insulted.

Let's be absolutely clear about this. Someone who travels illegally to the UK and other parts of Europe using smugglers is knowingly breaking our laws.

If people are caught doing that, they can only expect to pay a price. How could it be otherwise? I am not sure if there is a way to put this more simply: no one has the right to live in my country or Europe illegally. To maintain the opposite is frankly an insult to the people of the UK.

Let me put it this way. If you, dear reader, found someone who had broken into your house and was living there illegally what would you do? You would listen to them, check with a lawyer but most likely ask them to leave. If they refused point-blank to leave, eventually you would call the police and make them leave. That is all the UK and other European governments are trying to do. Let me make something else crystal clear, too. We only try to return people to the Kurdistan Region when they have completely ex-

hausted all legal processes in the UK. Everyone has their day in court.

And before any 'activist' tries to paint this as a campaign against the Kurds, let me, again, be very clear. The UK and other European countries routinely return people to many countries of the world. It is an established feature of the international system.

The odd thing is when people are returned to their country of origin, their host government accepts them; except, it seems, in the Kurdistan Region. Why does this thriving, dynamic region of Iraq not want those of its citizens who can no longer live in the UK or Europe back? Whose responsibility are these people who have been living illegally in the UK? Are they not Kurds?

## Kurdistan needs more space science

### Knowledge of space helps development and education

By Ranj J. Diggil

Since ancient times, humans have tried to gain enough knowledge and information about space to get answers to questions about the diverse phenomena that take place on Earth and in outer space.

Space science and technology have direct and indirect influences on other branches of science because they act as an incentive for technology industries to speed up the invention of new methods so space scientists can learn more about the topic. On the other hand, new discoveries in space are useful in daily life.

In modern times, space technology has become one of the means by which nations control and rule our world. The nations on the front line of space science are those that have the greatest power and influence on the world's policy and economy. Some people think the advanced space technology of those countries comes from their

power, while others think their power comes from their knowledge and technology. This controversy is complicated because the influence of knowledge on power is quite vast. A country like the United States has always made the question of space a great issue in presidential elections. This, in turn, shows the significance of the space industry for the world's greatest economy.

It is clear that neither the people nor the government of Kurdistan pay much attention to this matter. Obviously, our nation, which is in its first steps of development, is not expected to reach the stage of well-developed nations, but we can at least study space science and technology so our universities can forge stronger relations with universities and institutes in the countries that are leading this areas of study. These days, investment in space studies and research has become a scale on which a nation's development is measured.



A view of a spiral galaxy.

Carrying out theoretical studies and research in space science does not necessarily need a huge budget. If Kurdistan's Ministry of Higher Education and Scientific Research starts to spend some of its annual budget on space studies and research, we will, of course succeed in

drawing the attention of countries that are willing to contribute to the development and rebuilding of Kurdistan Region. The world's research centers are always open to bright students and researchers who can contribute to innovation projects and programs they run.

I personally see a large gap in the field of space science study and research in Kurdistan. In my point of view, Kurdistan's governmental and non-governmental organizations need to invest money and make an effort to encourage people in Kurdistan to take prac-

tical steps towards space science studies to bring about progress in this domain of science.

*Ranj J. Diggil holds an MSc in Space Engineering*

PRESS PHOTO

# Michiel Leezenberg of the University of Amsterdam discusses the National Language Conference

"The declaration rightly emphasizes the role of children" — Michiel Leezenberg

**Globe:** What do you think about the National Language Conference in Diyarbakir and its final declaration?

**Leezenberg:** I think the conference is of enormous importance. Not only is it the first conference of this size and scale in Diyarbakir, where not so long ago a gathering like this would have been unthinkable; but it also brought together Kurdish intellectuals from all parts of Kurdistan, speaking all different dialects. This shows that over the past two decades, enormous progress has been made.

Regarding the conference's final declaration, I think the emphasis on preserving the variety of dialects and the need for more empirical research on them is quite important. The declaration rightly emphasizes the role of children and hence of elementary school instruction in the preservation of one's mother tongue.

**Globe:** Two main subjects that were discussed at the Conference were "The differences between Kurdish dialects and differences of alphabets" and "Unity of Kurdish national language." How did Kurdish, with its four dialects, come to be a national language while the Kurds lack the structural support of a nation-state?

**Leezenberg:** That is a complicated story. Generally, the basis for new national languages in the Ottoman Empire was laid out in the 19th century, prior to the establishment of new independent successor states. In the late Ottoman Empire and early Turkey, an increasing number of works were written in the Kurmanji dialect until all spoken and written usage of the language was banned in the 1920s; the extent of linguistic assimilation since then becomes clear if one sees that even the language of Kurdish novelists contains clear traces of Turkish grammar. The revival of Kurdish since, roughly, the 1980s, has



Michiel Leezenberg of the University of Amsterdam speaks at the Kurdish Language Conference in Diyarbakir, March 2nd.

been the work of a number of intellectuals in exile. Since the 1990s, increasing numbers of people have been working on rehabilitating Kurdish as a spoken and written language inside Turkey. Two important — if partly symbolic — developments have been the creation of the Kurdish-language state channel TRT6 [in Turkey] and the creation of Kurdish departments in a number of Turkish universities; but the big question is whether and when Kurdish mother tongue education can become a reality in Turkish primary schools. The Turkish state policy has hitherto been very centralist and monolingual; perhaps more effort should be put into presenting possible models of multilingualism (such as Spain, Canada, and South Africa) that do not threaten the integrity of the state.

In Iraq, Sorani has become a standard, but from early on, it was clear that

Badini speakers were generally unwilling to adopt Sorani as their own standard. Right now, it seems as if Kurdish is heading towards a bi-standard situation even in Iraqi Kurdistan, let alone among Kurds elsewhere. It should be kept in mind that, regarding both grammar and alphabet, Badini is not quite identical to Kurmanji either. Thus, Kurdish currently has a multi-standard reality, and there is no reason to expect very substantial convergence in grammar and alphabets. Some Kurdish nationalists may feel sorry about this; but the assumption that strict linguistic unity is necessary for national consciousness is simply unwarranted. The movement for the use of Kurdish has in part grown out of resistance against linguistic centralization and assimilation, and there is little justification for pursuing similar centralizing policies among Kurds themselves. For the Kurds

in Turkey, the adaptation of the Arabic alphabet is as unrealistic of a prospect as the adaptation of the Latin alphabet by Kurds in Iraq or elsewhere.

**Globe:** You mentioned the Kurdish madrasas in your presentation. What was the role of the madrasas considering the development of the Kurdish language and Kurdish national identity?

**Leezenberg:** In madrasas in northern Kurdistan, Kurdish has been used as a language of both spoken and written instruction since at least the 18th century. There are indications that both spoken Kurdish and the use of textbooks in and on Kurdish by authors like Elî Teremaxî and Yunus Xalqatîni have helped in creating a standardized form of Kurmanji, which can be found all over northern Kurdistan. If this is correct (and we really need more research on this question), then the madrasas may have played

a more important role in creating and preserving a unified northern Kurdish language than has hitherto been assumed.

**Globe:** Since when do the Kurds have a Kurdish policy of the language? And how far does this policy historically reach back?

**Leezenberg:** Early Kurdish authors like Ehmedê Xanî and Elî Teremaxî were very conscious of their language, but did not have anything like a policy. More sustained efforts by Kurdish individuals and organizations came about by the late 19th century. Only in Iraq, where Kurdish became an official language, did anything like a Kurdish language policy develop; but this has thus far had little effect on the Kurds elsewhere. Since the 1980s, the Kurdish Institute of Paris has been trying to create a unified Kurdish technical vocabulary; increasingly, this work is being done (al-

beit in a less systematic, let alone unified manner) by the various Kurdish satellite channels. Thus, the famous (or notorious) appeal by a number of authors and intellectuals in 2008 to adopt the Sulaimaniya variant of Sorani as a standard language has created a heated debate. Currently, the most likely scenario is for Kurdish to remain a multi-standard language with several different dialects and scripts, and perhaps some convergence in vocabulary through the creation of neologisms, but less in grammar or alphabet. To my mind, the more important and urgent question is whether Kurdish can be developed into a fully functional language of education, mass communication and even administration in the Kurdish-inhabited provinces of Turkey.

Interview By  
Mehmed Sabri Akgönül



# We remember Mustafa Barzani with love

By Ismail Besikci

The Kurds engaged in an intense war with the Ottoman administration during the early and mid-19th century. A crucial point to highlight in this war is this: Those Kurdish princes (Mirs), Kurdish sheikhs and tribal leaders who engaged in war with the Ottoman Empire, at certain stages, surrendered to the Ottoman state. Once they surrendered, they asked for forgiveness, and submitted their loyalties and apologies to the Ottomans. They complained about the insufficient income from the Ottomans during their exile. This type of behavior can be discerned in almost all the uprising and resistance movements during the 19th century. During the 19th century, there were uprisings and resistance movements at various times, but these rebellions lasted only one or two years and were unsuccessful and ended with submission to the authorities.

In the 20th century, and in the first years of the Republic of Turkey, similar processes could be discerned for the uprisings and resistance movements. The only exception is Mustafa Barzani. Barzani had always shown great effort and determination not to be caught by his enemies. He was very consistent in this. During his lifetime struggle, which began at the end of 1920s, and continued during the '40s, '60s and '70s, this characteristic of Mustafa Barzani is worthy of note within the context of Kurdish history.

Barzani had always warned his comrades not to be caught or to surrender to the enemy and to take all necessary precautions for that purpose. During his struggles, Barzani never surrendered to the enemy and when he was caught, despite all precautions, there was never an apology, and he did not ask for forgiveness or accept submission. Barzani urged the first Kurdistan President Qazi Muhammed in 1947 not to surrender to the enemy. Despite this warning, Muhammed surrendered to the Iranian forces. However, his commendable stance against the Iranian court, his defense of Kurdish national rights, his refusal to ask for forgiveness needs to be remembered as well.

Apart from this distinctive characteristic, Barzani had another special ability. As the leader of the Kurdistan Democratic Party, Barzani had clear knowledge and perception about the real world politics of the time. He was a leader who had a clear understanding of the respective roles of the Soviet Union and the United States in global politics. He sensed that there would be no



A ceremony to remember the legendary Kurdish leader, Mala Mustafa Barzani.

positive approach to the Kurdish national liberation movement from the Soviet Union. He saw the negative stance of the Soviet Union towards the Kurds during his experience in asylum in the Soviet Union, and as well as the positions and stance of the Soviet Union in later years. It was obvious the Soviet Union was not only providing support to the regime of former Iraqi President Saddam Hussein, with weapons and military equipment, but also ideologically backing it. It is also known that the advisors to Saddam's regime during the genocides against the Kurds in Anfal and Halabja were mostly experts from the Soviet Union.

Can goodwill be expected from the US towards the Kurds? This could and could not be. However, if there is any goodwill towards the Kurds, it may be from this side. Barzani developed a clear sense that things could go either way and it would be unwise not to consider this or stand against a power that determines and directs the world politics. Barzani's political aptitude was very important.

The Soviet authorities had never accepted the right to self-determination for the Kurdish nation and had always prevented the Kurds from gaining political status in the Middle East. There is a much larger gap between theory and practice than otherwise assumed. This is particularly true in the question of the Kurds and Kurdistan. This gap had worked against the interests of the oppressed Kurdish nation

and helped imperial and colonial powers, as well as the powers that occupied Kurdistan. It is that the differences between theory and practice contain irreconcilable contradictions.

In 1975 and 1991, the Kurds suffered a lot as a result of the US policies in the Middle East. However, this trend worked differently in 2003. As a result of US-led military operation against Iraq, the Saddam regime fell. The Iraqi army was disbanded. The Baath party apparatus and the Iraqi intelligence, Al-Mukhabarat, were destroyed. Weapons of mass destruction in Iraq were destroyed. All these developments opened the way for the Kurds. The formation of a Kurdistan regional administration came into existence as a result. The US, without doubt, operated against Iraq for its own national interests. The establishment of the Kurdistan Regional Government, however, took place as a result of this military operation against the Saddam regime. It is also a reality that the KRG established as a result of a determined struggle by the Kurds against Turkey and the US. Because of the struggle of the Kurds, the US administration had no choice but to recognize this de facto establishment.

During the Saddam era, the natural resources of Kurdistan were exploited for the economic and political interests of the regime. The income that came from Kurdistan's oil reserves returned to Kurdistan as landmines, bombs, poison gas and poverty. Today, however, in Kurdistan Region,

one can clearly see intense construction activities. Roads, dams, bridges, hospitals, schools, universities, new districts, housing and administrative buildings are being built. The Kurds demonstrated that they are determined to control their own natural resources for the construction of their own country. The Kurdish language, literature, culture and art are also progressing.

A third Barzani attribute also needs to be highlighted: He had always preserved his Kurdishness and remained loyal to the Kurdish cultural values. He was conscious of how the Kurds were oppressed compared to their neighbors and the world at large. This characteristic is important to note because the practices applied in Kurdistan by colonial powers caused erosion in the Kurdish psyche and senses. The Kurds, despite recognizing themselves as Kurds, distanced themselves from Kurdishness. In a period under the intensified colonial states' pressure over the Kurdish national identity to keep Kurdishness alive, defending the Kurdish national culture and identity has much more value than otherwise accepted.

I remember Mustafa Barzani and his comrades with love.

*This text was a message sent on the commemoration of legendary Kurdish leader Mustafa Barzani, held in Kiziltepe/Mardin, Turkey. The text was translated from Turkish to English by The Kurdish Globe.*

## About İsmail Beşikçi

Born in 1939 in İskilip, Turkey, İsmail Beşikçi is a Turkish scholar. He is a PEN Honorary Member. He served 17 years in prison on propaganda charges stemming from his writings about the Kurdish nation in Turkey.

Beşikçi studied at the Faculty of Political Science of the University of Ankara, and graduated in 1962. After his military service, he became an assistant professor at the Atatürk University in Erzurum, Turkey. He prepared his first anthropological study, an investigation of one of the last nomadic Kurdish tribes, the Alikan, there, which he submitted in 1967 to the Ankara Faculty of Political Sciences.

His second encounter with the Kurds was during his military service when he served in Bitlis and Hakkâri, Turkey, where he first saw the nomadic Alikan tribe pass through Bitlis on its migration from winter to summer meadows and back.

His book, *The Order of East Anatolia*, was published in 1969. In it, he sought to adapt and apply Marxist concepts to the analysis of Kurdish society and to the processes of socio-economic and political change taking place. It made him a public enemy. While the book did not cause much debate either in academic or left-leaning intellectual circles, the university took disciplinary measures against him, which led to a trial after the 1971 coup. He was detained and put on trial for communist and anti-national propaganda. He was sentenced to 13 years imprisonment for violating the indivisibility of the Turkish nation.

For many years, Beşikçi was the only non-Kurdish person in Turkey to speak out in defense of the rights of the Kurds. Continuing to write and speak in spite of all attempts to silence him, Beşikçi has become a powerful and important symbol for the Kurds and for Turkey's human rights movement. He was sentenced to more than 100 years in prison, but was released from jail in 1999. In 1987, he was a candidate for the Nobel Peace Prize. Thirty-two of his 36 books have been banned in Turkey. He has been described as "modern Turkey's pioneer of Kurdish studies."

# Syrian Kurds: Contextual Irony and Ramifications on Turkey

By Idrees Mohammed

The current crisis of Syria could possibly end in an ironic scenario for Syrian Kurds that will have both positive and negative ramifications for Turkey. On the one hand, the Kurdish issue is likely to develop further, strengthening Syrian Kurdish influence; on the other hand, the crisis may have a deleterious effect on the Syrian branch of the Kurdistan Workers' Party (PKK), critically weakening its power. For Turkey, the irony of the Kurdish situation is that any consolidation of Kurdish power might be disadvantageous, while the weakening of the PKK might not necessarily be advantageous.

Turkey's determination to influence developments in Syria is strongly marked by the Kurdish issue. The country's past experience with Iraq and Syria has been an important source from which to draw the lessons followed by Turkish policy-makers vis-à-vis the current crisis. Turkish objections to the 2003 invasion of Iraq left it with very limited influence on post-invasion developments, including those pertaining to the Iraqi Kurdish issue and the PKK, both being a great source of concern and destabilization for Turkey.

With regard to its domestic security issues, Syria's concerns about its neighbor are of great importance to Turkey. In the past, Syrian support for the PKK was always a sour point between the two countries since it presented a significant threat to Turkish domestic calm. However, the betterment in bilateral relations under the Justice and Development Party (AKP) improved cooperation over security, significantly curbing the Syrian PKK threat to Turkey, at least temporarily. The possibility, therefore, of the re-establishment of a strategic alliance between Syria and the PKK against Turkey as it mounts pressure on the regime has been Turkey's greatest fear since the Arab Spring reached Syria. In order to avert a recurrence or, at least, to decrease the possibility of these sce-

narios, Turkey has chosen to engage aggressively in Syria's crisis.

Despite such moves, the process of consolidation for the Syrian Kurds appears to be getting increasingly real. All indications are that the Kurds will be granted rights in a post-Assad Syria. However, for a variety of reasons—geographic, demographic and those related to the Syrian National Council and its agendas—these rights might not result in as much power as that gained by Iraqi Kurds. They will, nevertheless, result in some degree of Kurdish influence on the central and provincial political processes in Syria, consolidating the Kurdish nation's power. Thus, and in Turkey's eyes, crucially, providing an impetus for its own restive Kurds to demand greater rights.

The overthrow of the Assad regime could cause a severe weakening of power for the militant Kurdish PKK if it results in the organization losing a hitherto useful ally in Syria. Despite the fact that Syrian/Turkish relations appeared close at times, the fundamental reality of the situation meant that for the PKK, the phrase 'the enemy of my enemy is my friend' held good.

Meanwhile, the Syrian regime could be replaced by one willing to cooperate with Turkey in its campaign against the PKK, in which case should Syrian Kurds be granted constitutional rights and be well treated, the PKK's perceived legitimacy, and thus its very existence, would be questioned since a good part of that existence is derived from the present states' bias against the Kurds. Furthermore, Iraqi Kurdistan, an important player in Kurdish affairs, is becoming an increasingly outspoken advocate of peaceful rather than armed struggle for Kurdish rights, stating that the latter is no longer appropriate.

While Syrian Kurds are mistrustful of Turkey's intentions and uncomfortable about its influence on Syria's main opposition coun-



A Syrian protestor resident in Cyprus holds a banner as shouts slogans during a protest against the Syrian president Bashar Al-Assad outside of Syrian embassy, Friday, April 1, 2011.

cil, a trust-building process between the two sides could be mediated by Iraqi Kurdistan, which enjoys relations with Turkey and has influence with Syria's Kurds. Although Turkey has managed to establish good relations with Syria's Arab nationalists and Islamists in the opposition, it could cooperate with the Kurds on a range of issues regarding its political and economic security.

At the same time, despite the theoretical potential for improved relations with its neighbor, the very development of opportunities for Syria's Kurds will further intensify Turkey's concerns regarding the Kurdish issue. Turkey has always perceived the consolidation of Kurdish power as a threat to its domestic security because, as the successor of an ethnically mosaic empire, Turkey is home to different ethnicities whose political development endangers the state's power and territorial integrity. The country's deep-seated feeling in this regard leads it to always perceive that any Kurdish consolidation, even beyond its borders, will eventually result in a domino effect on

its Kurds.

Situated on Turkey's border with Iraq, Iraqi Kurdistan is fast developing on various levels. The Iraqi Constitution envisions important ethnic, political and cultural rights for the Kurds who currently enjoy de facto independence in a region that sits on large amounts of oil and gas and is witnessing political development and an economic boom. Should Syria's Kurds be granted rights, while not replicating the situation of Iraqi Kurds, they will certainly enjoy a better life and, as spectators to these scenarios, Turkish Kurds will feel themselves further oppressed by state-inspired obstacles to greater freedoms and, encouraged by their co-nationals, be motivated to obtain greater Kurdish rights.

In addition to the above, Turkey, burdened with its complex Kurdish issue, has for decades been unable to engage the PKK in a political process, an omission that has already resulted in severe damage to the country. On the other hand, the policy of isolating the organization will not prove effective. The disengage-

ment of the Syrian PKK in a post-Assad political process, in addition to the divisions between it and the other wing of Syrian Kurds, would become a destabilizing factor for Syria and Turkey despite the PKK's weakness.

Conversely, this same scenario in Syria could be of benefit to Turkey. The weakening of the hard line and hawkish Syrian branch of the PKK undoubtedly affects the whole organization in one way or another. Already pursuing a policy to weaken the PKK, Turkey tries to inflict great losses within the PKK. Moreover, the division among Syrian Kurds is beneficial to Turkey in that the Kurdish struggle to gain rights in a post-Assad Syria will be limited.

The Kurd's tactical approach of playing a waiting game toward Syria's crisis has been strategic; however, the division between them that would possibly turn into polarization could critically affect their power. For this reason, there have been calls on several occasions for striking a united Kurdish camp and position.

Nevertheless, Turkey

must realize that Syria's crisis will unleash new domestic, regional and international realities; among them will be the development of the Kurdish issue that cannot be ignored in a post-Assad Syria. Simultaneously, it is clear to the Syrian Kurds that neighboring Turkey has been a principal player on the crisis with its influence on regional issues mounting. Accordingly, it would be beneficial and advisable for the two actors to try to establish and manage good relations. It is extremely important for Turkey to strain every nerve to avert a problematic course with Syria's Kurds, including the PKK, especially as it is working on a new constitution, to try to engage its own Kurds in the political process away from the military struggle instead of using the divisions between them as a trump card.

*Idrees Mohammed is an observer of Turkey's foreign policy, primarily toward Iraqi Kurdistan. He is also interested in the Kurdish experience.*



# Erbil ties with Kazma in AFC Cup opener

**Coach Mahrous hopes for better results**

**The Kurdish capital city team, Erbil, played its first match at the Asian Football Confederation Cup on March 6 against the Kuwait's Kazma at home at Franso Hariri Stadium. The match ended 1-1, giving each team a point.**



A view of the football match between Erbil FC and Kazma FC. File Photo

The match started with several quick attacks by the Erbil team while the opponent had just enough time to defend. Kazma became more distracted as Mouhoube Somian was forced off due to an injury in the fourth minute and was replaced by Talal Al Fadel.

Erbil was well organized and coherent in its transferring and passing, especially in the midfield line. Striker Amjed Radhi had the first real opportunity of the match in the eighth minute as he stayed alone with Kazma's goalkeeper Shehab Kankone, but his kick went over the bar.

The host continued its control as the first half progressed. Syrian Abdul-

razaq Hussein and Iraqi Luay Salah played key roles in heating up the match and putting pressure on Kazma, forcing Kazma to stay on the defense side and to rely frequently on counterattacks.

In the last 10 minutes of the first half, Kazma came out of its area slightly, aiming to launch some attacks on Erbil. In the 37th minute, Kazma's right wing, Noser Farag, created the first real chance as he crossed an over to Ismail Sulaiman whose header was barely saved by Erbil's goalkeeper Sarhang Mohsin. The first half ended with a no-score draw.

In the second half, Kazma played a different game,

almost seeming like another team. Omani striker Sulaiman twice went close for Kazma in the opening minutes of the second half. Hamad Al Harby broke the deadlock for the visiting team in the 72nd minute; he fired a shot after he found Mohsin out of position. Mohsin tried to get back in the goal, but was too late to make a save.

Six minutes later, second-half substitute Efe Obode netted for the home side after Syrian midfielder Nadim Sabagh had capitalized on the poor defense from Kazma defender Mohamed Barakat.

After scoring the equalizer, Erbil placed more pressure on Kazma. It

was close to gaining three points for a win, with 10 minutes remaining, when striker Amjad Radhi's shot was saved by Kazma goalkeeper Kankone. Radhi showed up again in the 87th minute and scored an offside goal, which was disregarded.

During extra time, striker Hussein managed to maneuver between two Kazma defenders but was hit by the third one inside the penalty box. The referee counted Hussein's fall as misconduct and yellow carded him. The situation angered the Erbil fans. The end result was a 1-1 draw in the AFC Cup Group B opener. "Both teams played a good match. It was a bal-

anced match as sometimes Erbil was better and sometimes Kazma," said Erbil coach Nizar Mahrous.

Mahrous criticized the referee for not counting a penalty kick for his team during the injury time. "I am satisfied with my players' performance, but not at all pleased with the result. The referee ran the match fairly till the last minute of the match, but in the added time he didn't count a penalty kick for us," he noted.

Mahrous hopes he can fix the mistakes his team made in the match and have better results in upcoming matches.

Kazma coach Milan Macala said, "We did well

and managed to get a good point and I personally think that this is a satisfying result for the two teams, especially because we didn't know much about Erbil."

"We missed good chances to score, especially in the first half, while Erbil also played well and I believe that the draw was good for the two sides. We lost two points but we can compensate because we are just at the beginning of the competition," Macala said.

**Zakaria Muhammed**  
Erbil

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## Kurdistan Football Cup draw released

This year's cup to have 50 teams

**The Kurdistan Football Federation announced the schedule for this season's Kurdistan Cup competition in a ceremony held on March 3 in Erbil.**

An inter-league competition, the Kurdistan Cup pits professional teams in the Premier League against teams in the lower leagues like League 1 and League 2.

The competition is played in two stages and 50 teams participate. In the first stage, 18 teams from League 1 and 18 teams from League 2 play each other and 18 of those go onto the second stage. After the first stage, another draw is made for the winners of the first stage and 14 teams from the Premier League.

This competition is considered more challenging for bigger teams to win as the rounds are based on a single game instead of a two-game cup tie with a return leg. Games are thus played until there is

a winner (no draws). In the competition, smaller teams can benefit from shocking, surprise wins.

The meetings for the first stage are: Soran vs. Shaqlawa, Aso vs. Sarchinar, Alla vs. Khabat, Bardarash vs. New Sirwan, Dukan vs. Gara, Khak vs. Sharazur Sharazur, Brayati vs. Kifri, Altun Kopri vs. Halabja, Khanaqin vs. Zarayan, Laylan vs. Semel, Darbandikhan vs. Dubiz, Kaywan vs. Chamchamal, Duhok vs. Choman, Pishasazi vs. Solav, Kya vs. Akre, Makhmur vs. Hajyawa, Ashti vs. Ta'akhi and Peshkawtin vs. Dooz.

"The Kurdistan Cup is as important as other competitions because many good teams compete in it. We intend to increase football activities and make positive changes in the form of organizing the competitions through receiving opinions and ideas from all the clubs," said Safeen Kanaby, KFF president.

Kanaby believes the Kurdistan Cup will give teams that have not done well in the Leagues another chance to improve their performances and strengthen their lineups.

"The number of clubs participating in the Cup

and the excitement of footballers and coaches tells me that the future of football is bright in Kurdistan," noted Kanaby.

According to Kanaby, any player, whether from a big team or a small one, who performs well and proves they are the best, will have better opportunity to join the national team. Kurdistan plans to host VIVA World Cup in May.

VIVA World Cup is an international football tournament organized by the New Federation Board, an umbrella association for nations unaffiliated with

FIFA. The Cup is played every two years. Kurdistan Region has been chosen to host the events this year.

So far, no firm date has been set for the start of the Kurdistan Cup, Dilshad Salih, a KFF member, said the Cup will start this month and the teams who are drawn first will play the matches at their home stadiums. The first Kurdistan Cup was held last year, in which the Zakho FC beat Sulaimaniya's Peshmarga FC in the final to win the Cup.



# Memories



By Sazan M. Mandalawi

We began this class trip to London almost an hour and a half ago, something we have all been looking forward to for a while. Coming from Kurdistan, and typical of me, I think I looked forward to the journey more than the destination itself.

However, little did I know the bus was going to be as quiet as it is. Not a single sound. Everyone, including the professor, is either reading or listening to music on their headphones. Others are social networking on their little gadgets.

I look outside and wonder where all the halparke (dancing) is. Where are the never-ending jokes? Where is the smell of the large pots of dolma and bryani? I try to imagine Rahma's Kirkuki Yapragh and Aryan's extra-large

## UKHian and proud

lunch box filled with her famous homemade tabbouleh.

I remember back in university days, only the dull — and boring — people would sit at the front of the bus. The fun, vibrant and the loud always took the long row of seats at the back, not that they were ever sitting there. As I write this, I remember exactly who those students were who took the back seats. Trust me; even if you sat next to the driver at the front you would hear them.

For a single second, I stand up and look to the back of the bus I am in. The back third of the bus

is empty. Unlike our little bus at the University of Kurdistan-Hawler, this one is fancy, with curtains, seatbelts and even a toilet and a sink. However, the UKH one had a sticker at the back that read: Follow me to success.

As I get a glimpse of the bathroom, I cannot help but laugh as I remember some of the UKH picnics. On the first ever trip, I recall a few of the guys would frankly admit to the bus driver they need to visit "mali pash" soon I realized what that meant. Meanwhile, I can picture Nawa in my head, she was always in the most colorful Jli Kurdi; her wide smile would accompany the tapla (which was similar to the Djembe drum) in her hand.

If I told anyone, they might not believe me, but in Kurdistan I went to the best university anyone would wish to attend. I always dreamed of Harvard and Oxford; today, I feel like I'm a graduate of the Harvard or Oxford of Kurdistan.

Still, in these thoughts, I reach to my phone and write a few quick emails; the girls in Kurdistan are even quicker in their replies. A few days ago, they were busy with the student union elections, had the major Raparin celebration, and were preparing for International Women's Day.

They won't rest; as soon as that is over they will begin organizing the commemoration of Halabja and then their annual Newroz picnic.

My memories of UKH do not just stop at picnics and celebrations, but also exams, deadlines and times of frustration and anger. The collection of signatures to replace the cafeteria management, the complaining about class times, and the moments of tears (in fact, crying) when results were not pleasing.

We resented some of the professors, at times, for being tough, but now studying in the UK, in a proper Western education system, I do not feel disadvantaged among other students, while many of my Kurdish colleagues here do feel great disadvantages when trying to adapt to an entirely different system. Simple, because I'm a UKHian.

If leaders in Kurdistan give UKH the chance, it can prosper to be a leading university in not only Kurdistan, but in Iraq and beyond. If only local elites realized the strength of UKH graduates and their capabilities, and then gave them postgraduate and job opportunities, then Kurdistan's future would be in safe hands.

If leaders in Kurdistan give UKH the chance, it can prosper to be a leading university

باسیاسیل

کوردستانێکە بە ئێزێکی

سوپەر

پاکیجهکالی

سوپەر

بۆ پەڕگەمەین چار لە عێراقدا و لە ئاسیاسیلموود پاکیجهکالی «سوپەر» کە باشترین ئێزێکی پەڕوودەت دەدات، بۆ هەموو ئێزێکەکانی ناوێکی بە داکتێرێکی زیاتر لە ۵۰٪ لە چەرگەمی پەڕگەمەوود بە بێ هیچ هەرجێگە لە سەرانیسەری عێراقدا.

پاکیج	دەقیقە بۆ ئاسیاسیل و هەموو ئێزێکەکانی ئێز	ئێزێکی بەشداربوون (دەقێکی عێراقی)	ئێزێکی بەشداربوون
سوپەر ۶۰	۶۰	۷,۰۰۰	۷.۷ (مارە ۱) بۆ ۷.۷
سوپەر ۲۵۰	۲۵۰	۲۵,۰۰۰	۷.۷ (مارە ۲) بۆ ۷.۷
سوپەر ۵۰۰	۵۰۰	۴۵,۰۰۰	۷.۷ (مارە ۳) بۆ ۷.۷
ماوەی کارکردن	۴۰ رۆژ		

• ئێزێکی بەشداربوونێکی ئێزێکی و ئێزێکی داکتێرێکی پەڕوودەت هێنێ گەنجێکی و هێنێ تەمەنی و هێنێ زۆرێکی

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