

From the Heart of Kurdistan Region

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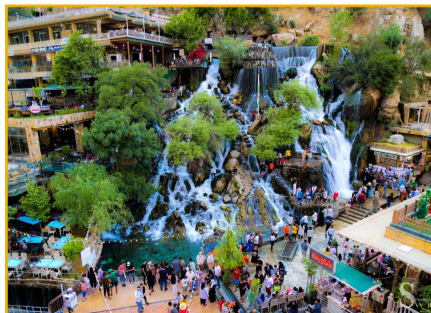
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## Editorial

# Is freedom of expression an issue in the Kurdistan Region?



By | **Dr. Nazaket Hussien**

To discuss freedom of expression in any country, one must consider the media laws enacted and followed within that country. Therefore, among the four main media systems — systems of power, systems of Soviet communism, liberal systems, and systems of social responsibility — which system has the country adopted? Each of these systems has its own specificities and methods.

In the Kurdistan Region, following a long history predating the mass uprising in the spring of 1991, the Baath Party ruled Iraq, implementing an authoritarian media system. Under this system, all media and media production fell under the authority and control of the government and the Baath Party's policies. No entity had the right to establish a media institution apart from those sanctioned by Saddam Hussein and his sons. Strict censorship was enforced before and after the publication of any media production, leaving no room for freedom of expression. Becoming a journalist was exceedingly difficult for Kurds, with only one Kurdish-language TV channel in Kirkuk under the Baath Party's control.

Following the uprising and the liberation of Kurdistan in 1991, the establishment of the first Council of the Kurdistan Regional Government and the Kurdistan Parliament led to the issuance of a press law in the region aimed at providing freedom of expression for citizens — Law No. 35 in 2007. This law grants any citizen or specific entity within the region the right to own a media institution, with the caveat that national security remains the responsibility of all channel or media apparatus owners. Furthermore, it abolishes all censorship on media

products and institutions. To date, no arrests or instances of torture due to freedom of expression or journalistic pursuits have been reported in the Kurdistan Region.

While some minor violations exist, such as occasional hindrances to journalists gathering information some time like other countries, freedom exists for all forms of media, traditional or modern, to criticize or express themselves. The region boasts a significantly larger number of newspapers, magazines, radios, television channels, and websites permitted to operate compared to some major countries.

Upon examining the media system implemented in the Kurdistan region, one finds it aligns closely with the liberal system and theory. Liberal theory allows all citizens the opportunity to own media, abolishing censorship of media products and providing citizens with the right to express themselves through the media.

Some may question whether it is premature to apply the liberal system within Kurdistan's media laws, fearing potential chaos. While it does indeed create chaos, the government, prioritizing freedom of expression, is willing to tolerate it and refuses to retract this freedom from its citizens. Discussions among specialists, media experts, and observers in the region focus on regulating this broad freedom and establishing codes of responsibility and ethics, aiming to maintain this expansive freedom without constriction. Law No. 35 for the press in the Kurdistan Region has provided a vast platform for freedom of expression, enabling all partisan and private media outlets to exercise this freedom.

# Lalsh Cultural Center: 31 Years of Yazidi Heritage



For centuries, the Kurdistan Region has stood as a bastion of harmony, welcoming diverse communities and faiths, including the ancient Yazidi people.

On May 12, the Lalsh cultural and social center commemorates its founding anniversary, emerging as a pivotal institution within the Yazidi community, dedicated to fostering peaceful coexistence among all Kurdish groups.

Saeed Shangali, Director of the Lalsh Cultural and

Social Center, shared with Kurdish Globe the center's core mission: preserving Yazidi religious texts and traditions, addressing misconceptions perpetuated by scholars and writers over time.

Shangali emphasized the center's multifaceted initiatives, from supporting Yazidi students across educational institutions to spearheading cultural and social programs vital for community cohesion.

Responding to inquiries

about the center's reach, Shangali revealed, "The Lalsh Cultural Center boasts twenty-six offices and eight branches spanning Yazidi territories, serving as a cultural nexus."

Furthermore, Shangali affirmed the unwavering backing of the Kurdistan Regional Government for the center's endeavors, ensuring comprehensive support across all domains of Yazidi life.

# Optimism follows the Tehran visit

Enhanced relations anticipated after the visit of the President of Kurdistan Region to Iran

Kurdistan Region President Nechirvan Barzani returned to Erbil last week after completing his two-day official visit to the Islamic Republic of Iran. Throughout his trip, President Nechirvan Barzani engaged in dialogues with Iranian leaders and officials, including the Supreme Leader of the Islamic Revolution Grand Ayatollah Sayyid Ali Khamenei, President Ebrahim Raisi, the Speaker of the Iranian Parliament, the Foreign Minister, the Secretary of the Supreme National Security Council, and the Commander-in-Chief of the Islamic Republic of Iran's Revolutionary Guards.

During these diplomatic discussions, Kurdistan Region President Nechirvan Barzani participated in productive conversations regarding the relations between Iran, Iraq, and the Kurdistan Region, as well as exploring potential areas of collaboration. He reaffirmed the Kurdistan Region's steadfast dedication to strengthening these ties and expressed a sincere willingness to expand cooperation further.

In a press conference held in Tehran, Kurdistan Region President Nechirvan Barzani highlighted the discussions that transpired and underscored the beginning of a new phase in the relationship between the Islamic Republic of Iran and the Kurdistan Region. The Kurdistan Region President said: "Our visit to the Islamic Republic of Iran was positive and we are confident that it will mark the beginning of a new chapter in the relationship between the Kurdistan Region and Iran."

## ANALYSIS

### Mending fences and strengthening ties

The visit of the President of the Kurdistan Region to Iran and his engagements with high-ranking officials of the country can be deemed signifi-



cant and a promising initiation towards reestablishing relations between the two parties in a more favorable trajectory. Despite the disparities in their respective positions and influences within the political dynamics of the wider region and the world, both Iran and the Kurdistan Region hold significance for one another. Beyond their economic and trade interests, their security, peace, and stability are intertwined, and to a certain extent, any disturbance in one party's political landscape can disrupt the stability of the other's.

The primary goals of this journey were to address three key objectives: first, to review and update mutual security agreements; second, to address concerns regarding destabilizing actions towards the Kurdistan Region, and third, to assist in mediating between conflicting political factions in order to reduce tensions in the Region.

In the security realm, the Kurdistan Region, with established ties to Tehran, is focused on preventing attacks against

the Region. Kurdistan Region President Nechirvan Barzani aimed to reassure Iranian authorities of the government's commitment to preventing any hostile actions against the Islamic Republic or other neighbors.

Also, Kurdish officials are looking to engage Iranian intervention in political mediation to facilitate reconciliation among leading political parties in Kurdistan Region, as well as the Iraqi central government. The primary aim is to restore a stable security relationship, which seems possible due to the generally positive relationship.

### Barzani's trip deepens Iran-Iraq relations

Both Tehran and Erbil have highlighted the positive impact of the visit on strengthening ties between the two countries, especially in light of regional events. They also underscored the importance of social, cultural, border, and trade relations between the two sides, noting the existing coopera-

tion between Iran and Iraq at both macro and micro levels, as well as the ongoing efforts to address security concerns in the Kurdistan Region through collaboration between the two sides.

Historically, Kurdistan Region has heavily relied on neighboring countries for its essential requirements, with a significant portion of food, raw materials, construction materials, and other crucial necessities being sourced from its neighbors. By addressing and resolving the technical and transit challenges, trade between Iran and the Kurdistan Region can be significantly facilitated and made more cost-effective compared to other longer routes.

There is a relationship between both parties in the field of science and study. The potential for scientific collaboration between Iran and the region is further enhanced by the shared cultural background and the proficiency of many Iraqi Kurds in the Persian language.

Treatment and healthcare

services are crucial aspects to consider also. Moreover, the potential for businessmen from Kurdistan Region to invest in Iran presents a promising opportunity that could benefit both parties involved, fostering economic growth and enhancing bilateral relations through joint production projects in border markets. Such collaborations have the potential to improve economic conditions in the Kurdistan Region and elevate the level of mutual cooperation between Iran and the rest of Iraq.

Consequently, engaging in partnerships with entities like the Kurdistan Region naturally aids in addressing regional challenges and enhancing the Iran-Iraq relations. Iraq possesses resources that the Islamic Republic can utilize, and Iran also has resources that can benefit Iraq. Iran and Iraq serve as strategic assets for each other and when the strategists from both sides are in sync, these relations deepen.

# International symposium in Erbil discusses climate change on Iraq and Kurdistan Region

With the Iraqi President Latif Rashid and Kurdistan Region President Nechirvan Barzani in attendance, the two-day event, titled "Drought and the Impact of Climate Change on Iraq's Political, Economic, and Demographic Landscape," aimed to examine the repercussions of climate change on various aspects of life in the region. Organized by Vision Education, the French Research Center on Iraq, and the Bahr Alolom Forum, the symposium underscored the urgent need to address climate-related issues.

During the symposium, Iraqi President Latif Rashid commended the organizers for their timely initiative amidst the country's significant climate challenges. He emphasized the detrimental effects of population growth and unsustainable practices on food security and environmental stability, including droughts and reduced rainfall.

Echoing President Rashid's concerns, Kurdistan Region President Nechirvan Barzani highlighted the severe impact of climate change on both Iraq and the Kurdistan Region. Referring to a recent UN report ranking Iraq fifth among countries affected by climate change, President Barzani urged governments to prioritize



climate action to safeguard the region's future.

Dr. Adil Bakhawan, Head of the French Research Center on Iraq, issued a stark warning about the existential threat posed by climate change to Iraq and Kurdistan. Citing research findings, Dr. Bakhawan stressed the urgent need for substantial financial investment, estimating

that \$223 billion would be required to mitigate climate-related challenges in Iraq over the coming years.

Abdul Rahman Sidiq, Chairman of the Environmental Protection and Improvement Board, lamented the politicization of climate issues, emphasizing the need for unified action to address environmental challenges effectively.

Dr. Jassim Al-Falahi, Iraq's Deputy Minister of Environment, emphasized the reality of climate change and its profound impact on the region. He highlighted the government's commitment to environmental conservation, including a substantial budget allocation of \$10.8 billion to support various

environmental initiatives. Dr. Ayoub Gomashini, Deputy Dean of Agricultural Engineering Sciences, emphasized the importance of collaboration between universities and governmental departments to develop sustainable policies for managing water resources and combating drought. He called for increased cooperation between

the Kurdistan Regional Government (KRG) and the Iraqi federal government to address water management challenges effectively.

Overall, the symposium underscored the urgent need for coordinated action to mitigate the adverse effects of climate change on Iraq and the Kurdistan Region.

## Leila Qasim: Iraq's First Female Activist Executed

Leila Qasim, a symbol of courage and resistance, met her tragic fate as the first activist woman executed in Iraq. Born in 1952 into a patriotic Kurdish family in Khan-aqin City's Bamili village, her detention on April 28, 1974, alongside her allies Jawad Hamwandi, Nariman Fuad Ma'sti, Hassan Hama Rashid, and Azad Sulaiman Miran, marked a dark chapter in Iraq's history. The Ba'ath regime's widespread crackdown on Kurdish people, intellectuals, students, and youth led to their swift execution on May 12, 1974.

Despite facing imminent death, Leila Qasim's spirit

remained unyielding. She expressed her desire to be adorned in Kurdish attire and requested her mother to chop off her yellow hair to be used in crafting the Kurdistan flag. However, her aspirations for a liberated Kurdistan were cut short, and she, alongside Jawad Hamwandi, was laid to rest in Najaf, denied the dignity of return to their families.

Leila Qasim's legacy of bravery and unwavering commitment to her ideals continues to inspire generations, reminding us of the sacrifices made in the pursuit of freedom and justice.



## Kurdistan Region and political solution



By Dr. Salar Othman \*

Kurdistan embodies a land of life and peace, steadfast in its commitment to peaceful coexistence since its inception. Opting for war only in self-defense, it has consistently prioritized peace over conflict, displaying remarkable bravery in protecting itself from aggression. The Kurdish people's courage is infused with a spirit of peace, evident to all who observe. While the Kurdistan Region grapples with challenges, it is clear that many have been imposed upon it. Despite this, Kurdistan stands as a beacon of progress, setting an example for others to follow. Rooted in a unique understanding of life and socio-political concepts, Kurdistan aspires to surpass existing standards.

The Region's institutions actively seek solutions to its challenges, refusing to yield to adversaries and addressing issues at their core. The Kurdish people yearn for a future marked by prosperity and brightness, a vision championed by leaders like Barzani.

To grasp this reality fully, one must delve into history, which narrates the Kurdish struggle for peace and the courageous defense led by figures like Barzani. This vision, shared by President Barzani and Kurdistan's official institutions, promises solutions to the issues facing the Kurdish people, ultimately paving the way for resolution.

With optimism and hope, efforts to address these challenges persist. It is imperative that others share the same spirit and vision, fostering prosperity for the Kurdish people, Iraq, and beyond.

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# Kurdish genocide unpunished: 35 years after Anfal, calls grow for accountability and KRG action

Marching into its 35th year, the harrowing memories of the Anfal campaign's fourth phase continue to cast a long shadow over the Kurdish people. This brutal operation, orchestrated by the Ba'ath regime of Saddam Hussein, stands as a stark reminder of the lengths to which a government can go to suppress the Kurdish component in Iraq.

The campaign's brutality unfolded in stages, with chemical weapons unleashing the first wave of terror. Villages like Askar, Goptapa, and Chami Razan became testing grounds for the regime's horrifying arsenal. An estimated 200 civilians and Peshmerga fighters perished in the initial attacks, with the death toll tragically rising to 500 as the chemical agents took their full effect.

Ramak Ramadhan, the Mayor of Chamchamal, echoes the yearning for closure felt by many. "I demand that the President and First Lady of Iraq put forth the same amount of effort as they have in the past to recover the bodies of our loved ones and return them to their homeland," he implores.

The Ba'ath regime's calculated timing ensured maximum devastation. They deliberately manipulated the flow of water from the Dukan Dam, hindering the Peshmerga's ability to maneuver and defend these villages – known havens for Kurdish fighters seeking refuge and support. The chemical assault on Goptapa and Askar resulted in the deaths of hundreds of civilians, leaving a trail of unimaginable suffering.

Following the chemical attacks, a brutal ground offensive commenced on May 3rd, 1988, lasting for six grueling days. The Peshmerga forces faced a relentless onslaught, with many succumbing in the defense of their homeland.

The Ba'ath regime's barbarity wasn't limited to the battlefield. A staggering 28,550 individuals – women, children, elderly, and youth alike – were rounded up and mercilessly transported to the notorious Topzawa military facility in Kirkuk. Their fate remained uncertain. Some were herded towards the "Human Killing Unit," a



chilling euphemism for laboratories where the regime experimented with its chemical and biological weapons. Others were condemned to a slow and agonizing death in the scorching southern deserts of Iraq, buried alive in mass graves.

The brutality extended even to those captured alive. Horrific accounts detail Peshmerga fighters and civilians being thrown from helicopters, their lives extinguished as they plummeted to the earth. Nugra Salman alone witnessed the deaths of roughly 100 people in this manner, while Jala Moord area saw a staggering 485 of its inhabitants "Anfalized" – a term used to describe the systematic disappearance and execution of Kurdish people.

The geographic scope of the Anfal campaign was extensive. Administrative units like Kirkuk, Shwan, Aghjalar, and countless others bore the brunt of the regime's wrath. Over 150 villages were utterly demolished, their inhabitants subjected to mass capture and execution. Homes were ransacked, livestock stolen, and farms set ablaze.

The Ba'ath regime employed a range of weaponry in its reign of terror, from chemical agents to long-range missiles, mortars, and engineering units deployed to inflict maximum damage on civilian infrastructure. Disturbingly, evidence points to the direct involvement of high-ranking officials within the Ba'ath regime. Lieutenant Colonel Sultan Hashim commanded the operation, with Defense Minister Lt. Gen. Adnan Khairullah overseeing the raid. The

infamous "Chemical Ali," Ali Hassan Al-Majeed, played a key role as the head of the Ba'ath Party's political bureau in the north (referring to the Kurdistan Region), while Nizar Khazraj, documented to be present at the scene, even took a celebratory photograph atop a Peshmerga house in Askar village after its capture. Furthermore, Hussein Rashid Tikriti, Sabir al-Duri, and Farhan Mutlaq al-Jabbari are all cited as having had direct involvement in the campaign.

The quest for justice continues. The High Criminal Court, established to try perpetrators of crimes against the Iraqi people under Saddam Hussein's rule, remains largely powerless. In 2007, the Iraqi Supreme Criminal Court declared Anfal to be a genocide, acknowledging the right of the victims' families to receive compensation from the Iraqi government. However, to this day, no such compensation has been delivered.

The Iraqi Parliament recognized the Anfal Campaign as genocide in 2008, declaring April 14th a National Day of Remembrance for this horrific event. Further action was taken in 2017, with a parliamentary decision to pursue international recognition of the Anfal crimes as genocide. The Kurdistan Regional Government (KRG) has also actively sought international recognition of the Anfal genocide, with countries like Norway, Sweden, Britain, and South Korea formally acknowledging it.

Despite these steps, a dark cloud hangs over the issue of accountability. Those

responsible for the Anfal atrocities remain at large. This lack of justice continues to fuel the anger and frustration of the victims' families.

Ramak Ramadhan, the Mayor of Chamchamal, further emphasizes the demands of the Kurdish people. "I also demand that the relatives of the victims of the Anfal campaign receive compensation, that a formal apology be extended to them, and that university seats be granted to their sons and daughters," he states. He also calls for healthcare coverage for the families affected by Anfal and urges the International Criminal Court to acknowledge the genocide.

Locally, the focus remains on ensuring justice for the victims and their families. Apprehension and trial of the perpetrators is a top priority, along with the excavation of mass graves and the dignified return of remains to their rightful place. Families also demand a proactive stance from the KRG in prosecuting those responsible for the Anfal campaign and other chemical attacks, aiming to prevent such tragedies from ever happening again.

The Anfal genocide serves as a stark reminder of the consequences of unchecked tyranny and the importance of holding perpetrators accountable for their crimes. As the Kurdish people continue their fight for justice, the international community has a responsibility to ensure such atrocities are never repeated.

The Kurdish Globe

# Kurdistan: Revealing The Pinnacle of Human History

Researchers from the Universities of Cambridge and Liverpool have reconstructed the face of a 40-year-old Neanderthal lady from Shanadar Cave in Kurdistan, whose life expectancy is thought to have been around 75,000 years ago.

Scientists believe the woman was forty years old based on the skull, which was found buried beneath a sizable cave. The team's 200-piece bone collection allowed them to rebuild the cranium. This task took nine months or so. The sex of the bone could not be ascertained, but by meticulous inspection and technical application, the New team using proteins in dental enamel was able to ascertain it.

The Neanderthal woman's height was estimated to be 1.5 meters by comparing the length and diameter of her arm bones to those of contemporary civilized humans. Her features included a wide face, eyes, and thick eyebrows.

For approximately 300,000 years, Neanderthals inhabited Europe, the Middle East, and Central Asia. Neanderthals and New Humans interacted and coexisted for around 35,000 years after Homo sapiens arrived in Europe from Africa approximately 70,000 years ago. At that point, Neanderthals were extinct.

The earliest evidence of Neanderthal remains was found in Belgium in 1830. Prior to the discovery of nine Neanderthal men, women, and children's skeletons in Shanadar in 1951, scientists believed that Neanderthals were primitive humans leading primitive lives. They were sophisticated, devout, and socially conservative.

Politically, the finding of the Neanderthal human form is significant because it will restore Kurdistan's and the Kurds' reputation as a cultured people on a global scale.

Economically speaking, it will draw historians, international organizations, and travelers to the Kurdistan Region, which will boost the industry's resurgence in the travel and tourism sector.

Regarding nationality, it is crucial because Kurdistan is currently in the spotlight and because Shanadar is the most sought name on Google these days.

When it comes to the significance of archaeology in the Kurdistan Region and the discovery of Neanderthal bones there, Dr. Zedan Bradošti, President of Qala Organization for Archaeological and Cultural Affairs and Professor of Archeology at Salahaddin University, responded to several inquiries from the Kurdish Globe newspaper.

**Kurdish Globe:** When was this skeleton unearthed in Kurdistan?

**Dr. Zedan Bradošti:** Although this skeleton was found in 2018, research into its history, shape, and age has been conducted at the University of Cambridge since the discovery of Neanderthal bones and the work done in the cave. They discovered that this was the

head of a 75,000-year-old woman who was between 40 and 45 years old.

**Kurdish Globe:** What is the region of Kurdistan's archaeological status?

**Dr. Zedan Bradošti:** The most significant point in this case is that in the middle of the previous century. Professionals in the fields of history and archaeology are aware of Kurdistan's place in the global archaeology scene. At the time, it was an accomplishment that was felt all around the world. Today, some American museums include a section devoted to Shanadar. Shanadar Cave is the center of attention for all archeology and ancient history departments worldwide.

**Kurdish Globe:** What made the research on this skeleton conducted outside of Kurdistan?

**Dr. Zedan Bradošti:** Due to the lack of a suitable laboratory in Kurdistan, this research had to be done in Cambridge. Thank goodness, the team lead showed up in 2013. They came to me first, asking for assistance, and they intend to remain and continue where scientist Ralph Slokey worked. He asserted that the crew was aware of the location's significance because they had been to Ralph Slokey's home and had done extensive research on it. Up until the contract was signed with them, we assisted the directors of Soran Archeology and the General Director of Archeology.

**Kurdish Globe:** How qualified are the archaeologists in Kurdistan?

**Dr. Zedan Bradošti:** Though we are only getting started, we already have employees in Kurdistan. If the staff members have degrees in archaeology from Iraqi universities, Baghdad, or other countries, yet we began in 2000 in 2004 Salahaddin University graduates working in archaeological cadres are currently employed by Sulaimani and Duhok universities. We don't need many personnel; we only need accurate and active ones, he remarked, pointing to the fact this department has produced a large number of graduates.

**Kurdish Globe:** In the government's five-year plan, how much emphasis is placed on archeology?

**Dr. Zedan Bradošti:** The sixteenth item on the government's first agenda in the previous five years addressed the value of archaeology. Luckily, the Kurdistan Parliament has received attention from the Kurdistan Regional Government (KRG). It was quite encouraging even though and had nothing to say. The Protection and Management Law, which we filed, was approved by No.107 May in 2021.

**Kurdish Globe:** What can the government do to make the sites more tourist-friendly?

**Dr. Zedan Bradošti:** This statute, which was passed by the parliament, states in four paragraphs throughout four separate sections



Shanidar cave in Iraqi Kurdistan was first excavated in the 1950s. The remains of more than 10 Neanderthals have been found there.

how we can pay attention to all places. Thus, the government ought to focus more on these issues and endeavor to have competent government employees and top-notch laboratories present it to the world's traveler population. Kurdistan will profit financially and economically from more tourism there.

**Kurdish Globe:** What are the perspectives of universities in Europe, America, and Japan on Shanadar Cave?

**Dr. Zedan Bradošti:** Salahaddin University hosted the Old Erbil scientific conference in 2014. 52 foreign academic institutions took part in the conference. The conference program was four days, three days were seminars, research was presented, the fourth day was to visit to Shanadar's cave. In response to their emails, universities from the US, Europe, and Japan expressed their satisfaction with this significant meeting; nonetheless, our primary objective for the fourth day was to explore the well-known cave. What is Shanadar, how did it get here, and what is its current status?

**Kurdish Globe:** Do these international teams continue to operate out of Shanadar Cave?

**Dr. Zedan Bradošti:** The contract for this squad is renewable for an additional three to five years, which is significant in something fresh is found every season. The history of the world is changing with each season.

**Kurdish Globe:** How does Shanadar Cave impacted Kurdistan?

**Dr. Zedan Bradošti:** Kurdistan is greatly impacted by Shanadar Cave. The fact that it is the oldest cave in the Middle East where life has been discovered is what mat-

ters most. The Soran archaeological department has been granted special permission by the archaeological department and me to conduct work and inspections during the for the last ten years, it has produced positive outcomes.

For the first time, the finding of Neanderthal skeletons in Shanadar Cave is a very significant discovery, according to Abdul Wahab Sulaiman Hassan, director of archeology in Soran. It was found in 1951 by Ralph Slokey, an American scientist who worked in the cave until he continued to locate ten Neanderthal skeletons. However, they were allowed to do so until the University of Cambridge provided them permission to operate in the cave. The University of Cambridge and the Kurdistan Regional Government inked a contract in 2013. The fact that this Neanderthal skeleton had never been discovered before was crucial. However, the skeleton was somewhat crushed and was not made of stone," he remarked. For a species of humans that evolved 75,000 years ago, it was a noteworthy accomplishment, as are its bones. The history of a 40-45-year-old woman's Neanderthal skull has been uncovered by the University of Cambridge.

The head of the Soran Archeological Institute stated that an hour and a half-long BBC broadcast about caves in France, Ukraine, and the Kurdistan Region The lives of Neanderthals and the reason behind their extinction remain a mystery in Kurdistan. In a short amount of time, the documentary, which aired on Netflix and the BBC, has almost 9 million viewers. Because Kurdistan was formerly known as northern Iraq, the region of Mesopotamia, its term is referenced directly and

independently in scholarly studies and articles.

However, the head of Salahaddin University's Department of Archeology, Dr. Aziz Zebari, stated to the Kurdish Globe newspaper: "The Shanadar cave and the Neanderthal skeleton found in Kurdistan were extremely significant discoveries." This demonstrates that civilization originated in Kurdistan and spread elsewhere from there. Kurdistan now has a wealth of evidence following the discovery of this statue. When Neanderthal life was discovered in Kurdistan in 1950, excavations there started, and they continued until 2014, when a crew arrived to begin work. They visited the cave and discovered solid proof.

He remarked "The team's current technology indicates that the woman's shape is extremely accurate. She lived in the cave with a family,". He claimed that although they occasionally left the cave in search of food and supplies, they nonetheless made use of it as a home.

He stated: Although there has been other evidence found that dates back 60,000 years, the history of this woman and her family in Kurdistan indicates that they lived in caves. As of this writing, the finding of this woman is the oldest historical proof. Ten members of a single family have so far been discovered. The cave, but little is known about their lifestyle, feminism, rituals, or cultural practices. Research indicates that this woman was between 40 and 45 years old. They were termed Neanderthals because they lived in a German valley where humans were first found.

# Kurdistan and Jordan forge educational partnerships: A step towards sustainable development

The Kurdistan Regional Government (KRG) Prime Minister Masrour Barzani attended the Jordan-Kurdistan Higher Education conference in Erbil on Sunday, May 5, 2024. A high-level delegation from Jordan's Ministry of Higher Education, as well as representatives from other Jordanian and Kurdish institutions, attended the event.

The summit, titled "Depicting the Future through Sustainable Development," convened delegates from Jordanian and Kurdistan universities to showcase collaborative efforts aimed at fostering educational excellence.

In a speech delivered at the Higher Education Summit between the Kurdistan Region and Jordan, Prime Minister Masrour Barzani emphasized the importance of education development and regional collaboration.

Barzani welcomed the Jordanian delegation and highlighted the "long-standing and friendly relationship" between the two regions,



expressing his gratitude for Jordan's "support for the Kurdistan Region at various stages."

Education as a cornerstone for progress

Education was a central theme in Barzani's address. He stated that "promoting and developing our education and academic institutions is one of our priorities." He emphasized the need for universities to keep pace with "the rapid development of this era" and contribute to the Kurdistan

Region's "economic infrastructure."

Overcoming challenges, embracing reform

The Prime Minister acknowledged the region's past struggles. "We have faced many crises in recent years," he said, "but no matter how many problems and crises we have, they will never cool us from paying full attention to the development of our education and universities."

Barzani placed high expectations on univer-

sities, calling them to be not only "a scientific center for teaching and educating our generations," but also "a living institution of enlightenment and an engine of innovation and invention."

Universities as partners in reform

Barzani stressed the crucial role universities can play in the Kurdistan Region's reform agenda. "Our universities must help us find solutions to the problems and crises we face," he said, urging

them to "assist the government to continue its comprehensive reform program through a scientific plan and roadmap."

Stability breeds development

Barzani concluded his speech by reiterating the Kurdistan Region's commitment to regional stability. "We always want peace and stability in the Kurdistan Region, Iraq, the region and the world in general," he declared. He underscored the link between stability and progress, stating, "only in a stable situation can we work on the development of our society in all areas to reach the level of developed countries."

The Higher Education Summit signifies a continued collaboration between the Kurdistan Region and Jordan in developing a robust and future-oriented education system.

According to the Director General of the Ministry of Higher Education and Scientific Research's Research and Development Office, Dr. Zhala Saeed, the meeting's goal is to expose Jordanian and Kurdistan universi-

ties and students to one another so that both sides may benefit from each other's experiences.

During his participation in the Jordanian-Kurdistan higher education meeting, Dr. Zhala Saeed, stated that efforts are being made to internationalize Kurdistan Region universities.

"This meeting offers a valuable opportunity to establish contacts with the universities of Jordan, as they have taken the initiative in this request," she stated. "Jordan's universities excel in medical and professional disciplines, and we may profit from them."

They also want to establish collaborative programs between the KRG and Jordanian institutions in the areas of scientific research and vocational and technical education.

She finally revealed that in the following days, the Jordanian delegation would visit all public and private colleges in the Kurdistan Region to begin executing their plans and sign multiple memorandum of agreements.

## Kurdish Youth Champion Dialogue for Peace at 6th World Forum

Hazhir Jaff, the Kurdish Youth Champion for Peace, stood as a beacon of hope amidst the global dialogue for peace and harmony at the 6th World Forum in Baku. Amidst the myriad of voices advocating for cultural understanding and conflict resolution, Jaff's presence resonated profoundly, representing not only the aspirations of Kurdistan Region but also Iraq and the broader Middle East.

"As a Kurdish youth, I see this forum as an opportunity to amplify the voices of marginalized communities and demonstrate that our perspectives are valued on the global stage," Jaff expressed.

As a panelist, Jaff brought forth invaluable insights, drawing from his firsthand experiences navigating the complexities of conflict-affected regions. His contributions underscored the pivotal role of youth in fostering intercultural understanding and driving sustainable peace initiatives forward. Through his words

and actions, Jaff illuminated the transformative power of inclusivity, demonstrating how dialogue among diverse communities can pave the way for reconciliation and collaboration.

"Inclusive dialogue is not just a means to an end; it's the cornerstone of sustainable peace," Jaff emphasized during the forum discussions.

In his dialogue with The Kurdishglobe, Jaff articulated a message of empowerment and representation, emphasizing the importance of amplifying the voices of marginalized communities. His participation in the forum served as a testament to the resilience and determination of Kurdish youth, inspiring them to actively engage in shaping their futures and contributing to peacebuilding efforts.

"My participation in this forum demonstrates that Kurdish youth are not passive observers but active contributors to global dialogue," Jaff remarked in his interview with The Kurdishglobe.



Jaff's journey to the forum encapsulated more than just geographical representation; it embodied the collective aspirations and struggles of his community. As the sole representative from Iraq and Kurdistan Region, he carried the weight of his people's hopes and dreams, striving to articulate their concerns on the global stage.

"Being here today is not just about representing myself; it's about being a voice for those who cannot be here," Jaff stated, reflecting on his role in the forum.

Reflecting on his experience, Jaff highlighted the significance of inclusive dialogue in fostering understanding and empathy. In regions marred by conflict like Kurdistan, such

dialogue serves as a catalyst for positive change, breaking down barriers and fostering a culture of mutual respect and cooperation.

"Inclusive dialogue is the bridge that can connect even the most divided communities," Jaff remarked, underscoring the importance of dialogue in conflict resolution.

In essence, Hazhir Jaff's

participation at the 6th World Forum in Baku epitomized the spirit of youth leadership and activism in the pursuit of peace. His journey serves as an inspiration to all, reminding us of the profound impact that individuals can have in shaping a more inclusive and harmonious world.

## The demographic shift and development prospects in Kurdistan Region



By *Jawad Qadir*

Various parts of the globe encounter diverse challenges when it comes to managing population expansion and implementing strategies to address the demographic shift.

Given the prevailing trend of relatively high fertility rates and population growth, it is reasonable to expect that the Kurdistan Region will experience a similar path of development as regions characterized by high population growth, as indicated by the Demographic Survey of KRI in 2018. If concerted efforts are made to decrease fertility rates and allocate resources towards education, training, and economic advancement, the Kurdistan Region has the potential to emulate the successful economic model observed in East Asia. Conversely, failure to meet these conditions may result in restricted economic growth akin to the Latin American model.

Based on the 2023 population estimates and projections, the Kurdistan Region is currently situated in phase 2 of the demographic transition, where mortality rates are decreasing but birth rates remain high. However, it is anticipated that the region will soon progress to phase 3, characterized by low mortality rates and a decline in birth rates. This transition is primarily defined by the relatively high total fertility rate of 3.4 and the current age distribution of the population.

In 2023, the age distribution reveals a significant proportion of individuals in the 0-14 age group, accounting for 39.45% of the population. This indicates a high dependency ratio, as there is a larger number of dependents compared to the working-age group. Conversely, the working-age group (15-64 years) has experienced limited growth, comprising 57.57% of the population.

Population projections suggest that Iraq, including the Kurdistan Region, will continue to face a substantial proportion of dependents (36.3%) in the forthcoming years. This correlation implies that the Kurdistan Region is likely to confront persistent demographic challenges in the future (KRG Statistical Board 2023).

Despite the elevated fertility rate, there is a noticeable absence of effective family planning initiatives in Kurdistan Region. While some programs do exist, they do not offer widespread access or efficient distribution of contraceptive methods. Consequently, there is a considerable unmet demand for contraception among Kurdish women, resulting in increased levels of unwanted fertility.

The government persists in operating with the systems and regulations that were established in the 1980s to encourage fertility during the Iraq-Iran war. These measures include extended maternity leave and incentives for childbearing. Economically, Iraq heavily depends on oil, leading to an unemployment rate ranging from 30% to 60%. Moreover, a significant portion of the workforce, over 66%, is engaged in service sectors rather than production sectors. In the Kurdistan Region, agriculture and tourism have the potential to make substantial contributions to economic growth. Notably, there has been significant growth in foreign and domestic investments across various sectors, particularly in the oil industry. Education is provided free of charge in Iraq, with additional support and incentives in Kurdistan to promote education at all levels.

Nevertheless, the country grapples with substantial obstacles in addressing the needs of the expanding student body within educational establishments. Additionally, a significant portion of graduates tends to seek employment in the public sector, leading to a reliance on these sectors rather than promoting efficiency.

The Kurdistan Region's emphasis on improving the well-being and education of children and young people, particularly in light of the current surge in births and demographic shift, is crucial for cultivating a skilled workforce and a high-caliber populace. This deliberate investment will be instrumental in propelling economic growth during the demographic window period, especially given the early indications of economic advancement in the Region.

## Barzani Charity Foundation: A Beacon of Hope in Kurdistan

Since the liberation of Iraq in 2003, Kurdistan has witnessed the emergence of a vibrant volunteer and charitable work scene. Rooted in the Kurdish culture of cooperation and support, various individuals and organizations have dedicated themselves to aiding those in need, particularly during times of hardship.

One such organization, the late Barzani Charity Foundation, stands out for its unwavering commitment to serving the people of Kurdistan. Founded in the aftermath of Iraq's liberation, the foundation has become a symbol of compassion and assistance, providing vital support to countless individuals and families across the region.

In a recent interview with The Kurdish Globe, Musa Ahmad, the head of the Barzani Charity Foundation, shed light on the organization's mission, achievements, and future endeavors. Here are some highlights from the conversation:

**Kurdish Globe:** Following the liberation of Iraq in 2003, an organizational volunteer and charitable work scene developed in Kurdistan. Could you tell us about the historical background of the Barzani Charity Foundation and its mission?

**Musa Ahmad:** Certainly. The Barzani Charity Foundation was established with the aim of consistently aiding all segments of society, particularly the underprivileged and destitute. Our activities encompass various areas such as health, education, shelter, and camp management, all designed to improve the lives of those in need and promote peace and harmony in the community.

**Kurdish Globe:** How has the Barzani Charity Foundation responded to natural disasters, and what role has it played in recent Kurdish catastrophes?

**Musa Ahmad:** The foundation has always been at the forefront of humanitarian efforts in response to natural disasters, providing swift and efficient assistance to victims. In recent years, we have responded to various catastrophes both within Kurdistan and in neighboring countries, offering humanitarian aid and support to those affected.

**Kurdish Globe:** What are the most recent activity statistics of the Barzani Charity Foundation, and how has it supported the underprivileged and destitute?

**Musa Ahmad:** In the first four months of 2024 alone, we have undertaken 71 projects, serving 1,192,723 indi-



viduals and 217,863 families. Our services range from non-food items and health services to education and financial support, all aimed at improving the lives of those in need across various sectors.

**Kurdish Globe:** What projects does the Barzani Charity Foundation have scheduled for this year, aside from responding to natural disasters?

**Musa Ahmad:** Our upcoming projects include initiatives such as the construction of drug rehabilitation facilities, the remodeling of public schools, and the expansion of centers for children with autism and disabilities. These projects reflect our ongoing commitment to addressing key issues and improving the well-being of the community.

**Kurdish Globe:** What obstacles does the Barzani Charity Foundation face in executing philanthropic projects?

**Musa Ahmad:** We encounter various challenges, including a decrease in international aid and economic difficulties. Additionally, the absence of infrastructure by the Iraqi government hampers our efforts to support refugees and internally displaced people, requiring us to focus on providing essential services in the absence of adequate support.

**Kurdish Globe:** How does the Barzani Charity Foundation collaborate with other charities and human rights organizations, and how beneficial are these partnerships?

**Musa Ahmad:** We work tirelessly to strengthen our ties with charitable and human

rights organizations, both domestically and abroad. These partnerships are invaluable in supporting our humanitarian endeavors and maximizing our impact, allowing us to train hundreds of cadres and gain valuable human experience in serving the community.

**Kurdish Globe:** How does the Barzani Charity Foundation view the decision made by the Iraqi government to close refugee camps in the Kurdistan Region, and what support does it continue to offer to Iraq's internally displaced people?

**Musa Ahmad:** We view it as our responsibility to continue managing the camps and serving the refugees, ensuring that they receive dignified treatment and essential services. While we support voluntary returns, we emphasize the need for adequate security and legal arrangements to facilitate the process.

**Kurdish Globe:** To what extent is the Barzani Charity Foundation's activity supported by the Kurdistan Regional Government?

**Musa Ahmad:** The Kurdistan Regional Government plays a significant role in supporting our activities, providing shelter and assistance to almost two million refugees. Through collaboration with humanitarian organizations, we are able to efficiently deliver humanitarian aid to refugees and the underprivileged, ensuring that all segments of society receive the support they need.



# Kurdistan tourism booms with millions visiting and billions invested

Tourist arrivals in the Kurdistan Region of Iraq have skyrocketed in recent years, driven by a surge in investment and the region's natural beauty and cultural heritage. Buoyed by success, the Kurdistan Regional Government (KRG) is setting its sights on attracting even more visitors, aiming to make tourism a major pillar of the economy.

Investment paves the way for growth

The KRG has prioritized tourism development, pouring a staggering \$4.5 billion into the sector over the past four years. This investment has yielded significant results. The number of hotels has mushroomed, with over 470 now operating across Kurdistan, including 40-branded and five-star establishments. Ibrahim Abdulmajid, spokesman of the KRG Tourism Board, highlighted this progress, stating, "In terms of infrastructure, the investment in the tourism sector in the past four years was \$4.5 billion, which means that the investment in tourism is ahead of all other sectors, by 42 percent." This expanded infrastructure is crucial for accommodating the growing influx of visitors.

## Record numbers flock to Kurdistan

The region's tourism industry is flourishing. In 2023, Kurdistan welcomed over seven million tourists, a figure that has more than doubled in the past five years. This year is shaping up to be even stronger, with 1.7 million visitors arriving in the first four months alone.

Amal Jalal, an official in the KRG Tourism Board, attributed this growth to the development roadmap implemented in recent years. "Now the level of tourism has improved compared to previous years and our revenue has increased significantly," she said.

Data from the KRG shows a dramatic increase in tourist arrivals, with numbers jumping from over 300,000 in 2007 to over seven million in 2023. This significant rise represents a major achievement for the KRG and a substantial boost to



the local economy, particularly for those who rely on tourism for their livelihoods. While the Kurdistan Regional Government (KRG) lacks detailed visitor demographics, Abdulmajid estimates that approximately 75% of tourists hail from Iraq's central and southern provinces. The remaining 25% represent international visitors from around the globe.

Tourists are drawn to Kurdistan's stunning scenery, rich history, and the warm hospitality of its people, as evidenced by a tourist from Basra who told the KRG media office, "Kurdistan itself has a unique region and attractive nature, every foreign tourist who comes, will be impressed by the beauty and hospitality of the Kurdish people and the services provided by tourism activities."

Another tourist echoed this sentiment, sharing, "We visit Erbil regularly. We spend good time in tourist attractions such as Bekhal resort and Korek Mount, restaurants and ancient sites; the security men are very helpful to us. We come here most of the holidays."

## Beyond numbers: The tourist experience

Statistics paint a clear picture of growth, but the true essence of Kurdistan's tourism boom lies in the experiences of visitors themselves. Tourists like those from Basra in southern Iraq rave about the beauty of Kurdistan's attractions and the warm

hospitality they receive. Families from Erbil enjoy regular outings to historical sites like Bekhal and Korek, while international visitors appreciate the region's distinct cultural identity.

"We have the advantage of Kurdistan's breathtaking nature to attract even more tourists," remarked Kamran Mohammed, a history expert, to Kurdish media outlets. "We should focus more on promoting national holidays and attracting larger numbers of visitors to the Kurdistan Region."

## Security and stability: the

### foundation for growth

Dler Mohammed, Director General of Tourism Board in Erbil, stated that a critical factor highlighting Kurdistan's tourism success is its reputation for safety and security. Tourists consistently praise the helpfulness of security personnel, allowing them to relax and fully enjoy their visit. This sense of stability is essential for attracting families and international travelers seeking a peaceful vacation destination, he added.

## A long-term vision: KRG prioritizes continued growth

Recognizing the sector's potential, the KRG's ninth cabinet has made tourism development a key agenda item. A long-term plan is in place to further develop the industry and attract 20 million tourists annually. This ambitious goal necessitates ongoing investment

in infrastructure and marketing efforts. This target is fueled by the impressive growth seen in recent years, with tourist arrivals doubling over the past five years. Last year alone, approximately eight million tourists explored the captivating tourist destinations throughout the Kurdistan Region.

## Building infrastructure for the future

The KRG's commitment to tourism extends beyond hotels. Efforts are underway to improve transportation links, with a focus on creating a seamless travel experience for visitors. This includes upgrades to airports, the development of scenic highways, and the expansion of public transportation options within major cities.

Mohammed also added that: "In terms of variety, the number of hotels has increased dramatically over the past few years, with more than 470 hotels and 260 motels currently operating across Kurdistan."

He additionally added that: "In terms of quality, while five-star hotel brands represent only a fraction of the total number of hotels, there's a sense of satisfaction as presently, in the Kurdistan Region alone, there are over 40 branded hotels and five five-star hotels, indicating a rising standard of hospitality services."

## Marketing blitz targets international audience

The KRG is actively promoting Kurdistan on the global stage. A delegation from the KRG Tourism Board recently participated in the prestigious Arab Tourism Market (ATM) exhibition in Dubai. This participation aimed to showcase the region's archaeological treasures and natural wonders to a wide audience of travel professionals and potential visitors. The KRG also attends international tourism fairs and undertakes targeted marketing campaigns to raise awareness of Kurdistan as a unique and compelling travel destination.

Abdulmajid, spokesperson of Kurdistan Tourism Board, highlighted several factors that position Kurdistan as a major tourist destination. One key attraction is the Erbil Citadel, a UNESCO World Heritage Site boasting a remarkable history stretching back six millennia. Sulaymaniyah, Abdulmajid continued, has also been recognized by UNESCO as a City of Literature, joining a prestigious network of culturally significant locations worldwide. Adding to Kurdistan's appeal, Abdulmajid noted the groundbreaking discovery of the Shanidar Z Neanderthal skull. This fascinating find attracts not only tourists but also scientists, solidifying Kurdistan's position as a regional tourism powerhouse.

## Ancient discoveries add to allure

Recent archaeological discoveries, such as the

near-complete human skull unearthed in the Shanidar cave, hold immense potential to further boost tourism. This find, considered the oldest human skull ever discovered, adds to Kurdistan's rich history and underscores the region's role in the development of human civilization.

Tourists with a passion for history and archaeology will find Kurdistan's archaeological sites and museums increasingly fascinating. Dr. Faisal Sadiq, Director General of Tourism of Soran Independent Administration, commented on the significance of the discovery, stating, "The discovery of this near-complete human skull will have an impact on the revival of the tourism sector, because archaeology is one of the most important forms of tourism in the world. Tourists are especially interested in visiting the places where such discoveries are made."

This sentiment was echoed by Ismail Abdullah, director of tourism in Koya, who emphasized the need to adapt tourism offerings to accommodate the growing number of visitors. "Now we see several tourism companies bringing tourists to the Kurdistan Region, so the program and plan of the tourism sector should be at the level that welcomes a large number of tourists," he said.

## Kurdistan:

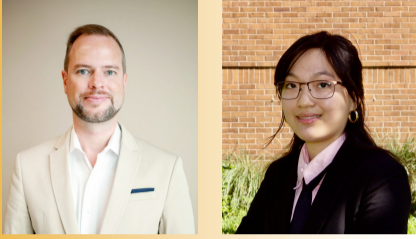
### A destination awaits

Kurdistan offers a captivating blend of natural beauty, rich cultural heritage, and warm hospitality. With its ongoing investment in infrastructure, security, and marketing, the region is poised to become a major tourist destination. Whether you're seeking adventure in the mountains, immersion in historical sites, or simply relaxation in a peaceful environment, Kurdistan has something to offer everyone. As Kurdistan continues to develop its tourism industry, visitors can expect an even more enriching and unforgettable travel experience.

The Kurdish Globe  
By: Salih Waladbagi

# Kurdistan Matters

## Will Artificial Intelligence Generate a Kurdish Utopia or Dystopia?



By *Dr. Tyler Fisher*  
& *Tina Tran*

The region that gave the world the earliest writing systems now has the opportunity to lead once again in developing innovative Artificial Intelligence (AI) applications. The land of the Kurds is also land of the Codes: cuneiform, primordial alphabets, and legal codes. The advent of AI promises comparable groundbreaking advancements in the preservation, communication, and technological elaboration of human intelligence. “There are significant opportunities for Kurdistan to lead regionally in AI research and improvement, especially by fostering collaboration among universities, research institutions, business, and industry,” says Ahmad Khalil, an entrepreneur and expert in Information Technology in Erbil.

The early results of such collaboration are already astounding. In 2020, students of the Electronic and Telecommunication Engineering (ETE) department of The American University of Kurdistan (AUK) developed an Assistive Robot for COVID-19 (ARC-19), equipping an AI robot with a UV light system and spraying system for cleaning floor surfaces. These robots can work semi-autonomously or fully-autonomously and can replace traditional cleaning jobs to avoid virus infections. Just last year, AUK was awarded a \$3.75 million grant, “Support to American-Style Higher Education in Iraq,” from the U.S. Department of State. One of the specific goals of the grant was to establish an Artificial Intelligence Lab for research and development of sustainable and innovative technology in this field.

“AI” is a popular umbrella term to denote training a computer to “think” like a human. In the case of chatbots like ChatGPT and Google’s Bard, the program is taught to hold a conversation. Two common techniques to create or “train” an AI program include reinforcement learning and neural networks. Reinforcement learning resembles positive reinforcement in human and animal psychology. Good or desired behavior is rewarded so that the behavior is reinforced and will happen more frequently. For example, when a dog earns a treat for sitting on command, eventually the dog will sit on command. Similarly in AI, this reward system is used for finding good answers. The closer the answer is to what a user wants, the more the program is “rewarded” to produce



similar results. Neural networks are called such by analogy with the networks of a human brain. The brain’s neurons take electrical and chemical signals and send them to different neurons. A neural network in code extracts a connection from data through individual “neurons” that each take information, transform or learn from it, then send it to another neuron. More complicated neural networks with multiple “layers” or groupings of neurons are known as deep learning neural networks.

Methods of reinforcement learning and neural networks are just scratching the surface of what is possible with AI. Mohammed Salih, a businessman and IT consultant in Soran, says, “Artificial Intelligence is already being used in Kurdistan in various sectors, especially in transportation and security.” One example is the Intelligent Transportation System (ITS) which seeks to reduce traffic accidents by improving traffic flow. ITS is an application of computer vision, a subset of AI referring to the ability to learn based on input from a camera that enables a program to view the natural world. ITS can be deployed to regulate traffic, enable smart parking, provide general transport information assistance, improve shipping, measure highway speed restrictions, and more. To provide these data insights, ITS first learns how to identify and classify vehicles into various classes using a combined neural network and reinforcement learning design. Nama Ezzaalddin Mustafa and Fattah Al-

izadeh released a dataset of road vehicles in Iraqi Kurdistan gathered by an unmanned aerial vehicle just two months ago. This dataset categorizes various images into five classes: bus, truck, taxi, personal car, and motorcycle. The ITS splits the images into digestible chunks for each of its “neurons” and is trained through reinforcement learning via rewards for correctly identifying the vehicle classes. For example, the AI may find that a motorcycle has two wheels, so any image containing a vehicle with two wheels must be a motorcycle. The dataset also considers diverse circumstances, varied sizes of vehicle, weather and lighting conditions, and massive camera movements to produce images that would challenge the AI. Perhaps heavy rainfall left a puddle, making it seem like a motorcycle reflected on the water has four wheels. If this case was not in the dataset, it may lead to a misclassification in the deployed system. By utilizing their dataset, the ITS can achieve improved accuracy in heavy rainfall or other circumstances. Mustafa and Alizadeh’s research can improve transportation safety and logistics for Kurdistan.

“In the next 5 to 10 years, AI is expected to continue advancing rapidly, with further integration into various aspects of daily life, including personalized healthcare, autonomous vehicles, and enhanced automation across industries,” Salih predicts. “There will also likely be continued debates and regulations around AI

ethics, privacy and accountability.”

Just as AI can be used to improve our lives and livelihood, it can also be used for malicious purposes. With the advent of AI, impostors can now mimic loved ones’ voices with just a short audio sample. AI can also generate “Deepfake” videos depicting famous politicians or celebrities doing or saying things that did not actually occur. Online, deepfake videos can manipulate the public, creating a dystopia of unreliable media. Terrorists have used unmanned aerial systems, or drones, in actual and attempted terrorist attacks, disruption, surveillance, and propaganda. In 2016, the so-called Islamic State used drones to kill two Kurdish peshmerga and wound two troops from the French Special Operations, and, earlier this year, several Kurdish fighters were killed in a drone attack on a base in Syria, among many such attacks on U.S. military bases and troops in the region. Drones have long been capable of harnessing AI for simple flight stabilization, but advances in AI technology are rapidly giving rise to fully autonomous aircraft, capable of either ensuring more efficient defense or inflicting more devastating terror.

Kurdistan can be at the forefront of possibilities in creating AI programs and new models. The big question is: Will AI generate a utopia or a dystopia? Users’ choices will determine the answer, in Kurdistan as elsewhere.



# Safeguarding Kurdish Rights

Iraqi Constitution, a testament to the country's commitment to democracy and federalism

By *Saadula Agrawi*

## Leveraging the Iraqi Constitution, Centralizing Power and the Kurdish

Yes, I do believe that the Iraqi Constitution, ratified in 2005, stands as a testament to the country's commitment to democracy, federalism, and the protection of the rights of all the Iraqi people. Among the diverse array of communities within Iraq, the Kurds have a significant presence, particularly the autonomous Kurdistan Region. Understanding the provisions within the Iraqi Constitution that safeguard Kurdish rights is crucial for ensuring inclusivity and stability within the nation.

And of course one of the fundamental principles enshrined in the Iraqi Constitution is the recognition of Kurdistan as a federal entity within the Iraqi state. Article 117 of the Constitution establishes the Kurdistan Regional Government (KRG) as one of Iraq's federal entities, alongside the central government. (This Constitution, upon coming into force, shall recognize the region of Kurdistan, along with its existing authorities, as a federal region.) This recognition affirms the Kurds' distinct identity and their right to self-governance within the framework of a unified Iraq.

Moreover, the Constitution grants the Kurdistan Region a considerable degree of autonomy in various spheres, including legislative, executive, and financial matters. Article 121 delineates the powers of the Kurdistan Regional Government, which include the authority to legislate and implement laws on a wide range of issues, such as education, healthcare, and investment, within its jurisdiction. This autonomy empowers the Kurds to govern themselves according to their unique cultural, linguistic, and historical heritage.

I believe that another critical aspect of Kurdish rights enshrined in the Iraqi Constitution relates to the equitable distribution of national resources, particularly oil and gas. Article 112 of the Constitution stipulates that (The

federal government, with the producing governorates and regional governments, shall undertake the management of oil and gas extracted from present fields, provided that it distributes its revenues in a fair manner in proportion to the population distribution in all parts of the country, specifying an allotment for a specified period for the damaged regions which were unjustly deprived of them by the former regime, and the regions that were damaged afterwards in a way that ensures balanced development in different areas of the country, and this shall be regulated by a law).

The federal government, with the producing regional and governorate governments, shall together formulate the necessary strategic policies to develop the oil and gas wealth in a way that achieves the highest benefit to the Iraqi people using the most advanced techniques of the market principles and encouraging investment. However, Article 115 acknowledges the (All powers not stipulated in the exclusive powers of the federal government belong to the authorities of the regions and governorates that are not organized in a region. With regard to other powers shared between the federal government and the regional government, priority shall be given to the law of the regions and governorates not organized in a region in case of dispute).

The Iraqi Constitution grants the right of the Kurdistan Region, to participate in the management of these resources in a manner that benefits all Iraqis. This provision ensures that the Kurds have a stake in the country's natural wealth and are entitled to a fair share of the revenues generated from oil production in their region. Furthermore, the Constitution contains provisions aimed at addressing historical grievances and resolving disputes between the Kurdistan Region and the central government. Article 140 outlines a process for resolving the status of disputed territories, including areas claimed by both the KRG and the

central government. We can provide a mechanism for addressing land and property disputes, promoting reconciliation, and fostering peaceful coexistence between different ethnic and religious communities.

Yes, in addition to these constitutional provisions, the Iraqi legal framework includes safeguards for the linguistic and cultural rights of the Kurdish population. The Constitution recognizes Kurdish as one of Iraq's official languages, alongside Arabic, and guarantees the right of Iraqis to use their mother tongue in government institutions, educational settings, and the media. This recognition reflects the diversity of Iraq's population and ensures that the Kurds can preserve and promote their language and cultural heritage.

We know that the Iraqi Constitution contains robust provisions aimed at safeguarding Kurdish rights and promoting their inclusion and participation in the country's political, economic, and social life. By upholding the principles of federalism, autonomy, and equitable resource distribution, the Constitution lays the foundation for a pluralistic and democratic Iraq where all communities, including the Kurds, can thrive.

In recent years, the Iraqi Constitution has become a pivotal tool in the struggle for power and influence within the country. One of the most contentious issues it addresses is the relationship between the central government and the semi-autonomous Kurdistan Region. Despite the constitutional guarantees of Kurdish rights and autonomy, there have been instances where the central government has sought to use the document to assert its authority over the Kurds, leading to tensions and disputes.

The Iraqi Constitution, ratified in 2005, was hailed as a landmark achievement that aimed to provide a framework for democracy, federalism, and the protection of minority rights. It recognized Kurdistan as a federal entity with its own regional government, parliament,



and security forces. However, the interpretation and implementation of certain provisions have been subject to debate and contention, particularly when it comes to the distribution of power between Baghdad and Erbil.

One of the key areas of dispute has been control over oil and natural resources. Article 111 of the Iraqi Constitution (grants that the Oil and gas are owned by all the people of Iraq in all the regions and governorates).

This ambiguity in the articles of the Iraqi constitution, has led to disagreements over revenue sharing and the extent of Kurdish autonomy in managing oil production within its territory.

Yes, additionally, Article 140 of the Constitution outlines a process for resolving the status of disputed territories, including areas claimed by both the Kurdistan Regional Government (KRG) and the central government. I was intended to address historical grievances and tensions, particularly in oil-rich regions like Kirkuk. However, the implementation of Article 140 has been delayed, allowing for continued disputes over land and resources.

Furthermore, the centralization of power in Baghdad has been a growing trend in Iraqi politics, with successive governments seeking to consolidate authority at the expense of regional autonomy. Amendments to electoral laws and the structure of government institutions have been perceived by some as attempts to weaken Kurdish influence and promote a more central-

ized state. The return of central rule and the use of the Constitution to curtail Kurdish autonomy raise concerns about the future of Iraq's federal system and the rights of minority communities. While the Constitution provides a legal framework for addressing these issues, its interpretation and implementation remain subject to political maneuvering and power struggles.

I believe that the Iraqi Constitution is a double-edged sword when it comes to the relationship between the central government and the Kurds. While it guarantees Kurdish rights and autonomy, it also provides avenues for the central government to assert its authority and undermine Kurdish aspirations. Moving forward, achieving a balance between federalism and centralization will be essential for fostering stability and inclusivity in Iraq.

For the Contrasting Central and Federal Systems in Iraq, the Iraq's governance structure is defined by a delicate balance between central authority and regional autonomy, with the central government in Baghdad coexisting alongside the autonomous regions like the Kurdistan Region. Understanding the differences between central and federal governance in Iraq is essential for grasping the complexities of the nation's political landscape and the distribution of power.

Regional Autonomy, Federal governance grants regions a degree of autonomy to govern themselves according to their unique cultural, linguistic, and historical backgrounds,

fostering diversity and inclusivity within the nation.

And about the Resource Sharing, Federalism promotes the equitable distribution of national resources, ensuring that regions benefit from their natural wealth while contributing to the overall development of the country.

The Federal governance relies on mechanisms for collaboration and coordination between the central government and regional entities, such as joint committees and agreements, to address shared challenges and promote cooperation.

And of course, while central governance emphasizes unity and uniformity, federal governance prioritizes diversity and decentralization. The tension between these two models often manifests in debates over the distribution of powers, resource allocation, and the extent of regional autonomy. Striking a balance between central authority and regional self-governance is essential for fostering stability, inclusivity, and democratic governance in Iraq.

The differences between central and federal governance in Iraq reflect the country's diverse social fabric and complex political dynamics. While central governance provides a unified framework for decision-making and resource management, federal governance accommodates the aspirations and identities of Iraq's diverse regions. By navigating the nuances of both systems, Iraq can work towards a governance structure that promotes unity, equality, and prosperity for all its citizens.

# Kurds Upholding Democratic Principles in the Iraq, Following decades of authoritarian rule



## Democracy and Federalism, Iraq's Ongoing Journey

By *James Harris*

In the tumultuous landscape of the Middle East, Iraq stands as a complex mosaic of ethnicities, religions, and political factions. Since the fall of Saddam Hussein's regime, Iraq has embarked on a challenging journey towards democracy and federalism, striving to reconcile the aspirations of its diverse population with the imperatives of governance and stability. In this article, we explore Iraq's experience with democracy and federalism, the challenges it faces, and the prospects for a more inclusive and representative political system.

Kurds struggle and the Transition to Democracy Following decades of authoritarian rule under Saddam Hussein, Iraq embarked on a path towards democracy after his ousting in 2003. The country held its first free elections in decades, establishing a system of parliamentary democracy with regular elections, multi-party competition, and a constitution enshrining fundamental rights and freedoms. The Challenges to Democracy Iraq's transition to democracy has been marred by numerous challenges, including political fragmentation, sectarian tensions, and external interference. The country's political landscape is characterized by competing ethno-sectarian factions vying for power, often at the expense of national unity and stability. Moreover, allegations of corruption, electoral fraud, and government inefficiency have eroded public trust in the democratic process. The Federalism and Power Sharing Federalism emerged as a mechanism to accommodate Iraq's diverse ethnic and sectarian communities, granting significant autonomy to regions such as Kurdistan while preserving the country's territorial integrity. The Kurdistan Region, in particular, has enjoyed a degree of self-governance, with its own parliament, security forces, and control over



natural resources. The Challenges of Federalism While federalism offers a framework for power sharing and decentralization, it also presents challenges to national cohesion and governance. Disputes over resource allocation, territorial boundaries, and the division of powers between the central government and regional authorities have fueled tensions and occasionally led to violent conflict. The Prospects for Reform Despite the challenges, Iraq continues to grapple with the task of strengthening its democratic institutions and consolidating federalism. Efforts to promote political inclusivity, foster dialogue between different communities, and address grievances are essential for building trust and stability. Additionally, reforms aimed at enhancing transparency, accountability, and the rule of law are critical for restoring confidence in the democratic process.

The International Engagement The international community plays a crucial role in supporting Iraq's democratic transition and federalist framework. International partners provide technical assistance, capacity-building support, and diplomatic mediation

to facilitate dialogue and reconciliation among Iraqi stakeholders. Moreover, regional cooperation and diplomatic engagement are essential for addressing cross-border challenges and promoting stability in Iraq and the broader Middle East. The Iraq's journey towards democracy and federalism is fraught with challenges, yet it also holds the promise of a more inclusive, representative, and stable political order. As Iraq navigates the complexities of its political landscape, fostering dialogue, reconciliation, and institutional reform will be paramount. Ultimately, the success of Iraq's democratic experiment hinges on the commitment of its leaders and citizens to uphold the principles of democracy, federalism, and national unity.

The Middle East, a region rich in history, culture, and diversity, has witnessed various forms of governance throughout the ages. In recent decades, there has been a growing global call for democratization and the establishment of democratic principles in the Middle East. However, the path to democracy in the region has been complex and fraught with challenges. The principles of

democracy in the Middle East, the obstacles to their realization, and the potential for progress towards democratic governance. The Democratic Values and Principles Democracy, as a political system, is founded on principles such as popular sovereignty, rule of law, protection of human rights, and political pluralism. These principles are essential for ensuring accountability, transparency, and inclusivity in governance, as well as safeguarding the rights and freedoms of citizens.

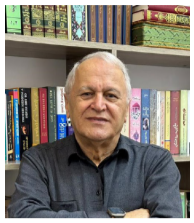
The Challenges to Democracy in the Middle East Despite aspirations for democratic governance, the Middle East faces numerous challenges that hinder the realization of democratic principles. Authoritarian regimes, political instability, sectarian tensions, and external interventions have all contributed to the erosion of democratic norms and institutions in the region. Moreover, socio-economic disparities, lack of political participation, and cultural barriers pose additional obstacles to democratization efforts. The Role of Civil Society and Activism Civil society organizations, human rights activists, and grassroots movements play a crucial

role in promoting democratic values and holding governments accountable in the Middle East. Despite facing repression and persecution, these actors continue to advocate for political reform, social justice, and respect for human rights, contributing to the push for democratic change. The Opportunities for Democratic Progress Despite the challenges, there are also opportunities for democratic progress in the Middle East. Societal demands for political reform, coupled with advancements in technology and communication, have empowered citizens to mobilize and voice their grievances more effectively. Moreover, international support for democratic transitions, coupled with diplomatic pressure on authoritarian regimes, can create conducive conditions for democratic change. Also the Regional Dynamics and External Influences Regional dynamics and external influences play a significant role in shaping the prospects for democracy in the Middle East. Geopolitical rivalries, interventionist policies, and conflicting interests among regional and global powers often exacerbate instability and undermine

democratization efforts. However, constructive engagement, dialogue, and cooperation among stakeholders can help foster a conducive environment for democratic reform.

The Path Forward Moving forward, the promotion of democratic principles in the Middle East requires a comprehensive approach that addresses the root causes of political instability and authoritarianism. This includes strengthening institutions, promoting political inclusivity, empowering marginalized groups, and fostering a culture of democratic citizenship. Moreover, regional cooperation, dialogue, and respect for sovereignty are essential for building trust and stability in the region. The Upholding democratic principles in the Middle East remains a formidable challenge, yet it also presents an opportunity for positive change and transformation. By addressing the underlying drivers of political instability and authoritarianism, promoting civic engagement and activism, and fostering regional cooperation and dialogue, the Middle East can move closer towards realizing the aspirations of its people for democracy, freedom, and justice.

# Ĥencûrî, the Kurdish Poet who became the Mythical Bird of the Simurgh



By *Tahir Taeb Jaff*

Ĥencûrî, the Kurdish poet from 1750 to 1810 CE, was born in the village of Zîwiye, of the city of Kirkuk. His full name was Mela Omer Xalid Beg, the son of a religious figure belonged to the Zengene tribe of the Kurds. He resided in Kirkuk and renowned for his expertise in various religious and secular fields of his era. Many of his manuscripts in jurisprudence, language, logic, Sharia, and astronomy are preserved in the Iraqi Manuscripts House.

Ĥencûrî is revered as one of the most significant Kurdish poets of all time. As a classical Kurdish poet, he crafted his poems in the Kirmanjî dialect, which served as the literary language among poets in the central Kurdish regions since the era of the Kurdish State of Hesenkéf.

Cities like Kirkuk, Kermanshah, Dînûr, and Suhrewar were pivotal Kurdish cultural hubs under Hesenkéf, where Kirmanjî prevailed as the literary language until the establishment of Sulaymaniyah in 1784 CE as the capital city of the Baban Emirate. Subsequently, the Sorani dialect supplanted Kirmanjî, becoming the literary language in Central Kurdistan, prompting several Kurdish poets who emerged after Ĥencûrî to compose their works in the Sorani dialect.

As a prominent scholar of his time, Ĥencûrî attracted numerous disciples and dervishes. One of his notable achievements is his poetic anthology, compiled, gathered, and printed by Professor Muhammad Ali Qeredaxî in 1986 CE under the title "The Poetry Collection of Ĥencûrî, Mela Omar Zengene".

The Kurdish archaeologist Professor Abdurraqib Yusuf conducted a field tour in the Imam Qasim neighborhood in Kirkuk city to confirm the location of Ĥencûrî's grave. He captured numerous documentary photos of the places where the poet lived and his final resting place. In the 1985 issue (number 107) of the Kurdish magazine "Roşinbîrî Nuwé, (The New Intellectual)," a comprehensive study was published about the poet's life. After extensive effort, Professor Yusuf managed to find some valuable manuscripts of Ĥencûrî in the Awqaf Library in Baghdad.

Ĥencûrî's diaries are considered one of the most important legacies of the poet. The manuscript, consisting of 23 pages, contains diary entries written by the poet in 1810, shortly before his death. This manuscript, currently

preserved in the Awqaf Library in Baghdad, was copied in 1915-1916 by a person named Hewayî from the original version. This person, known as Mela Mohammad Amin Hewayî, the son of Mela

Ĥencûrî was known for exchanging poetic messages with many Kurdish poets of his time, and the poet Weli Dêwane is mentioned at the forefront of these poets. Several Kurdish authors such as, Mela

id Beg, son of Omar Beg, hails from the Zengene tribe and the village of Girawî in the Zengene region."

2- Professor Abdurraqib Yusuf, however, relies on one of the manuscripts of the poet Ĥencûrî and believes that he belonged to the Şal-

spun about his life. Legend has it that he harbored deep affection for the Prophet Muhammad and undertook a journey to Medina, where he composed a heartfelt poem in reverence of the sacred city. According to the tales, an inexplicable event occurred as his body suddenly became engulfed in flames, transforming him into the mythical bird of the Simurgh.

5- Renowned Kurdish classical poet Haji Qader Koyi paid homage to Ĥencûrî in one of his verses, portraying him as a sage and erudite figure steeped in wisdom, drawn from his own writings.

While Ĥencûrî primarily penned his verses in the Kirmanjî dialect, he also ventured into the Sorani dialect, thus earning the distinction of being the first Kurdish poet to do so in the annals of Kurdish literature. Following his passing, a cadre of Kurdish poets followed suit, composing their works in Sorani, including luminaries such as Nali (1800-1856), Salem (1805-1869), Kurdi (1812-1850), among others.

In his compositions, Ĥencûrî hailed Abdul Rahman Pasha, the exiled Emir of the Baban Emirate, imprisoned by the Ottomans in Basra, as the symbolic ruler of Kurdistan. In a poignant piece titled "Poets of Kurdistan," Ĥencûrî memorialized the names of 55 Kurdish poets who preceded or lived during his time, opening his ode with the following verses:

"The poets of Kurdistan sing with passion, Let their renown resound far and wide."

In his poem, Ĥencûrî continues to honor numerous Kurdish poets until he concludes with the following verses:

"Here stand the remaining poets of Kurdistan, beloved guests of the gathering, masters of the feast."

In another composition, Ĥencûrî vividly depicted the outbreak of plague that afflicted the city of Kirkuk. Employing alphabetical letters, he meticulously chronicled the spread of the epidemic, pinpointing its occurrence in Kirkuk in the year 1799. The esteemed Kurdish poet Ĥencûrî breathed his last in 1810 in Kirkuk and found his final resting place in the Sheikh Muhyiddin Cemetery near the Ĥencûrî Mosque, later renamed the Rahman Mosque in the early 1990s.



Ahmad Dûşiwani, (MY UNCLE) received education at the Khanqah of Sayyid Ahmed in Kirkuk and passed away in 1923. Anyone who reads these diaries will clearly see that the poet meticulously recorded many daily events.

The Kurdish poet Ĥencûrî spent a period of his life in the town of Ağjiler near Kirkuk, serving as the Imam of the mosque in Kanî Bey village. In 1786, he finally settled in the mosque named after him in Kirkuk city (Ĥencûrî Mosque), which served as a place of residence for decades for students of knowledge who came from all Kurdish cities.

Jameel Rojbeyani; Muhammad Ali Qeredaxî; Abdurraqib Yusuf; Dr. Marouf Xeznedar; Mohammed Sadiq Burki; Mela Abdul Karim Muderis; Ahmed Taqane; Dr. Mohammed Kesas; Abdul Razzaq Bimar, and Hashim Kakeyî, and others have written about Ĥencûrî, the poet, and his poetic works. Much has been said about the life of the poet and his original places of residence.

1- Professor Mela Abdul Karim Muderis writes: - "I learned from my research that Mela Omar Ĥencûrî, son of Xal-

id Beg, son of Omar Beg, hails from the Zengene tribe and the village of Girawî in the Zengene region."

3- In the second part of the book "History of Kurdish Literature," Dr. Marouf Xeznedar states: "Ĥencûrî is the poet who named Mela Omar Zengene, son of Xalid Beg, son of Omar Beg Zengene. He was born in 1750 in the village of Girawî on the outskirts of Kirkuk, and spent most of his life in the city of Kirkuk."

4- Kurdish historian Jemil Rožbiyanî provided a wealth of information about this writer, and numerous myths have been

# Unveiling Kurdistan's Natural Jewel: The Story of Kurdish Gum

Exploring the Cultural and Medicinal Significance of Kurdish Gum Extraction in the Zagros Mountains

Exploring the Cultural and Medicinal Significance of Kurdish Gum Extraction in the Zagros Mountains

In the rugged slopes of the Zagros Mountains, nestled within the heart of Kurdistan, a remarkable natural treasure unfolds with the onset of early summer: Kurdish Gum. As the sound of bows reverberates through the air and old trees bear the scars of extraction, a tradition as old as the land itself comes to life. Sara Sultan delves into the intricate relationship between the gum tree and the Kurdish people, uncovering its cultural heritage and medicinal prowess.

The extraction of Kurdish gum is not merely a means of livelihood for some villagers; it's a narrative woven into the fabric of Kurdish identity. Known by various names like Wan, Qazwan, Waswan, and Ben,



these trees are primarily found in the Zagros region, covering an expanse of six million hectares. With origins dating back 500 years, these trees yield 300-500 tons of gum annually, accessible only for a fleeting 45 days each year.

The process of gum extraction is both art and science. Using bows, villagers pierce the Wan

wood, allowing the sap to flow into clay bowls placed strategically nearby. Under the sun's heat, the gum oozes into these receptacles, forming a green, transparent substance prized for its medicinal properties.

Beyond its cultural significance, Kurdish gum boasts a plethora of medical benefits. With 25% turpentine oil, it finds

its way into various industrial, pharmaceutical, and dietary products. From treating burns and sores to combating gastrointestinal malignancies, its versatility knows no bounds. Traditional medicine harnesses its power to alleviate stomach problems and improve ocular strength.

However, the extraction process must be conduct-

ed with care to prevent the drying out of trees. Over 5,000 families rely on Kurdish gum for their livelihood, highlighting its economic importance in the region. European nations like China and Germany recognize its value, importing it for its myriad uses.

As the sun sets on the Zagros Mountains, the legacy of Kurdish gum

continues to thrive. With each harvest, it not only sustains livelihoods but also preserves a tradition deeply rooted in Kurdish heritage. With proper care and attention, the Wan tree stands as a testament to resilience, enduring for up to 300 years and offering hope for generations to come.

The Kurdish Globe

## Kurdish Cuisine

### Discovering Doghewa: A Taste of Kurdish Tradition



In the hills and valleys of Kurdistan, there's a special meal called Doghewa or Dokliw that folks love to eat, especially in the springtime. It's a big part of Kurdish culture because it's made with things that grow a lot in Kurdistan's soil and mountains.

Doghewa has been around for a long, long time, even before our grandparents' time. Different places make it slightly different, like

some use just mint, while others add more herbs like Kurada.

In the countryside, where plants grow like crazy in the spring, families make Doghewa a lot. They sometimes mix in sour yogurt to make it tangy.

Making Doghewa is not too hard. First, you heat up sour yogurt or Dogh until it's warm. Then, you add some rice and a bunch of herbs like mint and Kuard. These

herbs grow in the mountains and make Doghewa taste really good!

You let everything cook together until it's all nice and soft. Then, you add a little salt for flavor. When it's ready, you've got a delicious dish that smells amazing and tastes even better.

But Doghewa is more than just a yummy meal. It's a way for Kurdish families to remember their history and the land they come from. When

people eat Doghewa, they're tasting a bit of Kurdistan's culture and tradition, passed down through generations.

So, as spring rolls around and the smell of Doghewa fills Kurdish kitchens, it's not just a meal. It's a reminder of the strong bond between Kurdish people and their heritage, celebrated one spoonful at a time.

# Hiking and Mountaineering Adventures in Kurdistan

An Insightful Discussion with Kurdistan Mountaineering and Climbing Federation Secretary



Nestled amidst the rugged grandeur of Kurdistan, a realm of outdoor exploration beckons to adventurers far and wide. With its diverse array of mountain ranges, prominently featuring the iconic Zagros mountain, Kurdistan stands as a bastion of alpine allure. In this illuminating conversation, we journey into the realm of hiking and mountaineering with Hemn Amin Mansour, representing the Kurdistan Mountaineering and Climbing Federation (KMCF).

As Mansour sheds light on Kurdistan's vibrant outdoor culture, we gain a deeper understanding of the profound impact of mountainous pursuits on both individual well-being and societal cohesion. From the physical chal-

lenges of scaling peaks to the spiritual connection forged with nature, Mansour articulates the transformative power of mountain exploration. Join us as we traverse the rugged landscapes of Kurdistan and uncover the timeless beauty and enduring allure of its alpine wonders.

Kurdish Globe: There are a lot of weekend mountaineering groups in Kurdistan, as you can see. In Kurdish civilization, which is a mountainous region, has mountaineering become a global sport or a hobby? Have you contributed?

Mansour: in 2005, a group of individuals working under the auspices of the Kurdistan Mountaineering and Climbing Federation established modern mountaineering

as a sports, technical, physical, and organic movement and international standards. It is an integral component of Kurdish culture, daily living, and educational endeavors.

Kurdish Globe: Does the Kurdistan Region have a coach, supervisor, or organization for this particular type of sport? Or is it just a buddy group that exists?

Mansour: Indeed, the organization has a secretariat and a volunteer committee in every Kurdistan city nationwide, operating within the parameters of regional traits and expertise. It uses both foreign and local instructors and teachers to offer training programs, courses, and mountain expeditions over 4000 meters, adhering to the

World Mountaineering Federation's (UIAA) requirements. One aspect of mountaineering, a social and spiritual sport, is the social dimension of the expeditions that are currently undertaken, whether they be friendship- or class-related.

Kurdish Globe: Tragic incidents occurred in the past. Do you offer the participants any form of direction or guidelines?

Mansour: Our registered groups receive weekly weather forecasts and instructions. We provide a variety of classes. Sadly, certain government agencies authorize centers, associations, and organizations for mountaineering, which is why these tragedies happen. Even so, it's not how these organizations usually op-

erate! Not for any organization dedicated to the mountains and the development of technical climbing, but rather for civic work and community development initiatives, is their primary responsibility. Natural landscapes, deserts, and tourist sites.

Kurdish Globe: Do you do this primarily as a hobby or for health reasons?

Mansour: For physical, social, and spiritual benefits, Hemn Amin Mansour / mountaineering is a way of life inside a set and structured structure; yet, we must not lose sight of the fact that motivation for such an endeavor must come from a desire or a form of human love.

Kurdish Globe: What proportion of women take part in this activity?

Mansour: In my viewpoint, it's a field where women are actively involved and contribute positively. Along with males from Kurdistan and beyond, we have a number of women's mountaineering groups in this movement.

Kurdish Globe: Which age groups participate in this activity the most?

Mansour: People of all ages participate in mountain-related activities, but there is a notable trend among younger individuals who engage in hiking, particularly for recreational purposes. However, it is especially common among those aged 40 to 60 to pursue mountaineering as a form of self-education.



## Folklore Spotlight



### Ayşeşan

#### A Musical Journey Spanning Cultures and Generations

In 1938, the world welcomed Ayşeşan Osman in Amed, where she embarked on a remarkable journey destined to leave an indelible mark on Kurdish and Turkish music. The life and legacy of this iconic singer, whose passion for her craft and cultural heritage knew no bounds, are explored here.

Born to Mohammed Osman and Hajia Khanum of the Haji Mustafa Beg Erzurum tribe, Ayşeşan's musical talent emerged at a young age. At twenty, she captivated audiences with her soulful voice, earning accolades from fans and critics alike. Renowned writer and journalist Kakşar Öremar immortalized her story in the book "A Queen Be- reft of a Crown."

In 1963, Ayşeşan ventured to İstanbul at the behest of her admirers, where she mesmerized audiences with her renditions of Turkish and Kurdish melodies. It was here that she recorded the haunting ballad "I'm Sad" and ascended to fame. Despite her success, Ayşeşan remained committed to promoting the Kurdish language and culture, a passion that led her to Germany.

Tragedy struck in Germany when her 18-year-old daughter passed away, plunging Ayşeşan into profound sorrow. Channeling her grief into music, she penned the poignant song "Qadar," a heartfelt tribute to her beloved daughter.

In 1979, Ayşeşan's journey took her to Baghdad, where she reignited her musical career under the name "Ayşeşani Ali," at the invitation of the Erbil governor. Her talent resonated across South Kurdistan, where she collaborated with esteemed artists like Mohammed Arif Jaziri and Isa Barwari, enchanting audiences with her performances.

Throughout her career, Ayşeşan gifted the world with timeless melodies, including hits like "Qadere," "Gharibm Daye," and "Warn Warn Peshmerga," each song a testament to her artistry and dedication. Yet, amidst her success, Ayşeşan faced personal loss, releasing the poignant "Daye" in memory of her mother.

On December 18, 1966, Ayşeşan Osman bid farewell to the world, leaving behind a legacy that continues to resonate with music lovers worldwide. Though she may have left this world, her melodies and spirit endure, a testament to the enduring power of music to transcend boundaries and touch the soul.

# Recognizing Completion of Mukriyan Oral Dictionary Project

## Honoring Kurdish Language and Culture through Comprehensive Linguistic Resource

A ceremony was held on Wednesday to recognize the completion of the Mukriyan Oral Dictionary project. The event celebrated the publication of a book titled "Mukriyan Oral Dictionary; a masterpiece in the history of Kurdish dictionary writing." Dr. Salar Osman, Head of Culture and Media of the Kurdistan Democratic Party, along with other party and government officials, intellectuals, authors, and academics attended the ceremony to honor the author.

Salah Payaniyani, a prominent Kurdish author from Mahabad, Iranian Kurdistan, highlighted the significance of dictionaries in language preservation. He emphasized the need for continuous renewal and care for language dictionaries. The Mukriyan Oral Dictionary has reached a stage where it can be comparable to dictionaries of international languages. It has been meticulously written and is being published in various volumes.



Payaniyani expressed gratitude to his family, friends, and the Mukriyan Publishing House for their support during the four-year process of writing the dictionary. He thanked everyone who contributed, acknowledging that without their dedication, publishing such a dictionary would not have been possible.

Karwan Abdullah, Head of Mukriyan Publishing House, described the Mukriyan Oral Dictionary as the pride of Kurdish dictionaries, noting its innovative approach to

publishing the dictionary. He emphasized the importance of dictionaries in preserving languages amidst global changes and threats of extinction. The agreement between Mukriyan Publishing House and Payaniyani stipulated completing the dictionary in seven years, but it was finished in four years.

At the ceremony's conclusion, the Kurdistan Regional Government (KRG) and the KDP's Department of Culture and Media commended Payaniyani and his associates for their efforts in

publishing the dictionary. The Mukriyan Oral Dictionary spans 15 volumes, totaling nearly 1000 pages, and was completed in four and a half years. It serves as a valuable linguistic resource for Kurdish writers, researchers, and translators, aiding in the expression of feelings and emotions. Additionally, it offers solutions to linguistic challenges, enriching Kurdish writings and serving as a reliable source for text writing and translation.

## 12th Jazz Ensemble Wows Erbil Audience

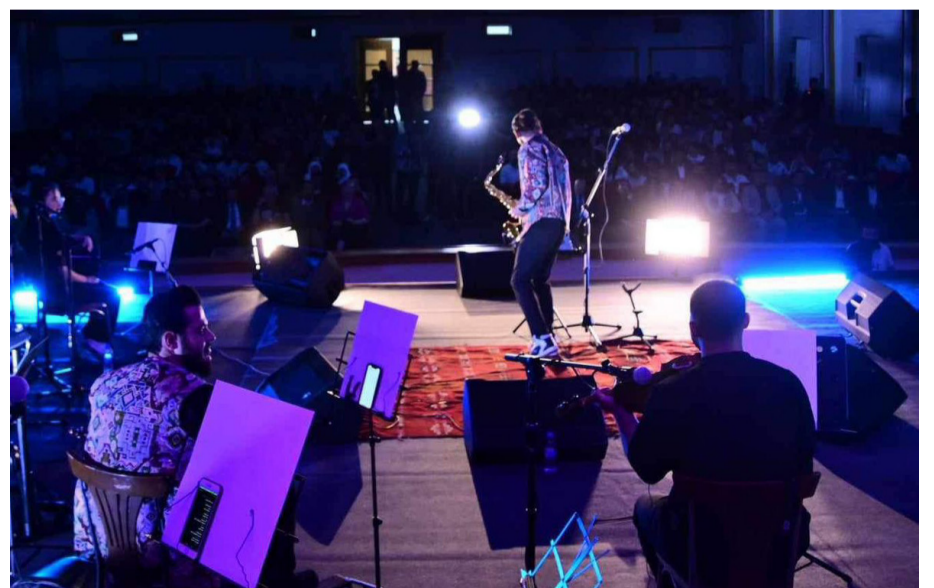
### Twelve Young Musicians and Students Debut The 12th Jazz Ensemble with Resounding Success

A captivated audience of music enthusiasts filled the Cultural Hall of Erbil on May 7, 2024, to witness the inaugural performance of the 12th Jazz Band.

Reflecting on their journey, Bahiz Abbas, leader of the ensemble, shared insights with Kurdish Globe. "After our first concert, held in a tiny hall within our university, we decided to take on this major performance due to the overwhelmingly positive feedback we received."

Describing their unique musical fusion, Abbas explained, "Our style seamlessly blends Western jazz, a genre with roots dating back about a century, with the rich melodies of Kurdish culture."

Delving into jazz's origins, Abbas recounted, "The blues, born among Black Americans as a poignant expression of pain, evolved into jazz, a genre so intertwined that only



musicians can discern their nuances."

Highlighting jazz's cultural significance, Abbas noted, "Jazz stands as the music of minorities, chosen and celebrated by societies worldwide. Every April 30, the World Day of Jazz is observed, with the Kurdistan Region proudly

participating in the festivities."

Acknowledging past challenges faced by jazz ensembles in Kurdistan, Abbas revealed, "Previous attempts at jazz bands in our region were short-lived. Currently, we rely on generous donations to support our musical en-

deavors."

When asked about the ensemble's name, Abbas explained, "We draw inspiration from the overlooked '12 horsemen of Marivan.' Through our music, we aim to honor their legacy and ensure it endures."