

From the Heart of Kurdistan Region

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Political Parties and Government: Leveraging Dialogue Circles for Mutual Benefit



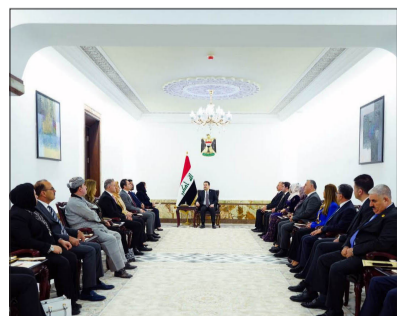
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Editorial

March's Events and their Meanings:

Kurdistan is Strong and will Overcome Obstacles



By | *Dr. Salar Othman*

For years, people of Kurdistan, in all their differences, have celebrated March with glory. Those events are full of deep meaning, strength, power, and love.

Some are happy events, and some others are unpleasant. Some of them are victorious and some others are wounds and sufferings. However, all of them are part of our history and our destiny. We should remind our generations of them and learn lessons from them.

In this month, we celebrate the birth of the leader of the nation, Mustafa Barzani, we also commemorate his death. In both events, we grasp the bright truth of Barzani's path which is the path for life and freedom. The life, with its wider significance, and the freedom that reflects continuous struggle and effort for this purpose.

We also commemorate Halabja massacre in this month. The event that tells us that Kurds have few allies but many wounds. Therefore, we address our allies and tell them: "If we have common objectives, then you should remember the wounds and sufferings of the Kurds".

In this month, we celebrate the 1991 uprising. The uprising that overthrew the tyranny and materialized the freedom. We can read this truth within lines of the uprising: "The unity of people of Kurdistan is strength, power, crossing into a better future, while disunity is devastation".

In this month, we celebrate Nawroz by lighting fire. The fire carries with itself meaning of pursuing life, freedom, coexistence, unity and love, because people of Kurdistan are people of life and love.

In the end, we would like to say that the events of March are full of meanings. It's important that we turn the meanings into candles to light up our path for the survival from the current problems. It's for sure that Kurdistan is strong now, and it will be able to overcome the problems. We look into tomorrow with hope.

KRG: Federal Government should fully disburse employee salaries



"Salary disbursement is a constitutional and legal right, should be separated from any inter-governmental disputes, and must be upheld,"

KRG.

Prime Minister Masrour Barzani chaired a meeting of the Kurdistan Regional Government (KRG) Council of Ministers. At the outset, the Prime Minister highlighted the recent visit of a high-level delegation led by the KRG Prime Minister to the United States. The delegation engaged in meetings with senior officials from the White House, State Department, Defense, Treasury, and Congress.

During these discussions, emphasis was placed on fostering stronger bilateral relations and addressing outstanding issues between the Kurdistan Region and the federal government. These issues included securing the region's rights and financial entitlements, as well as the establishment of the Federal Council.

Subsequently, Shorsh Ismail, Minister of Peshmerga Affairs, commended the success of the delegation's visit, noting the attention it received from senior US officials and the reiteration of support for the Kurdistan Region and its Peshmerga forces.

Another agenda item was the presentation of the first report from the Kurdistan Regional Prosecutor's Office on the implementation status of the National Strategy to Combat Corruption. This strategy, previously endorsed by the Council of Ministers in September, received a summary presentation from

Ahmed Anwar, Chairman of the Board of Integrity. The report included recommendations for various official institutions aimed at enhancing anti-corruption awareness, internal supervision, legislative amendments, capacity building, and employee training.

The Council of Ministers applauded the submission of the report and reaffirmed its commitment to promoting transparency, accountability, and combating corruption. It instructed relevant ministries and entities to closely monitor the implementation of the recommendations.

Following this, Awat Sheikh Janab, Minister of Finance and Economy, outlined recent measures taken by the Ministry and other KRG entities regarding employee salaries in light of recent developments. The Ministry had requested full salaries for February 2024 from the federal government's Ministry of Finance, totaling 949,813,146,170 billion dinars. However, only 560 billion and 219 million dinars were allocated, resulting in 59% of the budget needed to fund employees, creating a shortfall and hindering February's salary payments.

Minister Janab clarified that the Kurdistan Region had already initiated funding processes under the supervision of the Central Bank of Iraq.

The Council commended these

efforts and stressed the importance of ensuring that no employee is deprived of their salary. It reiterated that salary disbursement is a constitutional and legal right, separate from any inter-governmental disputes, and must be upheld.

Furthermore, the Council emphasized the significance of the 'My Account' project, an advanced banking initiative akin to the 'Tautin' process in the rest of Iraq, offering cost-effective and superior services. The KRG announced that all employees would receive salaries via the Ministry of Finance and 'My Account.' Participating banks are licensed by the Central Bank of Iraq, aligning with the broader Iraqi banking system.

The Council highlighted the importance of employee freedom in selecting banks for account opening, similar to their Iraqi counterparts, with five banks currently participating and more expected to join soon.

In summary, the Council of Ministers' meeting underscored the necessity of full salary disbursement by the federal government, commitment to anti-corruption efforts, and endorsement of the 'My Account' project to ensure efficient financial transactions for Kurdistan Region employees.

KRG Urges Employing (My Account) in Domiciliation of Employee's Salaries

The Kurdistan Region Government (KRG) announced that no obstacles should stand on the way of distributing Kurdistan's civil servants via the local banks operating in Kurdistan region under the license of the Iraqi Central Bank. The statement followed correspondence by Iraqi Minister of Finance regarding withholding Kurdistan employee's March salaries until the procedure for what the Ministry called "domiciliation" is finalized by the KRG. The KRG's Ministry of Finance on the other hand expressed concerns over the correspondence and stated that the condition is unlikely to be met within such a constrained time-frame.

In a statement released on March 12th, the KRG's Ministry of Finance and Economy

emphasized the importance of ensuring that public sector employees in the Kurdistan Region receive their financial entitlements without delay. The Ministry urged the federal Ministry of Finance to avoid employing "impractical conditions" as justifications for withholding the rightful dues of the Kurdistan Region. Additionally, the KRG's Finance Ministry called upon the Iraqi government not to "politicize" the matter and implored them not to impose unnecessary hurdles in the way of distribution of March salaries to the civil servants and employees in the Kurdistan Region.

The KRG maintains that employees of the Kurdistan Region should receive their salaries through the KRG's Ministry of Finance via the (My Account) project.

Beside receiving their salaries, the account holders through the project will also benefit from various banking services and payments and receive loan facilities. The banks in Kurdistan Region that have involved in (My Account) project are licensed by the Central Bank of Iraq and are part of the "domiciliation" process that has been ongoing in other parts of Iraq. Therefore, the KRG asserts that there is no obstacle to relying on the project (My Account), which is an important and advanced banking project and similar to the process "domiciliation", but with less cost and better services. Moreover, the KRG also emphasizes that the employees of the Kurdistan Region should be free to open their accounts in any bank, just as Iraqi

employees are free to choose and designate the banks to open their accounts.

During a meeting held March 12th, KRG's Council of Ministers stressed that the measures of the Ministry of Finance of the federal government, should not deprive the employees of the Region of their financial entitlements and "should be treated like employees in other parts of Iraq". KRG's Council of Ministers emphasized that the salaries of the employees of the Kurdistan Region should be paid, as the constitutional and legitimate rights of the employees of the Region. KRG has been emphasizing that Kurdistan's employees are entitled to their salaries and must be treated like employees in other parts of Iraq.

Meanwhile, the Iraqi government stated on

Saturday that the Federal Ministry of Finance is committed to sending the salaries of the KRG employees in March. Iraqi Government Spokesman Bassem Awadi said in statement that the remittance of salaries to the Kurdistan's employees will continue. He denied the news of halting the remittance of the funds to KRG. Awadi said that the sending the funds for the salaries of the Kurdistan Region will continue in accordance with the applicable measures and in coordination with the KRG.

The KRG's Ministry of Finance and Economy had requested the federal government to provide funds amounting to IQD 949,813,146,170 to cover the salaries of the KRG's public sector employees. However, according to the statement by KRG, the

federal Ministry of Finance approved only around IQD 560 billion, fulfilling just 59% of the requested sum. This decision has left a shortfall of IQD 390 billion needed for one month's salaries, intensifying the financial strain on the Region.

The KRG has announced earlier this week that more than 240,000 bank accounts have been created for KRG employees and more than 120,000 bank cards have been distributed. The KRG's partnership with banks has led to a significant increase in ATMs, according to the statement, while the project is aiming to register more than one million employees of the Kurdistan Regional Government by the end of this year.

KDP Pushes for Fair Share in Iraq Budget, Demands Resolution with PM

A delegation from the Kurdistan Democratic Party (KDP) faction in the Iraqi parliament met with Prime Minister Mohammed Shiah Sudani to discuss issues related to the Kurdistan Regional Government (KRG) and the Federal Government.

The KDP presented a list of seventeen demands:

Governance and Budget:

1. Emphasize the obligations agreed upon between the two governments, focusing on the interests of the Kurdistan Region.

2. Address the KRG's budget and employee salaries, particularly Federal Court decisions deemed unconstitutional by the KDP. Additionally, secures the KRG's rightful share of the national budget.

3. Recognize the contributions and merits of KRG officials in military and security positions, including the National Security Agency, intelligence services, and counter-terrorism units.

Advocate for Kurdish representation in deputy ministerial positions and independent bodies.

Legislation:

4. Encourage the adoption and submission of key legislative proposals to parliament, including the Federal Law and the Federal Council Law.

Representation:

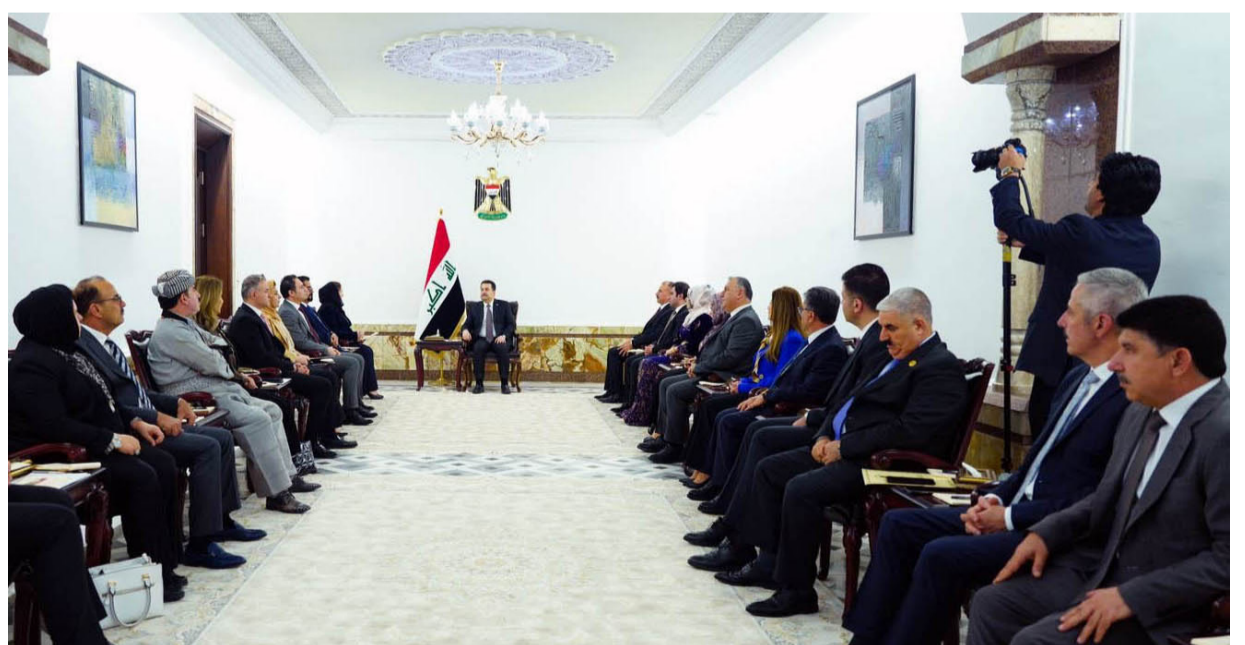
5. Acknowledge the KDP's role as the largest Kurdish faction in the House of Representatives, ensuring their rightful share of representation.

Social and Economic Development:

6. Guarantee the Kurdistan Region's fair share of medical supplies and treatments provided by Iraq's Ministry of Health.

7. Increase social welfare program coverage in the Kurdistan Region and consider compensation for those affected by border bombings.

8. Facilitate investment opportunities in the Kurdistan Region by treating investment companies



equally to those in other Iraqi provinces.

9. Address property claims and provide compensation to affected citizens in the Kurdistan Region.

10. Ensure that Kurdish farmers receive the same benefits as others in Iraq, including access to fertilizers, agricultural

supplies, and equipment.

11. Establish branches of agricultural and industrial banks in the Kurdistan Region.

Education and Security: 12. Reiterate the importance of implementing the Sinjar Agreement.

13. Recognize the universities and institutes in the Kurdistan Region,

along with the Kurdistan Board of Higher Education and Scientific Research.

14. Oppose hasty decisions regarding the closure of the Federal Ministry of Education's representative offices in other Iraqi provinces.

Sports and Disputed Territories:

15. Advocate for equal treatment of KRG sports clubs compared to other Iraqi clubs.

16. Address concerns regarding the areas of Article 140 (disputed territories).

17. Request compensation for shop owners affected by the fire in Langa (second-hand) market.

Kurdistan Regional Judicial Council responds to Federal Court ruling

In a statement issued, the Kurdistan Regional Judicial Council expressed deep disagreement with a recent decision by the Federal Supreme Court of Iraq.

Judge Abdul Jabbar Aziz Hassan, President of the Council, delivered the statement, which asserts that the Federal Court exceeded its legal authority in its ruling on the matter of minority seats in the Kurdistan Parliament.

"The constitutional framework of the Kurdistan Region is well-established," Judge Hassan stressed. "There exists no valid reason to amend these provisions. They are binding upon all parties, including the Federal Court, which has to uphold them, not to create difficulties or violate them under dubious pretexts."

He elaborated, stating, "The Iraqi Constitution, adopted in 2005, explicitly recognizes the Kurdistan Region and its authorities. Article 117/1 grants the Region the right to exercise its powers, with the sole exception of those exclusively reserved for the federal



government. Importantly, the Constitution establishes the supremacy of regional laws in instances where they conflict with federal legislation."

Judge Hassan raised concerns regarding the legitimacy of the Federal Court, suggesting its establishment may not fully comply with the stipulations outlined in Article 92 of the

Constitution and Federal Court Law No. 30 of 2005.

"The recent ruling," he argued, "grants the Federal Court broad and intrusive powers to intervene in matters of both significance and triviality within the Kurdistan Region. This is demonstrably evident in Decision No. 83 of 2024, which revokes amendments made to the Kurdistan Region Par-

liamentary Elections Law No. 1 of 1992. Not only does this decision dissolve eleven parliamentary seats, reducing the total to one hundred, but it also appears to directly contradict the Constitution that the Federal Court is obligated to uphold."

The statement emphasizes the critical importance of upholding the principle

of "supremacy of the laws of the Kurdistan Region" when these laws conflict with federal statutes. It further underscores that the recent Federal Court decision disregards this principle, despite the regional law being fully compliant with the Constitution.

Judge Hassan argues that the Court's decision effectively usurps the role of

legislation by modifying both the number of seats in the Kurdistan Parliament and provisions of Law No. 11 of 2007 concerning the Independent High Electoral Commission.

"The division of electoral districts falls squarely within the exclusive purview of the Kurdistan Parliament," the statement asserts. "The Federal Court's intervention necessitates a thorough review of its decision, even though it is considered final and binding on all authorities."

The statement concludes by advocating for a re-evaluation of the Federal Court's decision to ensure fairness and equality, principles that are fundamental to effective governance.

"Equality and justice are the bedrock of a strong society," declared Judge Hassan. "Their application strengthens the position, balance, and overall weight of society, ultimately guaranteeing the rights and dignity of all citizens, irrespective of ethnicity, religion, nationality, sect, or gender."

Christian leader voices concern over minority seat elimination in Kurdistan Parliament, alleging constitutional threat

The leader of the Hammurabi Coalition expressed grave concern over recent developments regarding the Kurdistan parliamentary election, particularly regarding the Federal Court's decision prompted by a complaint from the Patriotic Union of Kurdistan (PUK). According to the Coalition leader, this decision, deemed unconstitutional, illegal, and inhumane, is a significant blow to the

rights of Kurdistan's minorities and poses a direct threat to the region's political and constitutional integrity.

Ano Jawhar, Head of the Hammurabi Coalition, criticized the PUK's move to challenge the quota system within the Kurdistan Parliament, arguing that it undermines the principle of coexistence essential for peace and stability in Kurdistan. He emphasized that this action appears to

be a calculated political maneuver aimed at consolidating power within the Parliament for the PUK over the next parliamentary term.

Jawhar condemned the Federal Court's decision, labeling it a "historic mistake" that will have detrimental effects not only on minority representation but also on Kurdistan as a whole. He warned that the erasure of minority political voices will diminish

the diversity and inclusivity necessary for Kurdistan's progress on the international stage.

Highlighting the significance of coexistence in Kurdistan's success, Jawhar stressed that any attempt to suppress minority rights represents a direct assault on the region's political and constitutional framework. He lamented that such actions mark the first instance of oppression against mi-

norities in Kurdistan in over three decades.

The recent session of the Iraqi Federal Supreme Court on February 21, 2024, addressed various complaints related to Kurdistan, including those concerning employee salaries and parliamentary election laws. Among the decisions made, the Court ruled to abolish the 11 quota seats in the Kurdistan Parliament, deeming them unconstitutional.

This move reduces the total number of parliamentary seats from 111 to 100 and shifts responsibility for overseeing elections to Iraq's Independent High Electoral Commission. Additionally, Kurdistan is now divided into four constituencies for the upcoming parliamentary elections.

Shingal University to be built in Snune district

The Directors of the government departments from Nineveh Governorate visited Shingal district to start the process of establishing Shingal University. Rafaat Smo, Nineveh Governor's assistance to administration affairs, stated that directors of most of the directors visited Shingal district to pave the way for opening of the university which will be built in the town of Snune where nearly 200 acres of land has been allocated.

Smo added that in the initial phase of the university, colleges of agriculture and basic education will be opened, while new colleges will be opened in the future, including a few colleges in Shingal district.

Iraqi Ministry of Higher Education has made the decision to open a university in Shingal. But according to Smo the opening of the university will take time as it requires the approval from 13 govern-

ment ministries which is expected to be acquired by the end of 2024.

Khalaf Shingali, an advisor to the Iraqi PM for Yezidi Affairs stated that PM Mohammed Shiaa' al-Sudani has agreed to open a university in Shingal and has allocated 200 acres of land which will include a large university compound.

Opening a new university according to Shingali will open many new job opportunities for the peo-

ple of the district and will have positive impact on the education sector in the area as well as the livelihood of the people.

On August 3, 2014, ISIS militants took over the Shingal district of northern Iraq, committing genocide against the Yazidi minority. Thousands fled their homes as the militants systematically killed men and older women and enslaved younger women and children. In the first days of the genocide, 1,293 peo-

ple were killed and 6,417 people were abducted.

During the war on ISIS, where ISIS terrorists invaded Shingal, 500, 000 people from the area fled to the Kurdistan Region, with 330,00 currently living in the camps and have not been to return to their homes due to the security threats and lack of government services.

The Kurdistan Regional Government and Iraqi government reached a deal in October of 2020

over the governance and security of Shingal to resolve a number of issues preventing its displaced people from returning to the area.

Under the Erbil-Baghdad agreement, security for the troubled region will be Baghdad's responsibility. The federal government will have to establish a new armed force recruited from the local population and expel fighters from the PKK and their affiliated groups.

Political Parties and Government: Leveraging Dialogue Circles for Mutual Benefit

The distribution ceremony of the second book of the discussion circle, titled "Challenges of National Security," took place recently, marking a significant event in Kurdish political and intellectual circles. Held on March 10, 2024, the event was moderated by Mohammed Rauf, a prominent politician from Kurdistan, and Rebar Ahmad, the Interior Minister of the Kurdistan Regional Government (KRG).

Distinguished guests including government officials, party representatives, intellectuals, academics, journalists, and media professionals gathered at the media hall to participate in the ceremony. A moment of silence was observed to honor the memory of Barzani and Mr. Idris, followed by a heartfelt welcome speech delivered by Dr. Salar Osman, Head of the Culture and Media Department of the Kurdistan Democratic Party (KDP). Dr. Osman highlighted



the significance of the dialogue circle, initiated in 2023 under the auspices of the Department of Culture and Media of the PDK. He recounted the inception of the circle with its first publication, "People's Protest," em-

phasizing the centrality of understanding Barzani's legacy. The focus of the current gathering was the newly released book, "Challenges of National Security." The ceremony featured a documentary screening

showcasing the journey of the dialogue circle, followed by an engaging panel discussion led by Rebar Ahmad and Mohammed Rauf. The discussion delved into the critical challenges confronting national security

and underscored the pivotal role of dialogue in addressing them. Concluding the event, participants were presented with copies of the second book in the discussion circle series. Acknowledgement letters

were also distributed to the circle's members and guests, recognizing their valuable contributions throughout the six episodes of the series.

By Sara Sultan

KRG Ministry of Finance Calls on Iraqi Government for Full Salary Payments Amid Funding Dispute

The Ministry of Finance and Economy of the Kurdistan Regional Government (KRG) issued a statement revealing that the Federal Government's Ministry of Finance has only allocated 560 billion and 217 million dinars, representing just 59% of the total salary. This insufficient allocation has resulted in a shortfall in February's salary payments.

Finance Minister Taif Sami, in two separate directives to his ministry's payment system unit, has instructed the addition of over 130 billion dinars to the Ministry's bank account in the Erbil branch of the Central Bank of Iraq. These additional funds are intended for pensioners and individuals receiving social welfare salaries in the Kurdistan Region.

In the first directive, the Iraqi Finance Minister requested the inclusion of 10 billion 997 million 100 thousand dinars in the form of loans to support individuals with disabili-



ties in the directorates of the Social Protection Network, Social Welfare, and Development in Kurdistan.

In the second directive, an additional 119 billion 139 million 195 thousand 614 dinars in the form of loans were requested for civilian and military pensioners in the Kurdistan

Region. The Iraqi Finance Minister emphasized in both directives that if bank accounts for all employees in the Kurdistan Region are not opened by March, no funds will be deposited into the Ministry's account.

In an official letter dated March 5th, 2024, the Min-

istry of Finance and Economy of the KRG formally requested the Federal Government's Ministry of Finance to fully fund the Kurdistan Region's February salaries amounting to 949,813,146,170 dinars. However, the Federal Government's Ministry of Finance only allocated 560 billion and 217 mil-

lion dinars, depriving 41% of the region's employees of their rightful salaries.

This insufficient allocation has caused a deficit of approximately 390 billion dinars in February's salary payments, leading to significant financial challenges and depriving a large portion of employees of their due compensation.

The KRG asserts that unless the salary payments for March 2024 are initiated and completed without discrimination, they will not receive any funding. Negotiations with the Central Bank of Iraq are underway to resolve this issue, and the Ministry of Finance of the Federal Government must not withhold the rightful financial entitlements of the Kurdistan Region's employees due to any governmental disputes.

The Ministry of Finance and Economy reiterates its demand for the full payment of salaries for the Kurdistan Region, emphasizing that the financial rights of the region's employees should not be infringed upon. They urge the Ministry of Finance of the Iraqi government not to impose any restrictions on funding for the region's employees, as it constitutes their constitutional and legal rights, independent of any governmental conflicts.

March in The Kurdish

March is a significant month in the Kurdish calendar because it is full of both tragic and glorious memories from the Kurdish people's past. These memories demonstrate the Kurdish people's ongoing struggle for freedom and their history of suffering numerous tragedies.

Mustafa Barzani General of the Mountains



On March 14, 1903, Mustafa Barzani was born in the village of Barzan. He was the most well-known leaders and heroes of the Kurdish nation's freedom movement from 1903 to 1979. That description was based on the fact that he was the leader of the Barzani revolution between 1932 and 1933. He was the leader of the Barzani Revolution from 1943 to 1945. After being elevated to the rank of general, he took leadership of Barzani's forces, the largest military force in the Republic of Mahabad. Following the republic's fall on December 17, 1946, he guided 500 Barzanis towards the Soviet Union. He and his allies beat the Iranian army five times before crossing the Aras River on June 18, 1947. He oversaw the September revolution, which was united by a single political ideology, political party, and leader, for 14 years following the republic's demise. He compelled the central government of Iraq to acknowledge the rights of the Kurdish people on March 11, 1970. In an attempt to kill Barzani, the chief of the Iraqi intelligence service, Nazm Guzar, delivered multiple bombs to his Haji Omeran offices on June 16, 1972. All of the sent religious instructors perished when they exploded. Luckily, Barzani made it through. On September 29, 1972, the identical plot and incident were carried out again, and this time he made it out alive. However, he showed no reaction to any of these occurrences or to the Ba'athist rule.

After a protracted battle with a terminal illness, he passed away at George Washington Hospital in Washington, DC, on March 1, 1979. Mustafa Barzani's passing was a huge loss for the legitimate cause of our country. He was the leader of the Kurdish national movement.

The movement's leadership was an amazing deed. For fifty years, he was a modern-day Kurdish liberator, fighting for the Kurdish people's freedom and prosperity.

Following the revolt of the Kurdistan people, on October 6, 1993, the bodies of the late Barzani and the eternal martyr Idris were returned from the Shino cemetery and interred in Barzan at a magnificent ceremony.

The late Barzani represented the persecuted and divided Kurdish people, whose name was well-known around the world. In

the midst of the upheaval in contemporary international affairs and the unstable politi-

cal environment in Iraq, he left a route that has allowed the Kurdish people to adopt a balanced approach today in order to protect themselves.

The Great Kurdish Uprising in 1991



An uprising can be defined as a strategy, a stage in the process of struggle and revolution used by any people or nation for a variety of purposes in order to stabilize and accomplish the aims, accomplishments, and liberation of the people and the nation.

In fact, the situation of the Kurdistan political parties and the political situation among the political forces of South Kurdistan was very unfavorable and difficult, because when the bloody war between Iraq and Iran stopped on August 8, 1988, the Ba'athist regime was empty handed. He began to oppose the Kurds with all his forces and methods. He subjected the Kurds to Anfal, chemical attacks, displacement and wandering. When Iraq invaded and occupied Kuwait on August 2, 1990, the international coalition opened the door to change and uprising in Iraq for their own interests. The regime's army was defeated and Iraq's international position was weak. The economic, psychological and logistical situation was bad and weak, and the Iraqi armed forces rose up and launched an uprising.

The Kurdish people's uprising officially began on March 5, 1991 in the city of Ranya at 9 am. People poured into the streets from all sides, encouraging people to uprise

on the radios and loudspeakers in mosques. And continued until March 21 and the liberation of Kirkuk. The uprising led to the expulsion of the Ba'athist forces from Kurdistan and the establishment of a Kurdish local government.

On 5/3/1991, the people of Ranya gathered at 9 am and attacked the military and government units of the Ba'ath regime and cleared the city of the regime fighters until 3 pm.

On March 7, 1991, the masses of Sulaymaniyah rose up and stormed the Hamiya police station and Sara and liberated them. In the morning, March 8, they took control of the Red Security of Sulaymaniyah, Salam checkpoint and positions on Mount Azmar Sulaimani (Sheikh Mu'tasem Barzanji) and dozens of regime officials and men were killed. On March 9, 1991, the people of Shaqlawa and Koya also revolted.

On March 10, 1991, the people of Masif, Taqtaq, Rawanduz, Qarahanjir, Aghjaler, Harir, Batas, Khalifan, Spilk, Soran, Choman, Haji Omeran, Mergasur and all these areas rose up and liberated them within hours.

On March 11, 1991, the masses of Erbil marched towards the regime headquarters in Shorsh, Malayan and Biryati neighborhoods. At 9 am, the masses took to the

great achievements, changes and turning points.

The 1991 Uprising, or the Great Kurdish Uprising, was a mass uprising of the people of South Kurdistan against the Ba'ath regime, fighting against the Ba'ath regime and conducting operations against the regime in the mountains of Kurdistan.

International Women's Day Is On March 8th.

A fire broke out at the workplace in 1857 as women protested for their rights in a sewing factory in New York, burning over 100 women. This occurrence would serve as the catalyst for a day dedicated to defending women's rights. On February 28, 1909, the Socialist Party recognized the women's strike in the New York tailoring factory for the first time. Women's Day was declared an international day in 1910 by the World Congress of Socialists in Copenhagen as a symbol of women's rights; however, no precise date was specified.

The first women's fight commemoration took place on March 19, in Austria, Denmark, Germany, and Switzerland, a year after the Copenhagen Congress's impact. Over a million people protested that day, calling for their rights. The inaugural Women's Day was observed by Russian women on the final Saturday of February in 1913. Women led strikes occurred on multiple occasions in 1914, but not on March Women's Day, observed on March 8, 1914, was a day on which German women commemorated the achievement of the right to vote, which they did not obtain until

London had a sizable protest in favor of women's suffrage on March 8, 1914. Four days after Russian women organized protests in 1917 ahead of the October Revolution, the Russian the Emperor resigned. International Women's Day was observed on March 8; nonetheless, actions taken against them are permitted.

March 8th was formally declared International Women's Rights and World Peace Day by the United Nations in 1977. It is important to note that Kurdistan celebrates this day with a variety of events every year.

Although the recognition of such a day is a great achievement for the world women's movement, women knew that the struggle would continue until the message of this day was heard, until civil rights were expanded, to eliminate gender differences in human society not to be

Women understood that the fight would go on until the message of this day was heard, until civil rights were expanded, and until the goal of eliminating gender gaps in human society was fulfilled, even though the recognition of such a day is a great accomplishment for the global women's movement.

Throughout the history of the Kurdish people's liberation movement, women have been integral and significant players in the fight alongside males. They now play a significant and active role in the Kurdistan Region's government institutions.

The Kurdistan Region Honors National Costume Day On March 10

In the Kurdistan Region of Iraq, March

streets and attacked the regime's oppressive institutions, including the security department Tawari, Manzuma Shimali and police stations. By evening, all these headquarters were taken under control.

On March 12, 1991, the people of Jaloula rose up and liberated the city and its surroundings until evening. On the same day, they liberated Makhmur, Akre, Bjil, Surchiyat, Bardarash and Dinarati Zebar districts. Later, Sheikhan, Sarzey Khazir and Khan-aqin were liberated.

On March 14, 1991, the masses of Duhok rose up in the upper Baroshkey neighborhood and surrounded and attacked the regime institutions.

After the liberation of all the cities and towns of the Kurdistan Region and their control by the political forces and the Kurdish people, the only city left to be liberated was Kirkuk. The entire city of Kirkuk was liberated.

A few days after the uprising, the Iraqi Ba'athist government invaded Kurdistan again with a large army and the Kurdish people began to flee to the borders of neighboring countries. The March 1991 Kurdistan People's Uprising was a great, important and unique historical event, it brought about

People's History

10 has been formally designated as Kurdish Clothing Day. Today is recognized as the National Day of Kurdish Clothing by the Kurdish Parliament.

One of the long-standing cultural and national symbols of the Kurdish people is their traditional attire. The Kurdish nation is set apart from other nations by its flag, anthem, language, and other national emblems and components.

Every year, schools officially observe National Dress Day on March 10 by hosting special events and encouraging students to dress in traditional Kurdish attire.

Kurdish clothing is distinctive to the country and plays a significant role in Kurdish culture. Kurdish clothing styles differ from one location to the next. Its form has evolved since the Kurdish dress culture first emerged, yet it has managed to hold onto its national identity and endure among the Kurds to this day.

Kurdish clothing styles vary depending on the customs and traditions of each area and section of Kurdistan. Clothing for Men: Belts, caps, outfits, shawls and pants, ranks and pants.

Women's clothes include shirts (kras), Fistan, Kawa (Kewe), Khaftan, Sukhma (Sikhma), Kulanja, Salta, Hawri, Lachk, Gulwani, Pashtun, Faqeyana, Lawandi, Anguchak (a unique Kurdish shirt sleeve style), Dasmal, Kolwana (Charoga), deling (trousers), and undershirts (Awal kras). Shaking headband, coffee, and cap with decorations. Kalthori women are more likely to use vinegar(srkaye) (Hawre).

March 11, 1970 Agreement



The agreement between the Ba'ath Party and the Kurdistan Democratic Party (KDP), led by Mullah Mustafa Barzani, was signed on March 11, 1970. It had 22 articles total—15 of which were explicit and seven of which were hidden. Achieving unity among Kurdish ranks after four years of civil war.

The agreement was an important step to consolidate the Kurdish nation's right to autonomy inside Iraq and further advance the Kurdish issue in the region and abroad. March 11 was the product of the September Revolution led by Mustafa Barzani, which brought the Kurdish people's problem to a new stage and became the foundation for peace in Iraq, but was not implemented.

However, on March 10, 1970, Saddam and Barzani reached an agreement in Choman and it was decided to announce the contents of the agreement in Baghdad the next day. They did so and this agreement was later called the "March 11 Declaration." The March 11, 1969 agreement was based on negotiations between the ruling Ba'athist leadership and the leadership of the Septem-

ber Revolution.

The content of the agreement consisted of 22 articles, 15 of which were explicit and seven of which were kept secret. The provisions of the secret section dealt with Kirkuk and the disputed areas, including Sinjar and Khanaqin. For the first time in the history of Iraq, Kurdistan was given administrative and military autonomy and the Kurds participated in the central government with four ministers.

Russia, which had good relations with the Iraqi government at the time, mediated directly between the leadership of the September Revolution and the Ba'ath Party. When he signed the agreement, he welcomed it.

The United States, as one of the two powers of the time, welcomed the agreement, but on condition that Iraq and the Soviet Union did not get closer to each other. The direct enemies of the agreement were the Shahs of Iran, Turkey and Syria. They did not want the Kurds in Iraq to be given these rights because of the presence of Kurds in their countries.

March 11 agreement was a great victory for the Kurds and their revolution in the 20th century because they forced the Iraqi state to prove their autonomy.

Following March 11, the decolonization and isolation of a sizable portion of South Kurdistan—roughly 48% of its total area—was intensified and expanded as the first harm. Since the majority of South Kurds' rights were first formally acknowledged in writing with the 11 August 1970 proclamation, it is regarded as one of the most significant turning points in the history of the South Kurdistan revolution.

Halabja Is a Permanent Tragedy and an Incurable Wound

At the end of the eight-year Iraq-Iran war (1980-1988) and 36 years ago, the Ba'ath regime in Iraq used chemical weapons to attack the city of Halabja. From 11 am on March 16, 1988, until the next morning, the Iraqi air force bombed Halabja 15 times, each time with about 10 aircraft.

In the afternoon of the same day, the effects of the gases used in the bombing became apparent, killing thousands of civilians and injuring thousands more.

The gases used in the bombing spread the smell of apples and fruits in the city, which was strange for the residents of Halabja, so many of them hid in the basements of their homes. It created human greatness that is still one of the greatest genocides ever committed in the world.

Halabja was bombed by Sikho and Mirage Aircraft. The bombing began at 11 am and continued until the morning of March 17.

The city was attacked 15 times and more than 200 bombs of 500-kilogram were dropped on it) was used in the bombardment that strangled every living thing in the city including people, birds, animals and trees.

The casualties are estimated at more than 5,000 martyrs and 10,000 wounded. According to unofficial statistics, 5,460 victims have been registered in Halabja, while 12,800 people have been treated in Iran after the disaster, some of whom have died.

Ali Hassan Majid, also known as Ali Kimyai, is considered the main perpetrator of the chemical attack on Halabja and what happened was carried out under his orders. Ali Hassan Majid was the cousin of Iraqi President Saddam Hussein and was considered his right-hand man.

The chemical attack on Halabja is considered one of the greatest crimes against humanity in the history of the region. The chemical attack on Halabja was one of the cases in which the leaders of the Ba'athist regime had to stand on trial. On December 21, 2008, the Halabja case held its initial hearing. Ali Hassan Majid was given execution and the case was declared an offense against humanity by the court on December 17, 2010.

On December 25, 2010, eight days after the court's decision, Ali Kimyai was executed. In 2012, the rope used to execute Ali Hassan Majid was brought back to Halabja and placed in the Halabja Martyrs Monument.

Subsequently, on March 17, 2011, the Iraqi parliament declared the chemical attack on Halabja to be genocide; nevertheless, the Iraqi government has yet to fulfill its legal responsibility to provide compensation to the victims of Halabja.

Newroz Is a Symbol of the Formation of the Kurdish Nation

Every year on March 21, Kurdistan celebrates Newroz, or Kurdish New Year. Though attitudes regarding Newroz vary—some consider it a national holiday, while others consider it a religious occasion—Kurds typically both. The celebration honors this anniversary each year with artistic and cultural events. Every year, Kurdistan celebrates Newroz. There are several methods to commemorate Newroz.

Naturally, what has given the Kurds more enthusiasm in Newroz is the resistance of the oppressed against the oppressors. On that day, Kaveh Asangar defeated Azhidahak (Zukhak) and announced his victory by opening fire on the night before the first day of spring.

Although the invaders have attempted to eradicate Newroz for centuries, it is a highly unique holiday in Kurdish culture that is joyfully observed in all of the country's towns, cities, and villages. To this day, facing down tyrants and invaders is symbolized by winter, renewal, and the blueness of nature.

In addition, the Kurds utilize the arrival of Newroz and spring as a symbol to rebel against the invaders and reclaim the freedoms and rights that have been taken from them because they have been subjected to persecution, division, and occupation.

Presently, Newroz is observed as a worldwide holiday in numerous nations, and world leaders honor it by extending congratulations on this momentous occasion. The United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) formally acknowledged it as the world's oldest holiday on Wednesday, November 30, 2016.

No country exists without its own historical events and national symbols. The most significant thing that connects us Kurds is Newroz. We validate and confirm our national identity through Newroz.

Agony of The Kurdish Refugees in 1991

The 1991 Kurdish refugees took place after the Kurdish uprising of March 31. After the liberation of Kirkuk from the Ba'ath regime, it launched a massive campaign against the Kurds of South Kurdistan. In the heat of the million refugees, the freedom-seeking nations of the world sympathized with the plight of the Kurds and pressure was exerted on the states to provide international support to the Kurds.

Saddam Hussein felt the danger of the migration, so in order to suppress the uprising and to reduce international pressure on Iraq, he tried to attract the Kurdistan Front with false promises to send a message to the world that the migration was not a disaster. By inspiring the world community to stand with the Kurds, the migration generated international support and ensured that the uprising's successes would not be forgotten.

The border that the Kurdistan Regional Government currently controls is known as the no-fly zone safe heaven. Danielle Mitterrand, the wife of Francois Mitterrand, the French president at the time, was instrumental in persuading France to bring the Kurdish problem before the UN Security Council at that time. The UN Security Council resolved that the Iraqi regime should not launch armed attacks against the Kurdish people. On April 5, 1991, Resolution 688 was passed. (Ankara) in Turkey to protect the Kurdish people. Sending armed forces to protect people on their return. This decision led to the establishment of the Kurdistan Regional Parliament on 19 May 1992 and the Kurdistan Regional Government on 4 July 1992.

Although the 1991 Kurdish refugee is one of the consequences of the 1991 uprising, it is an independent event that we can analyze from several aspects and evaluate its political, economic, social and psychological aspects. The cell of neglect and forgetfulness.

The people who stayed in the fighting zones suffered the consequences of their presence, including torture, insults, arrests, and even shootings, despite the fact that all regimes directed their animosity toward the helpless civilians as a way to make up for the losses sustained in the conflict with the Peshmerga. Every time the dictatorship was militarily overthrown in a particular region, the liberated areas' civilian populations were attacked. In the event that they were defeated, the hamlet or region would be completely destroyed, designated as a restricted area, and its residents would be handled according to the whims of the military leaders, being either sent to camps for forced labor or exiled to southern and central Iraq. The laws of the defunct Majlis-e-Qiyada-e-Saura treated them like Peshmergas (rebels against national authority!), which frequently resulted in murders and massacres. It was courage that they were willing to choose death rather than fall under Ba'athist rule again. Several children and disabled people died of the cold and dozens of children were separated from their parents, some of whose fate remains unknown.

By: Sara Sultan

How Halabja ensures a prosperous future while reflecting on its tragic past



By *Jawad Qadir*

The historical significance of Halabja is clearly demonstrated through its advocacy for peaceful coexistence, a principle that was deeply cherished long before it became widely recognized in contemporary society. Halabja served as a melting pot of different religious, social, and political factions, fostering a harmonious living environment where different communities coexisted peacefully. Halabja, apart from its cultural heterogeneity, distinguishes itself in the realm of Kurdish classical literature, playing a significant role in enriching the tapestry of Kurdish literary and poetic works. Noteworthy poets and literary luminaries such as Mawlawi, Goran, and Ahmad Mukhtar Jaff have made substantial contributions to this literary tradition.

It has also acted as a platform for political and religious ideologies, accommodating a wide array of perspectives from the far left to the far right. Debates and discussions have flourished in Halabja, establishing it as a focal point for intellectual exchange.

However, to fully establish Halabja as a recognized province, certain measures need to be taken. While the Kurdistan Region has made some progress since its inception, there is still much work to be done. It would be inaccurate to claim that nothing has been achieved, but premature to assert that everything has been accomplished. Currently, Halabja is in need of economic growth as the lack of job opportunities has led many residents, especially the youth, to migrate to other cities. The absence of economic development has resulted in the decline and marginalization of the city. To address this issue, it is crucial to stimulate trade and commerce in Halabja. A strategic plan must be devised, outlining the starting point and the desired outcome, in order to uplift Halabja from its current situation. Halabja has the opportunity to enhance its economic development by focusing on key sectors such as agriculture, tourism, and trade. The fertile agricultural land in the Sharazoor region, known for its high-quality pomegranates, is not being fully utilized. Additionally, Halabja boasts numerous tourist attractions like the Zalm and Avesar resorts, which draw in many visitors. However, the region lacks the necessary infrastructure to fully support tourism. Establishing a tourism college or institute in Halabja could help unlock the area's tourism potential.

In this context, collaboration between the Kurdistan Region and the Iraqi government to facilitate the opening of the border with Iran would bring significant advantages to Halabja. Additionally, the construction of roads and bridges to connect Halabja with other areas and towns would enhance accessibility and promote economic growth. Furthermore, focusing on the development of the tourism sector would attract visitors and generate revenue for the region. It is also crucial to pay attention to the agriculture, horticulture, and livestock sectors, as they contribute significantly to the local economy.

Also, the allocation of resources towards the enhancement of cultural and sports amenities, including auditoriums and state-of-the-art arenas, would not solely contribute to the advancement of recreational activities but also stimulate the comprehensive progress of the locality.

By adopting these tactics and promoting cooperation between the municipal government and the Kurdistan Regional Government, Halabja has the potential to surmount its existing economic obstacles and flourish

PM Masrour Barzani decreed construction of Halabja Industrial City



Kurdistan Region Prime Minister Masrour Barzani has decreed the initiation of the Halabja Industrial City project, spanning 400 acres of land.

On the 36th anniversary of the chemical attack on Halabja, the KRG Prime Minister issued a decree to allocate a piece of land for the construction of an industrial area in the city of Halabja.

Bargasht Akrayi, a spokesperson for the Kurdistan Region's Board of Investment, stated that the construction industrial site is located over 3.5 kilometers away from Halabja's center.

Akrayi stated that the investor is poised to start construction as soon as the administrative procedures are completed. He underscored the project's importance in bolstering the Kurdistan Region's economic development and job creation, particularly for the people of Halabja.

Plans are underway to establish 8 to 12 industrial zones throughout Kurdistan, with most already having allocated land. These industrial cities are slated for provinces and independent administrations.

Under the ninth cabinet, 105 industrial projects, amounting to over \$2.51 billion in capital, have received licensing.

On February 22, PM Barzani laid the foundation stone for the Halabja-Tuwaqut-Qalija road and the Tuwaqut Bridge in a ceremony. Additionally, he visited an olive oil production factory in Halabja province, one of the Rasan projects aimed at bolstering local production, trade facilitation, tourism

support, and investment in the province.

During his first visit to Halabja province as Prime Minister, he inaugurated various significant projects and inspected several initiatives by the Rasan Group.

The Kurdistan Regional Government (KRG) is planning to construct 11 industrial zones as part of ongoing endeavors to modernize the local economy and diversify income sources for the public. This initiative is expected to stimulate local industry growth, enhance access to food products, and promote economic and agricultural development, ultimately reducing reliance on imports.

PM Barzani also laid the foundation stone for a food processing zone in Dohuk, as part of a series of similar projects to be implemented across the Region.

Directorate of Traffic in Halabja Governorate has started distribution of the new governorate's license plates following the Kurdistan Region Prime Minister presentation of the first license plate (23 A10000) to a resident of the city in late February.

Directorate General of Traffic Police in Halabja in a statement announced that they have started issuance of Halabja license plate numbers with the code number 23 to the people

On February 22, Kurdistan Region Prime Minister Masrour Barzani visited the Halabja Traffic Directorate and presented the first license plate (23 A10000) to a resident of Halabja.

During PM Barzani's visit to Halabja, the KRG made several decisions for the

benefit the new governorate, including, streamlining the legal procedures for recognizing Khormal District, initiating government employment opportunities for 500 residents of Halabja and launching street paving projects across Halabja.

Other KRG decisions included, establishing a committee tasked with overseeing a portion of revenue from border crossings to fund service enhancement initiatives, granting Halabja Governorate authority to execute the urban master plan devised by the Ministry of Municipalities as well as directing the Ministry of Higher Education and Scientific Research to establish a Medical College at Halabja University.

In 2018, the Kurdistan Regional Government (KRG) announced Halabja as a fourth governorate in Kurdistan.

Although the Iraqi government officially approved Halabja as the country's 19th governorate, the decision still has not been practically executed pending the Iraqi parliament's approval.

During his visit to Halabja, the Prime Minister called on the Iraqi political parties, the federal government and members of the House of Representatives "not to ignore this issue and not to use it as a political game and a budget must be provided by the Iraqi government for further reconstruction of Halabja."

He also urged the Iraqi government to fulfill its "moral and constitutional responsibilities, as well as compensate the families of the martyrs of Halabja."

Kurdistan Matters



By Dr. Tyler Fisher

When Donald Trump was elected President in 2016, I was living in northwest Kurdistan. As a US citizen, I had cast my vote weeks earlier via an international absentee ballot, and watched as the contest came to a climax in early November. To my surprise, the mild interest with which I regarded the unfolding election stood in stark contrast with the avid attention that my neighbors in Kurdistan paid to the results. While I fell asleep before polls had closed on the night of Tuesday, November 8th, my Kurdish hosts and friends remained awake until dawn as the American media broadcast the election numbers trickling in across the US states and time zones. In the end, Donald Trump defeated Hillary Clinton to become the 45th President. The mood in my neighborhood of Sheikhan, in the Nineveh Governorate, was overwhelmingly jubilant. Among the Kurds and Yezidis in my vicinity, the vibrant outpouring of hope and enthusiasm far surpassed my own blithe relief that, at last, the long, loud campaign had concluded. Just as the sun was rising in Kurdistan the day after the voting, my non-American neighbors celebrated the result by winding red fabric into turbans as a makeshift imitation of the Trump campaign's iconic red baseball caps! Trump, who had once remarked, "I'm a big fan of the Kurdish forces," in an interview with the New York Times, was clearly their man in Washington.

In the early months of his presidency, pro-Trump sentiment in Kurdistan was unmistakable. I met newborn babies who had been named after the new president. Between his election and inauguration, the notorious "Trump Fish" seafood restaurant opened in Duhok. The general hope among



the Kurds was that Trump, with his strongman persona, would take a harder line with Baghdad in favor of the KRG, and, as a more aggressive President than his predecessors, would intervene to turn the tide on the so-called Islamic State definitively. Surely Trump would reinvigorate US support of Kurdistan, in line with his emphasis on prioritizing US national interests; after all, the US could hardly ignore Kurdistan's strategic importance as a key ally in the Middle East, a confederate in the War on Terror, a buffer against Iranian aggression, and an example of representative democracy in a modernizing, pluralistic society. In practice, however, Trump did not live up to these high hopes.

=Much has changed since those heady early days following Trump's election. The robust support Trump enjoyed among the peoples of Kurdistan has given way to ambivalence. Disappointment, disillusion, and even outright suspicion now characterize Kurdish opinions on Trump, especially in the aftermath of the Kurdish Referendum of 2017. The KRG had hoped for Amer-

ican support for the Referendum; it was, after all, the Kurds' own Declaration of Independence in the American tradition of representative self-governance. But the Trump administration remained conspicuously hands-off until, within hours of the Kurdish Parliament's approval for the Referendum to be held, the US vehemently called for the Referendum to be cancelled and delayed indefinitely. Seldom have Baghdad, Iran, Turkey, and the US found such common ground in international affairs. The Kurds felt Trump's lack of support at such a juncture as a deep betrayal.

Consistent with his rhetoric of non-interventionism, even isolationism, Trump also abandoned Kurdish forces at a crucial moment in October 2019. Trump pulled back US forces in Syria, which left Kurdish fighters vulnerable to attacks by Turkey. The predictable vulnerability, as Turkey advanced in northern Syria, resulted in Kurds being slaughtered at the hands of Turkish-led units. Trump seemed to shrug off the massacre. He excused his disastrous lack of sup-

port for the Kurds by offering a bizarre geographical and historical anachronism: "They [the Kurds] didn't help us in the second World War, they didn't help us with Normandy for example." (Ten companies of Kurdish troops did, in fact, serve as recruits for British military efforts in the Middle East during World War II, part of the wider coalition that ultimately contributed to the Allied victory.) For Trump, putting into practice his slogan "America First" has meant directly downgrading US commitments to key allies, such as the KRG, with apparently little recognition of the fact that prioritizing US national interests often requires giving precedence to the defense of our allies. Trump broke faith with the Kurds who had agreed to serve as the frontline ground forces against the Islamic State and have sacrificed more than 11,000 troops in that lingering conflict.

Last week, as several more American states held primary elections, Trump passed the threshold number of party delegates necessary for securing the Republican Party's nomination for the general election. With

the only viable challengers, Florida Governor Ron DeSantis and former South Carolina Governor Nikki Haley, having now suspended their election campaigns, Trump clinches the Republican nomination, barring any impediments from his legal struggles, which remain volatile. The long-assumed rematch between Trump and Biden is all but inevitable in November.

Trump's unscripted, unfiltered candor, his readiness to speak his mind with little regard for political niceties, endears him to some Americans while offending and alienating others.

As heir to the Republican Party's legacy of defending the Kurds and championing pro-Kurdish causes, Trump still has ample opportunity to regain Kurdish trust and support (from those in Kurdistan and in the Kurdish diaspora, some of whom qualify to vote in the US election). But, as the old saying goes, actions speak louder than words. Concrete patterns of policy will ultimately trump mere patterns of bravado.

Kurds, Echoes of Sacrifice, continue the journey towards freedom and justice

The Kurdish Movement, Struggles, Progress, and Aspirations



By *Saadula Agrawi*

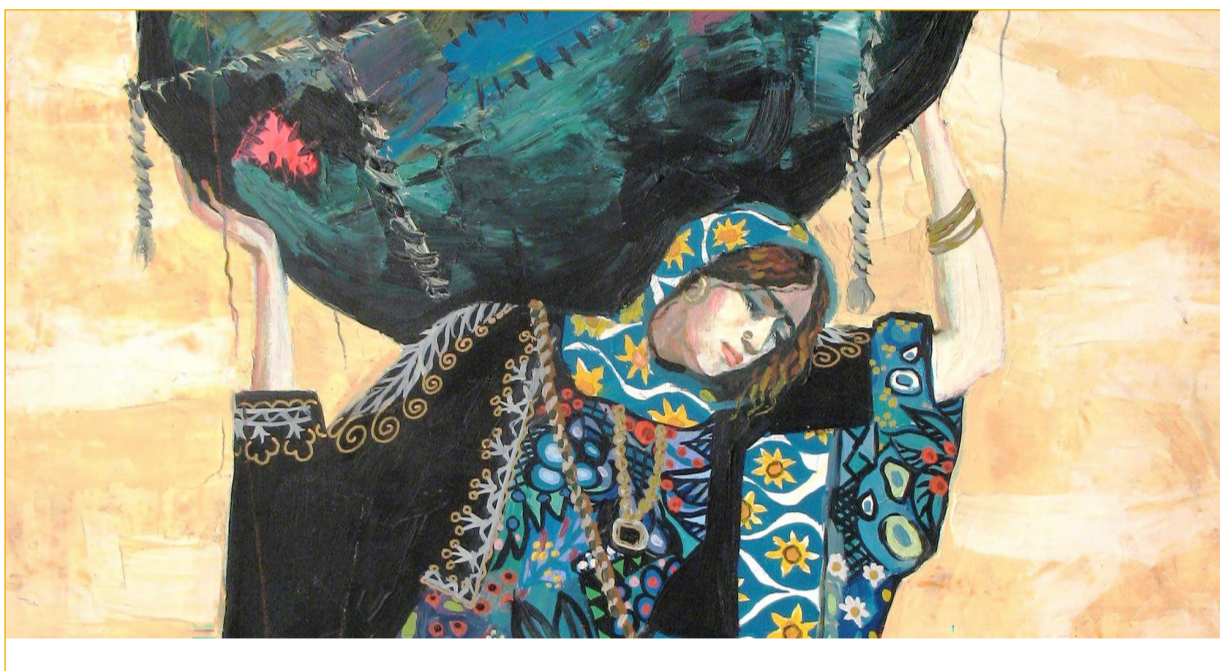
For the Kurdish people, I believe the month of March holds a special significance, commemorating pivotal moments in their history, struggles, and aspirations for self-determination. From uprisings and massacres to celebrations and declarations, March evokes a myriad of emotions and memories that shape the Kurdish identity and collective consciousness. The significance of March in Kurdish history and the enduring memories that resonate with Kurds around the world.

And of course, at the heart of Kurdish March memories lies Newroz, the ancient festival of the Kurdish New Year, celebrated on the spring equinox. Newroz symbolizes the triumph of light over darkness, freedom over oppression, and the renewal of nature. For Kurds, Newroz is not merely a cultural tradition but a symbol of resistance and resilience against tyranny and injustice. Despite attempts to suppress and co-opt the festival by authoritarian regimes, Kurds have kept the flame of Newroz alive, gathering in defiance to celebrate their identity, culture, and aspirations for freedom. March 16, 1988, marks one of the darkest chapters in Kurdish history, as Saddam Hussein's regime launched a deadly chemical attack on the town of Halabja, killing thousands of civilians, including men, women, and children. Yes, the Halabja massacre stands as a stark reminder of the atrocities committed against the Kurdish people and the international community's failure to prevent such crimes. Every March, Kurds worldwide pause to honor the memory of the victims and reaffirm their commitment to justice, accountability, and the prevention of genocide. March also commemorates the Anfal genocide, a series of systematic campaigns of violence and displacement orchestrated by the Iraqi Ba'ath regime against the Kurdish population in the late 1980s. The Anfal campaign resulted in the

deaths of tens of thousands of Kurds and the destruction of hundreds of villages. March 16, known as the Anfal Day, serves as a solemn occasion for Kurds to remember the victims, demand recognition of the genocide, and seek truth, justice, and reparations for the survivors and their families.

March holds a special place in the hearts of Kurds, evoking memories of struggle, sacrifice, and resilience in the face of adversity. From the ancient traditions of Newroz to the tragic legacies of Halabja and Anfal, March serves as a reminder of the Kurdish people's indomitable spirit and their unwavering quest for freedom, justice, and dignity. As Kurds continue to commemorate their past and honor their martyrs, March remains a time for reflection, remembrance, and renewal of their commitment to building a brighter future for generations to come. The history of Iraqi Kurdistan is marked by a legacy of resilience, struggle, and sacrifice. For centuries, the Kurdish people have faced oppression, persecution, and marginalization at the hands of various regimes and foreign powers. Yet, amidst adversity, Kurds have shown remarkable courage and determination in their quest for self-determination, freedom, and dignity. The rich tapestry of Iraqi Kurdish history, exploring the sacrifices made by Kurds in their pursuit of justice and recognition. The Kurdish people have endured centuries of oppression under successive rulers, from the Ottoman Empire to the modern Iraqi state. Throughout history, Kurds have fought against marginalization, discrimination, and attempts to suppress their identity, language, and culture. The Kurdish struggle for autonomy and self-rule has been met with violence and repression, including military campaigns, forced displacement, and chemical attacks.

One of the darkest chapters in Iraqi Kurdish history is the Anfal genocide, a



series of brutal campaigns launched by Saddam Hussein's regime in the late 1980s. The Anfal campaign targeted Kurdish civilians, resulting in mass killings, disappearances, and the destruction of thousands of villages. Tens of thousands of Kurds perished in the genocide, with survivors left to grapple with the trauma and loss inflicted upon their communities. March 16, 1988, forever changed the course of Kurdish history, as Saddam Hussein's forces unleashed a deadly chemical attack on the town of Halabja, killing thousands of civilians and injuring countless others. The Halabja massacre stands as a stark reminder of the horrors of chemical warfare and the brutality of the Ba'athist regime. The memory of Halabja serves as a rallying cry for justice and accountability for the victims and their families.

Despite the hardships and atrocities endured, Kurdish resilience and resistance have remained unwavering. From the mountains of Kurdistan to the streets of cities, Kurds have continued to resist oppression and assert their rights to self-determination and freedom. The Kurdish Peshmerga forces have played a crucial role in defending Kurdish territory and communities against external threats, including ISIS, and have become symbols of Kurdish resis-

tance and national pride. The Kurdish quest for recognition and autonomy has been a central theme in Iraqi Kurdish history. Despite setbacks and betrayals, Kurds have persisted in their pursuit of political rights, representation, and self-rule.

The establishment of the Kurdistan Regional Government (KRG) in 1992 marked a significant milestone in Kurdish history, providing a degree of self-governance and autonomy within Iraq. However, Kurds continue to advocate for greater recognition of their rights and aspirations for independence. The sacrifices made by the Kurdish people throughout their history are a testament to their resilience, courage, and determination in the face of adversity. From the atrocities of Anfal and Halabja to the ongoing struggle for recognition and autonomy, Iraqi Kurds have shown unwavering commitment to their identity, rights, and homeland. As they continue their journey towards freedom and justice, Kurds draw strength from the sacrifices of their past and the hope for a brighter future where their aspirations are realized.

The Iraqi Kurdish movement represents a dynamic and evolving struggle for autonomy, recognition, and rights within the framework of the Iraqi state. Over the decades, Kurd-

ish political parties and organizations have played a pivotal role in shaping the trajectory of Kurdish politics, society, and identity in Iraq. The history, challenges, and achievements of the Iraqi Kurdish movement, shedding light on its complexities and aspirations. The roots of the Iraqi Kurdish movement can be traced back to the early 20th century, when Kurdish nationalists began advocating for greater autonomy and recognition of Kurdish identity within the framework of the Iraqi state. The Kurdish struggle gained momentum in the aftermath of World War I and the collapse of the Ottoman Empire, as Kurds sought to assert their rights in the newly created state of Iraq.

I believe that throughout the 20th century, Kurdish political parties engaged in armed struggle and resistance against successive Iraqi governments, seeking to assert Kurdish rights and autonomy. The Kurdish Peshmerga forces played a crucial role in defending Kurdish territory and communities against external threats, including Iraqi military campaigns and repression. Following the 1991 Gulf War and the establishment of a no-fly zone in northern Iraq, the Kurdistan Region gained de facto autonomy and self-governance under the protection of the international community. The

Kurdistan Regional Government (KRG) was established, laying the groundwork for the development of Kurdish institutions, economy, and governance structures.

Yes, looking ahead, the Iraqi Kurdish movement remains committed to advancing Kurdish rights, autonomy, and self-determination within the framework of a federal and democratic Iraq. Kurds aspire to build a prosperous, inclusive, and democratic society that respects the rights and identities of all its citizens, regardless of ethnicity or religion. As Iraq continues its journey towards stability and democracy, the Iraqi Kurdish movement stands as a beacon of hope for a more just and equitable future for all Iraqis.

The Iraqi Kurdish movement embodies the resilience, courage, and determination of the Kurdish people in their quest for autonomy, recognition, and rights within Iraq. Despite the challenges and obstacles they face, Kurds remain steadfast in their commitment to building a better future for themselves and their country. As Iraq continues to navigate its complex political landscape, the Iraqi Kurdish movement will continue to play a central role in shaping the country's future and advancing the aspirations of the Kurdish people.



Kurdish Women, Breaking Barriers

Women's Rights and Activism, Political Representation, Challenges and Resilience:

By *Dania Hakim*

In the patriarchal societies of the Middle East, Kurdish women have long faced significant challenges and barriers to gender equality. However, in recent years, Kurdish women have made remarkable strides in various fields, challenging stereotypes, breaking barriers, and carving out spaces for themselves in politics, education, and society. We can explore the progress of Kurdish women, highlighting their achievements, challenges, and contributions to the advancement of gender equality. Kurdish women have made significant gains in political representation, both regionally and nationally. In the Kurdistan Region of Iraq, women hold key positions in government, parliament, and local administrations. The introduction of gender quotas has increased women's participation in politics, leading to the election of female lawmakers, ministers, and government officials. Moreover, women's rights activists and organizations have advocated for legislative reforms to address issues such as domestic violence, honor killings, and gender-based discrimination.

Education plays a crucial role in empowering Kurdish women and expanding their opportunities for socio-economic advancement. Over the years, efforts to promote girls' education and literacy have led to a significant increase in female enrollment in schools and universities across the Kurdistan Region. Women are pursuing higher education, professional careers, and entrepreneurship, challenging traditional gender roles and stereotypes. Additionally, initiatives such as women's cooperatives, vocational training programs, and microfinance projects have provided women with skills, resources, and support to start their businesses and become financially independent.

Kurdish women have been at the forefront of the struggle for women's rights and gender equality, advocating for legal reforms, social change, and empowerment initiatives.

Women's rights organizations, civil society groups, and grassroots movements have mobilized to raise awareness about gender-based violence, discrimination, and inequality. These efforts have led to the establishment of women's shelters, legal aid services, and support networks for survivors of domestic abuse and honor crimes. Moreover, Kurdish women activists have gained international recognition for their resilience, courage, and commitment to advancing women's rights in the face of adversity.

Despite progress, Kurdish women continue to face numerous challenges, including societal norms, cultural attitudes, and institutional barriers that perpetuate gender inequality and discrimination. Honor-based violence, restrictive gender roles, and lack of access to resources remain significant obstacles to women's full participation in society. Moreover, political instability, armed conflict, and displacement have disproportionately affected women and girls, exacerbating their vulnerability and marginalization. However, Kurdish women have demonstrated remarkable resilience, courage, and determination to overcome these challenges and assert their rights to equality, dignity, and justice. The progress of Kurdish women reflects a broader shift towards gender equality and women's empowerment in the Middle East. As Kurdish society continues to evolve and adapt to changing dynamics, there is hope for further advances in women's rights, representation, and participation. Continued investment in education, healthcare, economic opportunities, and legal reforms is essential to creating an enabling environment for Kurdish women to thrive and contribute to the development of their communities and the region as a whole.

The progress of Kurdish women is a testament to their resilience, strength, and determination to overcome obstacles and pursue their aspirations for a bet-



ter future. Through political activism, education, and advocacy, Kurdish women are challenging stereotypes, breaking barriers, and shaping a more inclusive and equitable society for themselves and future generations. As they continue to lead the fight for gender equality and social justice, Kurdish women serve as powerful agents of change and inspiration for women's rights movements around the world.

In Iraq, women have historically faced numerous challenges and obstacles in the pursuit of their rights and equality. From decades of conflict and instability to entrenched patriarchal norms and discriminatory laws, Iraqi women have been marginalized and deprived of their full potential. However, amidst these challenges, there have been significant strides towards

promoting women's rights and gender equality. The status of women's rights in Iraq, examining the progress made ongoing challenges, and opportunities for further advancement. Iraq's legal framework has undergone significant changes in recent years to address gender disparities and protect women's rights. The 2005 Iraqi Constitution guarantees equality between men and women and prohibits discrimination based on gender. Additionally, Iraq is a signatory to international conventions and treaties, such as the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW), which obligates the government to uphold women's rights and take measures to eliminate discrimination. Iraqi women have made strides in political representation, with increased participation in

government, parliament, and decision-making bodies. The quota system, implemented since 2003, reserves a certain percentage of seats for women in the Iraqi Parliament and local councils. While this has led to greater visibility of women in politics, challenges remain in ensuring meaningful participation and addressing gender stereotypes and biases within political institutions. Access to education is crucial for empowering women and girls and promoting gender equality. Iraq has made progress in improving access to education for girls, with increased enrollment rates and literacy levels. However, disparities persist, particularly in rural and marginalized areas, where cultural norms and economic barriers hinder girls' education. Initiatives to promote girls' education, vocational training, and literacy programs are

essential for empowering women and enhancing their socio-economic opportunities.

Gender-based violence remains a pervasive issue in Iraq, with women and girls disproportionately affected by domestic violence, honor killings, and sexual harassment. Despite legal reforms and initiatives to combat violence against women, implementation remains a challenge due to limited resources, inadequate services, and cultural attitudes that condone or normalize violence. Efforts to strengthen legal protections, expand support services for survivors, and raise awareness about women's rights are crucial for addressing gender-based violence and ensuring justice for victims. Deep-rooted patriarchal norms and cultural attitudes continue to pose significant barriers to women's rights and gender equality in Iraq. Traditional gender roles, discriminatory practices, and social expectations limit women's autonomy, mobility, and decision-making power within families and communities. Addressing these norms requires comprehensive strategies that involve community engagement, education, media campaigns, and religious leaders' support to challenge harmful stereotypes and promote gender-equitable attitudes. While progress has been made in advancing women's rights in Iraq, significant challenges persist, requiring sustained efforts and commitment from government, civil society, and the international community. Empowering women, combating gender-based violence, promoting education, and challenging discriminatory norms are essential steps towards achieving gender equality and ensuring women's full participation and rights in Iraqi society. As Iraq continues its journey towards democracy and development, upholding women's rights must remain a priority for building a more inclusive, just, and prosperous future for all its citizens.

The Evolving Relationship between Kurds and the Iraqi Government



Resource-Sharing and Revenue Allocation, Security Cooperation and Counterterrorism Efforts

By *James Harris*

I believe that the relationship between the Kurds and the Iraqi government has been marked by a complex interplay of cooperation, tension, and conflict, shaped by historical grievances, political dynamics, and territorial disputes. Despite shared aspirations for stability and prosperity, both parties have often found themselves at odds over issues of autonomy, resource-sharing, and national identity. The multifaceted relationship between Kurds and the Iraqi government, exploring its historical context, current challenges, and prospects for the future. The history of Kurdish-Iraqi relations is deeply intertwined with the struggle for Kurdish autonomy and recognition within the Iraqi state. Kurds have long sought greater political rights, cultural recognition, and control over their territories, while successive Iraqi governments have often viewed Kurdish aspirations with suspicion and sought to assert central control. The relationship between Kurds and the Iraqi government has been shaped by a series of autonomy agreements, most notably the 1970 Autonomy Agreement and the 2005 Iraqi Constitution. These agreements have provided the Kurdistan Region with a degree of self-governance and control over its affairs, including its security forces, economy, and natural resources. However, disputes over the implementation and interpretation of these agreements have led to periodic tensions and conflicts between the two parties.

One of the key sources of contention between Kurds and the Iraqi government is the issue of resource-sharing and revenue allocation, particularly with regards to oil and gas revenues. Disputes over the distribution of oil wealth and the management of oil fields have strained relations between the Kurdistan Regional Government (KRG) and the central government

in Baghdad, leading to legal battles, economic sanctions, and occasional military confrontations. Despite their political differences, Kurds and the Iraqi government have collaborated on security matters, particularly in the fight against ISIS and other extremist groups. Kurdish Peshmerga forces have played a crucial role in defending Kurdish territories and supporting Iraqi security forces in their efforts to combat terrorism. However, disagreements over the scope of Kurdish autonomy and the role of Peshmerga forces have sometimes hindered effective cooperation. Despite the challenges and conflicts that have characterized their relationship, Kurds and the Iraqi government have shown a willingness to engage in dialogue and reconciliation efforts. Initiatives such as the Erbil Agreement and the Baghdad-Erbil dialogue process have sought to address key issues of contention and promote greater cooperation between the two parties. While progress has been made in some areas, significant challenges remain to be overcome.

I believe that the relationship between Kurds and the Iraqi government is characterized by a complex interplay of historical grievances, political dynamics, and competing interests. While both parties share a common desire for stability, security, and prosperity, they must navigate a range of challenges and disputes in order to build a more constructive and cooperative relationship. By engaging in dialogue, addressing key issues of contention, and respecting the rights and aspirations of all Iraqi citizens, Kurds and the Iraqi government can work towards a more inclusive and harmonious future for Iraq.

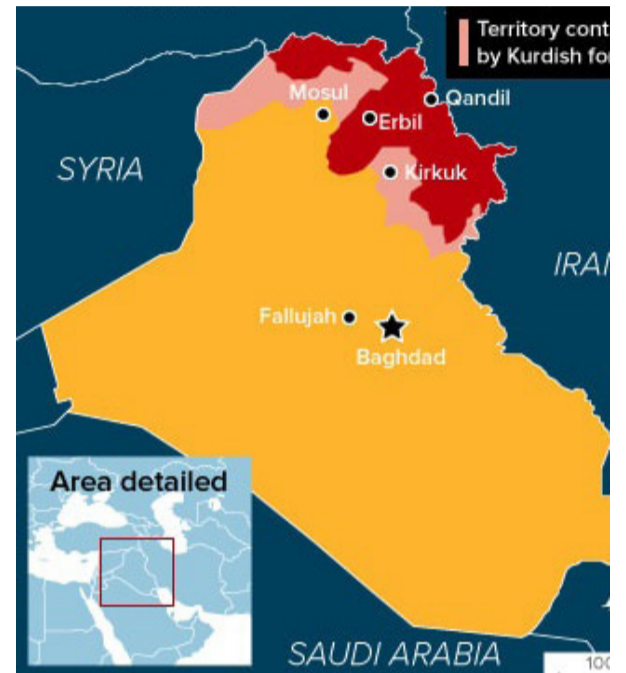
The relationship between Kurds and Arabs in the Middle East is a complex and multifaceted one, shaped by centuries of history, cultural interactions, and political dy-

namics. Despite sharing a common homeland and facing common challenges, Kurds and Arabs have often found themselves at odds over issues of identity, autonomy, and resource-sharing. The complexities of Kurdish-Arab relations, examining their historical context, current dynamics, and prospects for cooperation. The history of Kurdish-Arab relations dates back centuries, with both communities coexisting and interacting in the fertile lands of Mesopotamia. Over the centuries, Kurds and Arabs have shared cultural, linguistic, and economic ties, while also maintaining distinct identities and traditions. However, historical conflicts and power struggles have sometimes strained relations between the two communities. The legacy of colonialism in the Middle East has had a profound impact on Kurdish-Arab relations, as colonial powers drew arbitrary borders and imposed political systems that often marginalized ethnic minorities, including Kurds. The rise of Arab nationalism and the quest for statehood further complicated relations, as Kurds sought recognition of their identity and rights within newly independent Arab states. Kurds have long struggled for greater autonomy and recognition of their cultural and political rights within Arab-majority countries such as Iraq, Syria, Turkey, and Iran. The Kurdish quest for self-determination has sometimes been met with resistance and repression from Arab governments, leading to conflicts and tensions in areas with significant Kurdish populations.

Yes, despite historical tensions, Kurds and Arabs have often found themselves on the same side of political struggles and conflicts in the Middle East. Kurdish forces have collaborated with Arab militias and factions in the fight against common enemies, such as ISIS, while Kurdish political parties have engaged in alliances with Arab parties

and coalitions in various countries. Kurdish-Arab relations face a range of challenges, including unresolved territorial disputes, resource conflicts, and competing nationalist aspirations. However, there are also opportunities for cooperation and dialogue, particularly in areas such as economic development, cultural exchange, and regional stability. By recognizing and respecting each other's rights and identities, Kurds and Arabs can work towards building a more inclusive and harmonious future for the region. I believe that the relationship between Kurds and Arabs in the Middle East is characterized by a complex interplay of historical, cultural, and political factors. While tensions and conflicts have sometimes strained relations between the two communities, there are also opportunities for cooperation and reconciliation. By fostering dialogue, mutual understanding, and respect for diversity, Kurds and Arabs can build bridges and forge a shared future based on peace, prosperity, and coexistence in the Middle East.

The political history of Iraq is a rich tapestry woven with threads of conquest, empire, revolution, and conflict. From the ancient civilizations of Mesopotamia to the modern-day republic, Iraq has witnessed a myriad of political transformations, each leaving its mark on the country's identity and trajectory. In this article, we embark on a journey through Iraqi political history, exploring the key events, leaders, and ideologies that have shaped the nation's past and continue to influence its present. The fertile lands of Mesopotamia, known as the cradle of civilization, were home to some of the world's earliest political entities, including the Sumerians, Akkadians, Babylonians, and Assyrians. These ancient civilizations laid the foundation for urbanization, agriculture, and governance, leaving behind a legacy of



monumental architecture, legal codes, and religious texts that continue to resonate in Iraqi culture. With the rise of Islam in the 7th century, Iraq became a center of Islamic civilization, serving as the capital of the Abbasid Caliphate and the seat of learning and culture during the Islamic Golden Age. Baghdad, founded in 762 AD, flourished as a cosmopolitan metropolis, attracting scholars, traders, and artisans from across the Islamic world.

We know that In the early 20th century, Iraq came under British colonial rule following the collapse of the Ottoman Empire. The country gained independence in 1932 but remained under the influence of British imperialism, with a monarchy installed to govern the newly formed state. The Hashemite monarchy ruled Iraq until its overthrow in a military coup in 1958. The Ba'ath Party, founded in the 1940s, rose to power in Iraq in the 1960s, advocating for Arab nationalism, socialism, and secularism. The Ba'athist regime, led by Saddam Hussein from 1979 until his ouster in 2003, implemented authoritarian policies, suppressed dissent, and waged war against neighboring countries, including Iran and Kuwait. The US-led invasion of Iraq in 2003 toppled the Ba'athist regime and ushered

in a period of political turmoil and sectarian violence. The subsequent establishment of a transitional government and the drafting of a new constitution paved the way for democratic elections and the formation of a parliamentary system. However, Iraq continues to grapple with challenges of governance, security, and sectarian divisions. Today, Iraq's political landscape is characterized by a fragile balance of power between ethnic and sectarian factions, with competing interests vying for influence and control. The country's parliamentary system, enshrined in the 2005 constitution, has led to a rotation of power among various political blocs, each representing different constituencies and agendas.

The political history of Iraq is a testament to the resilience and complexity of the nation and its people. From the ancient civilizations of Mesopotamia to the modern-day republic, Iraq has traversed a tumultuous path of conquest, empire, revolution, and conflict. As Iraq continues to navigate its political landscape, it faces the challenge of forging a unified and inclusive vision for the future, one that honors its rich history while embracing the diversity of its society.

The Importance of Iraqi Kurdistan Region

Regional Dynamics and Geopolitical Considerations

By *Dr. Mathew Jose*

Investment and International Partnerships, Economic Development and Revenue Generation

In recent years, the Kurdistan Region of Iraq has emerged as a key player in the energy sector, with its vast oil and natural gas reserves holding significant strategic importance for both regional and global energy markets. As the Kurdistan Region continues to develop its energy infrastructure and attract investment, it has the potential to become a major energy hub in the Middle East. The energy importance of Iraqi Kurdistan Region and its implications for regional development and stability.

Iraqi Kurdistan Region is endowed with abundant energy resources, including significant reserves of oil and natural gas. The region's geological formations, particularly in areas such as the Kirkuk and Mosul oil fields, contain vast deposits of hydrocarbons that have attracted the attention of international oil companies. The Kurdistan Region has rapidly expanded its energy production capacity in recent years, with a growing number of oil and gas fields coming online. The region's oil production has surged, reaching significant levels of exports through pipelines to Turkey and other neighboring countries. Additionally, plans for the construction of new pipelines and export terminals aim to further increase the region's capacity to export energy resources to global markets. The energy sector plays a central role in the economic development of Iraqi Kurdistan Region, contributing to job creation, infrastructure investment, and revenue generation for the local government. Oil and gas revenues have provided a vital source of income for the Kurdistan Regional Government (KRG), enabling investments in education, healthcare, and other social services,

as well as infrastructure projects aimed at improving the region's economic competitiveness.

While the energy sector remains a cornerstone of the Kurdistan Region's economy, efforts are underway to diversify economic activities and reduce reliance on oil and gas revenues. The KRG has implemented policies to promote investment in other sectors, such as agriculture, tourism, and manufacturing, with the aim of creating a more resilient and sustainable economy.

The energy importance of Iraqi Kurdistan Region has significant geopolitical implications, particularly in the context of regional power dynamics and competition for energy resources. The region's growing energy production and exports have the potential to reshape regional energy flows and influence geopolitical alliances and rivalries in the Middle East. Despite its energy potential, Iraqi Kurdistan Region faces a range of challenges, including infrastructure constraints, regulatory issues, and political instability. Moreover, fluctuations in global oil prices and regional conflicts pose risks to the region's energy sector. However, with prudent management, investment in infrastructure, and regional cooperation, Iraqi Kurdistan Region can capitalize on its energy resources to foster economic growth, enhance regional stability, and contribute to global energy security.

The energy importance of Iraqi Kurdistan Region presents both opportunities and challenges for the region's development and prosperity. As the region continues to expand its energy infrastructure, attract investment, and strengthen its position in global energy markets, it has the potential to become a key player in the Middle East's energy landscape. By leveraging its abundant energy resources wisely, Iraqi Kurdistan Region can contribute to economic growth, regional stability, and sustainable development for the benefit of its people and the broader region.

The Iraqi Kurdistan Region has emerged as a significant player in the global oil industry, boasting abundant reserves and a growing production capacity. The region's oil sector has attracted considerable investment from international companies and has the potential to drive economic growth and development. How-

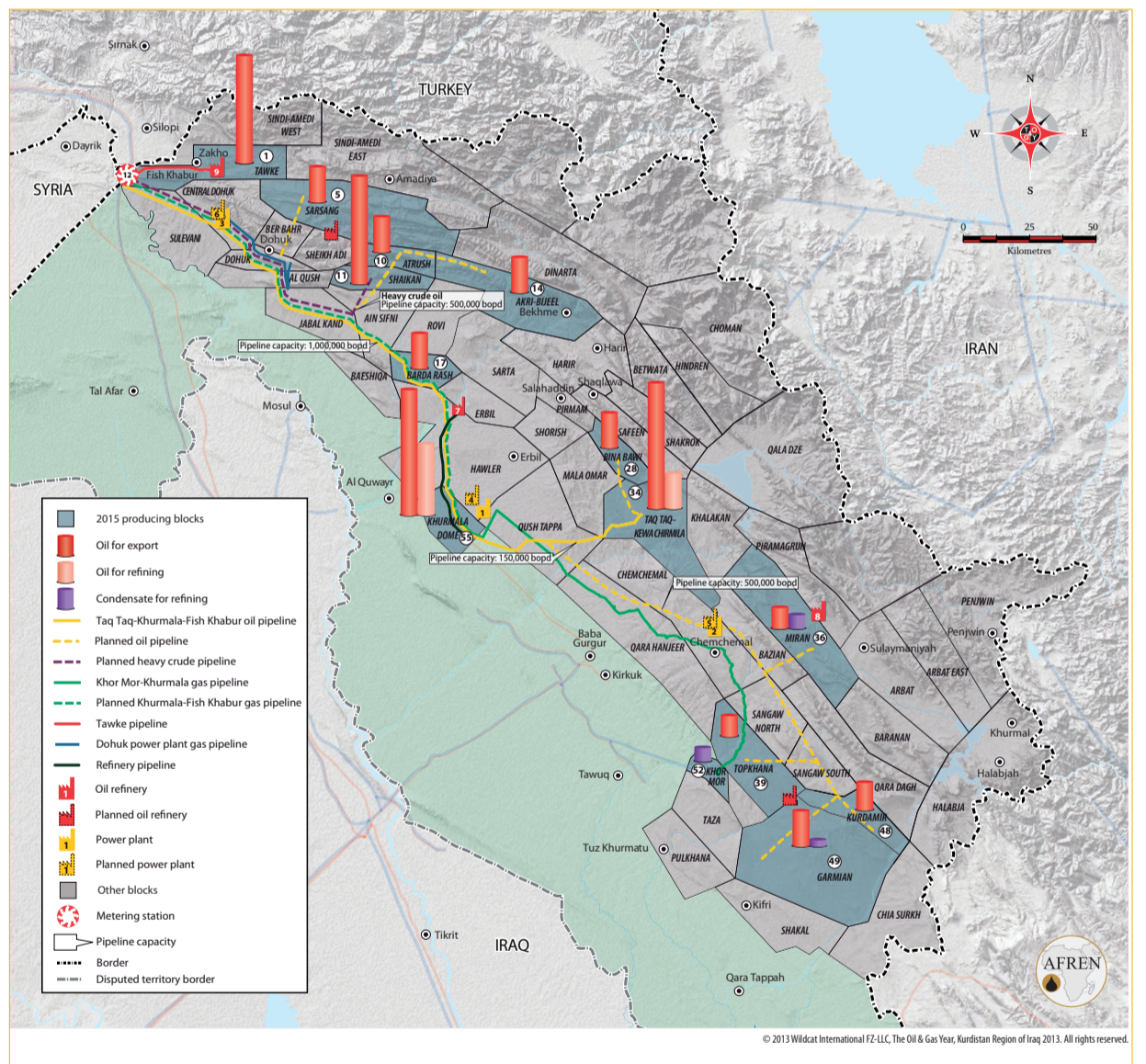
cantly expanded its oil production capacity, with production levels reaching hundreds of thousands of barrels per day. The region has invested in modern infrastructure, including pipelines, export terminals, and refineries, to support its growing oil industry.

The oil sector in Iraqi Kurdistan Region pres-

ent and develop oil fields, leveraging their technical expertise and financial resources. Despite its potential, the oil sector in Iraqi Kurdistan Region faces several challenges, including political tensions between the KRG and the central government in Baghdad. Disputes over oil revenue-sharing, contract terms, and the status

as air and water pollution, land degradation, and community displacement must be addressed through sustainable practices and effective regulation.

The oil sector in Iraqi Kurdistan Region holds immense potential for economic growth and development, offering significant opportunities for investment and partner-



ever, the sector also faces a range of challenges, including political tensions, regulatory issues, and fluctuating oil prices. The opportunities and challenges within the oil sector in Iraqi Kurdistan Region. Iraqi Kurdistan Region is home to substantial oil reserves, estimated at billions of barrels. These reserves are primarily located in fields such as Taq Taq, Tawke, and Shaikan, which have attracted investment from major international oil companies. In recent years, the Kurdistan Region has signifi-

cantly expanded its oil production capacity, with production levels reaching hundreds of thousands of barrels per day. The region has invested in modern infrastructure, including pipelines, export terminals, and refineries, to support its growing oil industry.

of oil contracts have led to periodic tensions and disruptions in oil production and exports.

Like other oil-producing regions, Iraqi Kurdistan Region is susceptible to market volatility and fluctuations in oil prices. Changes in global oil demand, geopolitical tensions, and economic conditions can impact the region's oil revenues and investment prospects. The expansion of the oil sector in Iraqi Kurdistan Region has raised concerns about its environmental and social impacts. Issues such

ship. However, realizing this potential requires addressing political tensions, regulatory challenges, and environmental concerns. By fostering cooperation between the KRG and the central government, promoting transparency and accountability, and adopting sustainable practices, Iraqi Kurdistan Region can harness its oil resources for the benefit of its people and the broader region.

Remembering Halabja, Chemical Attack on Kurds



Al-Anfal, the Devastating Attacks on Kurds, Quest for Justice and Recognition

By *Dr. Nojdar Akreyi*

The town of Halabja stands as a haunting symbol of one of the darkest chapters in Iraq's modern history. On March 16, 1988, during the final days of the Iran-Iraq War, Saddam Hussein's regime launched a devastating chemical attack on Halabja, killing thousands of Kurdish civilians and leaving a lasting scar on the collective memory of the Kurdish people. The tragic events of the Halabja massacre, examining its historical context, impact, and legacy. The Iran-Iraq War, which lasted from 1980 to 1988, saw intense fighting between Iraq and Iran, with both sides resorting to brutal tactics and indiscriminate attacks. As part of Saddam Hussein's campaign against Kurdish insurgents in northern Iraq, Halabja, a predominantly Kurdish town near the Iranian border, became a target for chemical weapons.

On March 16, 1988, Iraqi warplanes dropped a deadly cocktail of chemical agents, including mustard gas and nerve agents, on Halabja. The attack, which lasted several hours, unleashed a wave of death and destruction, as toxic clouds enveloped the town, suffocating and poisoning thousands of civilians, including men, women, and children. The chemical attack on Halabja resulted in the deaths of an estimated 5,000 to 7,000 people, with tens of thousands more suffering from debilitating injuries and long-term health effects. The harrowing images of the massacre shocked the world and prompted widespread condemnation, leading to calls for accountability and justice for the victims. The Halabja massacre left an indelible mark on the Kurdish people, traumatizing survivors and generations to come. Despite the immense suffering inflicted upon them, the Kurds of Halabja have demonstrated



remarkable resilience and determination, rebuilding their lives and communities in the aftermath of the tragedy.

In the years following the Halabja massacre, efforts have been made to seek justice for the victims and hold those responsible accountable for their crimes. In 2005, Saddam Hussein was brought to trial for his role in the massacre, ultimately facing justice for his crimes against humanity. Every year on March 16th, the people of Halabja and Kurds around the world gather to commemorate the anniversary of the massacre, honoring the memory of the victims and reaffirming their commitment to justice and peace. The Halabja Memorial Monument, erected in the town center, serves as a solemn reminder of the horrors of chemical warfare and the resilience of the human spirit.

The chemical attack on

Halabja stands as a tragic reminder of the brutality of war and the devastating impact of chemical weapons on civilian populations. As we remember the victims of the Halabja massacre, we must also renew our commitment to preventing such atrocities from ever happening again and ensuring that those responsible are held accountable for their crimes against humanity. The Al-Anfal campaign stands as one of the most tragic and brutal episodes in the history of Iraq, particularly for the Kurdish population. Orchestrated by the regime of Saddam Hussein in the late 1980s, the Al-Anfal campaign aimed to suppress Kurdish resistance and eliminate perceived threats to the Ba'athist regime. The harrowing events of the Al-Anfal attacks, examining their impact on Kurdish communities and their enduring legacy.

The Al-Anfal campaign took place against the

backdrop of the Iran-Iraq War, during which Kurdish rebels in northern Iraq, supported by Iran, posed a challenge to Saddam Hussein's regime. In response, the Iraqi government launched a ruthless campaign of repression and extermination against the Kurds, employing chemical weapons, mass executions, and forced displacement. The Al-Anfal campaign consisted of a series of military offensives carried out by Iraqi forces between 1986 and 1989, targeting Kurdish villages, towns, and rural areas across northern Iraq. The attacks were characterized by widespread atrocities, including the use of chemical weapons such as mustard gas and nerve agents, mass killings, and the destruction of civilian infrastructure. The Al-Anfal attacks resulted in the deaths of an estimated 50,000 to 100,000 Kurds, with thousands more subjected to torture, forced displacement,

and displacement. Entire villages were razed to the ground, and families were torn apart as loved ones were killed or forcibly separated. The psychological and emotional scars of the Al-Anfal campaign continue to haunt survivors and their descendants to this day. The Al-Anfal campaign drew condemnation from the international community, with human rights organizations and governments denouncing the atrocities committed by the Iraqi regime. The United Nations Security Council passed Resolution 688 in 1991, condemning Iraq's repression of its civilian population, including the Kurds, and calling for an end to human rights abuses. In the aftermath of the Al-Anfal campaign, efforts have been made to seek justice for the victims and hold the perpetrators accountable for their crimes. In 2005, Saddam Hussein was brought to trial for

his role in the campaign, ultimately facing justice for his crimes against humanity. The Al-Anfal attacks left an indelible mark on Kurdish communities, shaping their collective memory and identity. Every year, Kurds around the world commemorate the anniversary of the Al-Anfal campaign, honoring the memory of the victims and reaffirming their commitment to justice, truth, and remembrance.

The Al-Anfal campaign represents a dark chapter in the history of Iraq, marked by unspeakable suffering and tragedy for the Kurdish people. As we remember the victims of the Al-Anfal attacks, we must also renew our commitment to preventing such atrocities from ever happening again and ensuring that the voices of the victims are heard, their stories are told, and their memory is honored for generations to come.

Kurdistan clásico ends in dramatic draw

Coaches and players voice concerns over league schedule after intense showdown at Franso Hariri stadium

In the heart of the Franso Hariri International Stadium on Friday evening, a throng of passionate fans gathered to witness the gripping clash of the 19th round of the Iraqi Stars League. Among them stood fervent supporters of Erbil, affectionately known as the Yellow Castle team, eager to rally behind their beloved squad.

Facing off against formidable rivals Duhok on their home turf, the atmosphere was electric with anticipation as the match unfolded. Both sides showcased remarkable skill and determination, culminating in a hard-fought 1-1 draw that left spectators on the edge of their seats.

The excitement ignited in the 29th minute when Helio Montero netted a crucial goal, granting Erbil the lead in the first half. However, Duhok mounted a spirited comeback in the second half, refusing to concede defeat.

In a dramatic twist of fate, Jabbar Karim delivered the equalizer for Duhok in the 56th minute, ensuring that the highly anticipated Kurdistan Clásico would end in a deadlock. It was a testament to the resilience and fortitude of both teams as they battled fiercely until



A view of Erbil captain vs Duhok captain for the start of their team's match.

the final whistle.

Following the intense showdown, coaches from both sides took to the podium to voice their concerns about the league's congested schedule, which saw Erbil and Duhok settling for a draw.

"Unfortunately, all the clubs are suffering from the crowded schedule. We

have lost several players due to many trips. Unfortunately, Mohammed Qasim has been ruled out due to injury, but we must all work together to win the league," expressed Erbil coach Haider Abdulmir.

Erbil midfielder Akam Hashim echoed his coach's sentiments, lamenting, "We were better and de-

served to win. Unfortunately, we fell short of one point, but luck was not on our side."

Duhok coach Ahmad Khalaf criticized the demanding schedule, stating, "The schedule in the Iraqi Stars League is relentless. We play a game every three days, which has a detrimental impact

on the players' performance. Our team has been exhausted for two weeks due to extensive traveling and injuries."

Despite the challenges, Khalaf expressed satisfaction with the outcome, noting, "We are content with the result as it secures fourth place for us in the first round of the Iraqi

Stars League, which is a commendable achievement."

In the aftermath of the intense clash, Erbil and Duhok ended their encounter in a 1-1 draw at the Franso Hariri Stadium, with several key players sidelined due to injuries.

Sulaimani Club Triumphs in Kurdistan Handball League

Decisive Victory Over Erbil Secures Championship, While Keywan Clinches Third Place

The triumph of Sulaimani Club in the Kurdistan Handball League marked a significant milestone in their sporting journey, particularly with their decisive victory in the finals against Erbil, where they won with a notable margin of 39-21. This victory in the final of the Kurdistan Premier League wasn't just another win; it was a statement of dominance and skill, achieved last month in a season that had seen fierce competition from start to finish.

Throughout the league, both Sulaimani and Erbil demonstrated their strength and competitiveness by consistently outplaying their opponents. Their path to the final was paved with consecutive victories over formidable teams like Soran, Keywan, and Qala. These victories set the stage for a highly



This picture shows Sulaimani hanball team. PRESS PHOTO

anticipated final, with fans and pundits alike expecting a close and thrilling encounter. However, the outcome defied these expectations dramatically.

Sulaimani's performance in the final was nothing

short of spectacular. From the very beginning, they took control of the game, asserting their dominance in both attack and defense. Their tactical superiority and physical preparedness allowed them to outma-

neuver Erbil, who were the previous season's champions. This overwhelming display of prowess left no doubt about Sulaimani's rightful place at the pinnacle of the league, marking a significant shift in the re-

gional handball hierarchy.

The battle for the third place in the league also captured the attention of handball enthusiasts. Qala of Erbil and Keywan of Kirkuk faced off in a match that was more than just a

consolation prize; it was about pride, improvement from the season's efforts, and securing a spot on the podium. Keywan emerged victorious in this encounter, defeating Qala 22-18. This win not only secured them the third place in the league standings but also highlighted the depth of talent and competitive spirit within the league.

Sulaimani Club's championship victory in the Kurdistan Handball League is a testament to their hard work, strategic planning, and the relentless pursuit of excellence. Their triumph is not merely a reflection of their prowess on the court but also an inspiration for aspiring athletes in the region. It underscores the vibrant and competitive nature of handball in Kurdistan, promising a bright future for the sport.



Folklore Spotlight



Mazhar Khaleghi

Mazhar Khaleghi, born in August 1938 in Sanandaj, Iran, stands as a monumental figure in the preservation and celebration of Kurdish folklore music. From a young age, Khaleghi displayed an exceptional talent for singing, starting his journey in the realm of music at just eight years old. Under the tutelage of his school music teacher and later, the Kurdish master musician Hassan Kamkar, he honed his skills in Kurdish and Persian musical modes, laying the foundation for his lifelong dedication to Kurdish folk melodies.

By the age of twelve, Khaleghi had already made a name for himself, performing on the local radio station in Sine and captivating audiences across the region. Despite the absence of recordings from his early performances, except for a few from 1958, his voice became a symbol of Kurdish culture and identity.

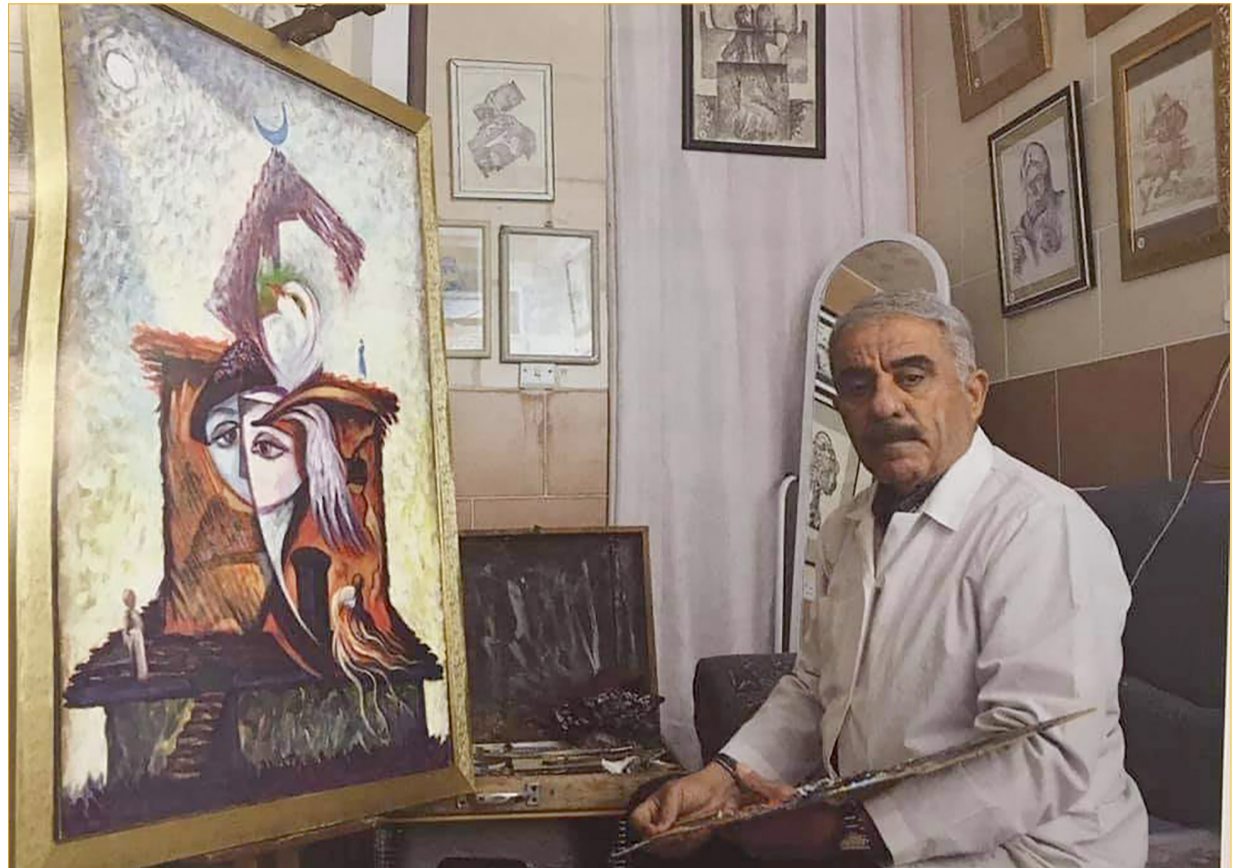
Khaleghi's move to Tehran in 1958 to attend Tehran University marked the beginning of a new chapter in his career. He quickly became a fixture on Radio Tehran, collaborating with some of Iran's most esteemed conductors and recording over 150 pieces of Kurdish folk music. His work with various orchestras, including the Tehran Symphonic, Cultural Ministry, and Radio Tehran Orchestras, further solidified his status as a pivotal figure in Iranian music.

However, the 1979 revolution led to significant changes in Iran's cultural landscape, with restrictions placed on music that did not include Islamic verses. This prompted Khaleghi to leave Iran, but his exile did not silence his voice. Instead, he continued to inspire hope and joy among the Kurdish diaspora, especially during the dark times of genocide committed by the Iraqi regime against the Kurds.

Khaleghi's recorded music serves as a bridge connecting three generations, encapsulating Kurdish literature, folk customs, and both modern and classical music. His last album, recorded before leaving Iran, consists of twelve songs dedicated to his people, symbolizing his enduring legacy as a beacon of cultural preservation and resilience. Mazhar Khaleghi's contributions to Kurdish music and culture continue to resonate, making his work an invaluable asset for future generations seeking to understand their heritage.

Preserving Kurdish heritage through art

Dara Mohamed Ali, a pivotal figure in Kurdistan's cultural landscape shares insights on art, education, and museums



Dara Mohamed Ali, a prominent figure within Kurdistan's cultural and artistic community, offers his perspective on various artistic matters and reflects on his personal experiences. Through his contributions, he provides a valuable perspective on the cultural scene, offering not only his thoughts on different artistic aspects but also weaving in his personal experiences. His role and engagement in Kurdistan's cultural and artistic sphere make his viewpoint particularly meaningful and enriching.

Born in 1950 in Erbil, Ali has dedicated over 30 years to teaching art, with an impressive portfolio that spans various artistic forms. As a teacher, artist, and cultural advocate, Ali sheds light on his impactful journey and the importance of preserving Kurdish heritage through artistic expression.

Reflecting on a lifelong commitment to art education

Ali began by reflecting on his extensive experience as a teacher of art in Howler schools and his role at the Howler Fine Arts Institute. With over three decades of teaching under his belt, he emphasizes the crucial role of education in nurturing the next generation of Kurdish artists. He shared, "Teaching art has been my passion for over 30 years. It's about nurturing young minds and preserving our cultural heritage through artistic expression."

Moozay Awene: Filling the gap with Mirror Museum

One of the highlights of our conversation was Ali's recent venture – the creation of Moozay Awene, or the Mirror Museum, in 2021. Ali passionately shared his dream of establishing a museum to bridge the gap in the cultural landscape of Kurdistan. He explained, "This was

a dream of mine from a long time ago. Unfortunately, in Kurdistan, we don't have a lot of museums. When people go to check things in other countries, they want to know where the museums are to learn more about the history and culture of the people of that country. The paintings and drawings are crucial parts of the history and culture of people."

Artistic versatility and innovation in education

Ali's artistic journey spans various specializations, from Caricature art to Calligraphy, and he delves into his unique style called "mirrored monument." He discusses his schools of painting and drawing, including Realism, Surrealism, and abstraction, as well as his efforts to adapt drawing through shapes for both children and adults, emphasizing the reflection of Kurdish identity in the process. "Drawing through shapes has been practiced for a long time ago, but I made a lot of changes so Kurdish people can find themselves in them," he explained.

Art as silent poems: Conveying stories through drawing and painting

Throughout the interview, Ali passionately expresses his belief that drawings and paintings are silent poems that convey stories. He discusses his focus on portraying Kurdish daily life, historical events, and love stories through his art. He said, "One of the ways of telling stories is through drawing and painting. I have tried to tell stories in my arts so people would know that I have messages to convey when I draw and paint. Drawing is more than just a bare picture; it can play the role of other arts and literature."

Economic sustainability for artists and colors as

a symbol of life

Ali shares insights into the economic aspect of being an artist, emphasizing the rights of artists to make a living from their craft. He also discusses the value of colors in life, especially for the colorful Kurdish culture. "The artists have rights to make money out of their arts so they can continue doing the arts. When the arts become a profession, the artists can be more dedicated to their jobs," he noted. "Colors are very valuable in life, especially for Kurdish people who like to appear colorful all the time. I think artists can make even new colors through mixing the basic paints."

Integral role in artistic associations: Building community

As a member of esteemed associations such as the Kurdistan Artist's Association, Iraqi Painters' Group, Iraqi Sculpture Association, and Kurdistan Journalists Syndicate, Ali speaks about his integral role in the broader artistic community of Iraq. His involvement reflects his commitment to building a strong network of artists and fostering collaboration. "Being part of these associations has allowed me to connect with fellow artists, share ideas, and contribute to the cultural scene of Kurdistan," he concluded.

Dara Mohamed Ali's interview offers a deep dive into his multifaceted contributions to art education, cultural preservation, and artistic expression. His unwavering dedication to preserving Kurdish heritage through various artistic forms is evident in both his words and his impressive body of work. Ali's impact extends beyond the canvas, shaping the cultural landscape of Kurdistan for generations to come.