Gmail **Slocum FARA account <farakrg@gmail.com>**

Fwd: [August 19] - RSVP for commemoration of World Humanitarian Day

1 message

J. Michael Slocum <jmichaelslocum@slocumboddie.com> Thu, Aug 18, 2016 at 2:08 PM
Reply-To: jmichaelslocum@slocumboddie.com
To: farakrg@gmail.com

J. Michael Slocum
Slocum & Boddie, PC
5400 Shawnee Rd. Suite 300
Alexandria, VA 22312
703-451-9001
703-451-8557 (fax)
jmichaelslocum@slocumboddie.com

---------- Forwarded message ----------
From: **Kurdistan Regional Government - USA** <us@gov.krd>
Date: Thu, Aug 18, 2016 at 1:53 PM
Subject: [August 19] - RSVP for commemoration of World Humanitarian Day
To: jmichaelslocum@slocumboddie.com

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Kurdistan Regional Government
Representation in the United States

Washington, DC

تکایە بڕۆ خوارەوەی لاپەڕەکە بۆ نوسخە کوردییەکە

The Kurdistan Regional Government
Representation in the United States

invites you to join us for a discussion

in commemoration of

World Humanitarian Day

Friday, August 19, 2016
11:00 am

1532 16th St NW
Washington, DC

Remarks by

Nancy Wilson
President, CEO
Relief International

Bayan Sami Abdul Rahman
KRG Representative to the United States

RSVP HERE



Violence in Iraq and Syria has displaced more than 15 million people. In the Kurdistan Region alone, over 1.8 million Syrians and Iraqis have found refuge from terrorism, genocide, and war.

Over the past decades, international organizations have played a crucial role in alleviating the suffering of humanitarian disasters. This year marks the 25th anniversary of Operation Provide Comfort, a military and humanitarian operation that saved thousands of Kurdistani lives. Humanitarian organizations also provided important food, medicine, clothing, and livelihood support throughout the Oil-for-Food program, Operation Iraqi Freedom, and today.

We thank and honor these humanitarian workers who sometimes put themselves in harm's way to serve those who need it most.

هەینی، ١٩ ی ئابی ٢٠١٦
کاتژمێر 11:00 ی بەیانی

نوێنەرایەتیی حکومەتی هەرێمی کوردستان
لە ویلایەتە یەکگرتووەکانی ئەمریکا

بانگهێشتت دەکات بۆ تاوتوێیەک

بۆ بەرز ڕاگرتنی

ڕۆژی جیهانیی مرۆیی

ناونیشان:
1532 16th St NW
Washington, DC

وتارەکان لە لایەن

نانسی ویلسن
سەرۆک، بەڕێوەبەری جێبەجێکار
ڕێکخراوی فریاگوزاریی نێودەوڵەتیی

بەیان سامی عبدالرحمن
نوێنەری حکومەتی هەرێمی کوردستان لە ویلایەتە یەکگرتووەکان

لێرەوە ناوی خۆت تۆمار بکە



زەبروزەنگ لە عێراق و سوریا بووەتە مایەی ئاوارەبوونی زیاتر لە ١٥ ملیۆن کەس. زیاتر لە ١,٨ ملیۆن ئاوارەی عێراقی و پەنابەری سوری پەنایان بۆ هەرێمی کوردستان هێناوە لە تاو تیرۆریزم، جینۆساید، و جەنگ.

لەو چەند دە ساڵانەی ڕابردوودا، ڕێکخراوە نێودەوڵەتییەکان ڕۆڵێکی پڕبایەخیان بینیوە لە کەمکردنەوەی ئازار و مەینەتییەکانی قوربانیانی کارەساتە مرۆییەکان. ئەمساڵ یادی ٢٥ هەمین ساڵیادی ئۆپەراسیۆنی پرۆڤاید کەمفۆرتە، کە ئۆپەراسیۆنێکی مرۆیی سەربازیی بوو و ژیانی هەزاران کوردستانیانی ڕزگار کرد. ڕێکخراوە مرۆییەکان هەروەها خۆراک و دەرمان و پۆشاک دابین دەکەن لە ڕێی بەرنامەی نەوت بەرامبەر خۆراک، ئۆپەراسیۆنی ئازادیی عێراق، ئێمە ئەمڕۆ

سوپاس و پێزانینی خۆمان دەردەبڕین بۆ کارمەندانی مرۆیی کە هەندێک جار ژیانی خۆیان خستۆتە مەترسییەوە بۆ خزمەتکردنی ئەو کەسانەی پێویستییان پێیەتی.

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Washington, D.C. 20036

Tel: +1.202.797.7575
Fax: +1.202.821.1870

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Fwd: April 11 at CTR - Discussion with HE Falah Mustafa Bakir

1 message

J. Michael Slocum <jmichaelslocum@slocumboddie.com> Fri, Apr 8, 2016 at 8:00 AM
Reply-To: jmichaelslocum@slocumboddie.com
To: farakrg@gmail.com

J. Michael Slocum
Slocum & Boddie, PC
5400 Shawnee Rd. Suite 300
Alexandria, VA 22312
703-451-9001
703-451-8557 (fax)
jmichaelslocum@slocumboddie.com

---------- Forwarded message ----------
From: **Kurdistan Regional Government - USA** <us@gov.krd>
Date: Fri, Apr 8, 2016 at 7:34 AM
Subject: April 11 at CTR - Discussion with HE Falah Mustafa Bakir
To: jmichaelslocum@slocumboddie.com

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Kurdistan Regional Government
Representation in the United States

Washington, DC

The Center for Transatlantic Relations at Johns Hopkins University SAIS
and
Conflict Management Program

cordially invite you to a public discussion on

The Future of Kurdistan in Iraq

with

H.E. Falah Mustafa Bakir

Head of the Department of Foreign Relations
Kurdistan Regional Government



Monday, April 11th
2:00 p.m. - 3:00 p.m.

Click here to RSVP
All guests must RSVP

BOB 500
Johns Hopkins University
School of Advanced International Studies
1717 Massachusetts Ave., NW
Washington, DC 20036

Opening remarks and introduction:
Sasha Toperich, Senior Fellow and Director of the Mediterranean Basin Initiative at the Center for Transatlantic Relations, SAIS

Keynote Address:
Falah Mustafa Bakir, Head of the Department of Foreign Relations
Kurdistan Regional Government

Commentator:

Daniel Serwer, Professor and Director, Conflict Management Program, and Senior Fellow, Center for Transatlantic Relations, SAIS

Moderator:

Rebeen Pasha, WYLN Senior Fellow, Mediterranean Basin Initiative at the Center for Transatlantic Relations SAIS, and co-founder and President, American Friends of Kurdistan





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1532 16th Street, N.W.
Washington, D.C. 20036 USA

Tel: +1.202.797.7575
Fax: +1.202.821.1870

Kurdistan Regional Government - USA, 1532 16th Street, NW, Washington, DC 20036

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Fwd: April 14 Reception with US-Kurdistan Business Council

1 message

J. Michael Slocum <jmichaelslocum@slocumboddie.com> Sat, Apr 9, 2016 at 2:56 PM
Reply-To: jmichaelslocum@slocumboddie.com
To: farakrg@gmail.com

J. Michael Slocum
Slocum & Boddie, PC
5400 Shawnee Rd. Suite 300
Alexandria, VA 22312
703-451-9001
703-451-8557 (fax)
jmichaelslocum@slocumboddie.com

---------- Forwarded message ----------
From: **Kurdistan Regional Government - USA** <us@gov.krd>
Date: Fri, Apr 8, 2016 at 1:41 PM
Subject: April 14 Reception with US-Kurdistan Business Council
To: jmichaelslocum@slocumboddie.com

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Kurdistan Regional Government
Representation in the United States

Washington, DC

H.E. Bayan Sami Abdul Rahman

Representative to the United States

invites to you to join us on

Thursday, April 14
6:30 PM

for a reception in honor of

H.E. Qubad Talabani
Deputy Prime Minister

H.E. Karim Sinjari
Minister of the Interior and Peshmerga Affairs

H.E. Falah Mustafa Bakir
Head of the Department of Foreign Relations

Hosted jointly by

KURDISTAN REGIONAL GOVERNMENT
Representation in the United States

US-Kurdistan Business Council

with honorary co-host

Kurdish-American Congressional Caucus

hosted at

大成 DENTONS

1900 K Street NW
Washington, DC

Click here to RSVP

Guests must register in advance

This invitation is not transferable

Please bring photo ID

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Representation in the United States

1532 16th Street, N.W.
Washington, D.C. 20036 USA

Tel: +1.202.797.7575
Fax: +1.202.821.1870

Kurdistan Regional Government - USA, 1532 16th Street, NW, Washington, DC 20036

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Fwd: Eid (Cejin) Greetings from KRG Representation in the USA

1 message

J. Michael Slocum <jmichaelslocum@slocumboddie.com> Mon, Sep 12, 2016 at 6:40 PM
Reply-To: jmichaelslocum@slocumboddie.com
To: farakrg@gmail.com

J. Michael Slocum
Slocum & Boddie, PC
5400 Shawnee Rd. Suite 300
Alexandria, VA 22312
703-451-9001
703-451-8557 (fax)
jmichaelslocum@slocumboddie.com

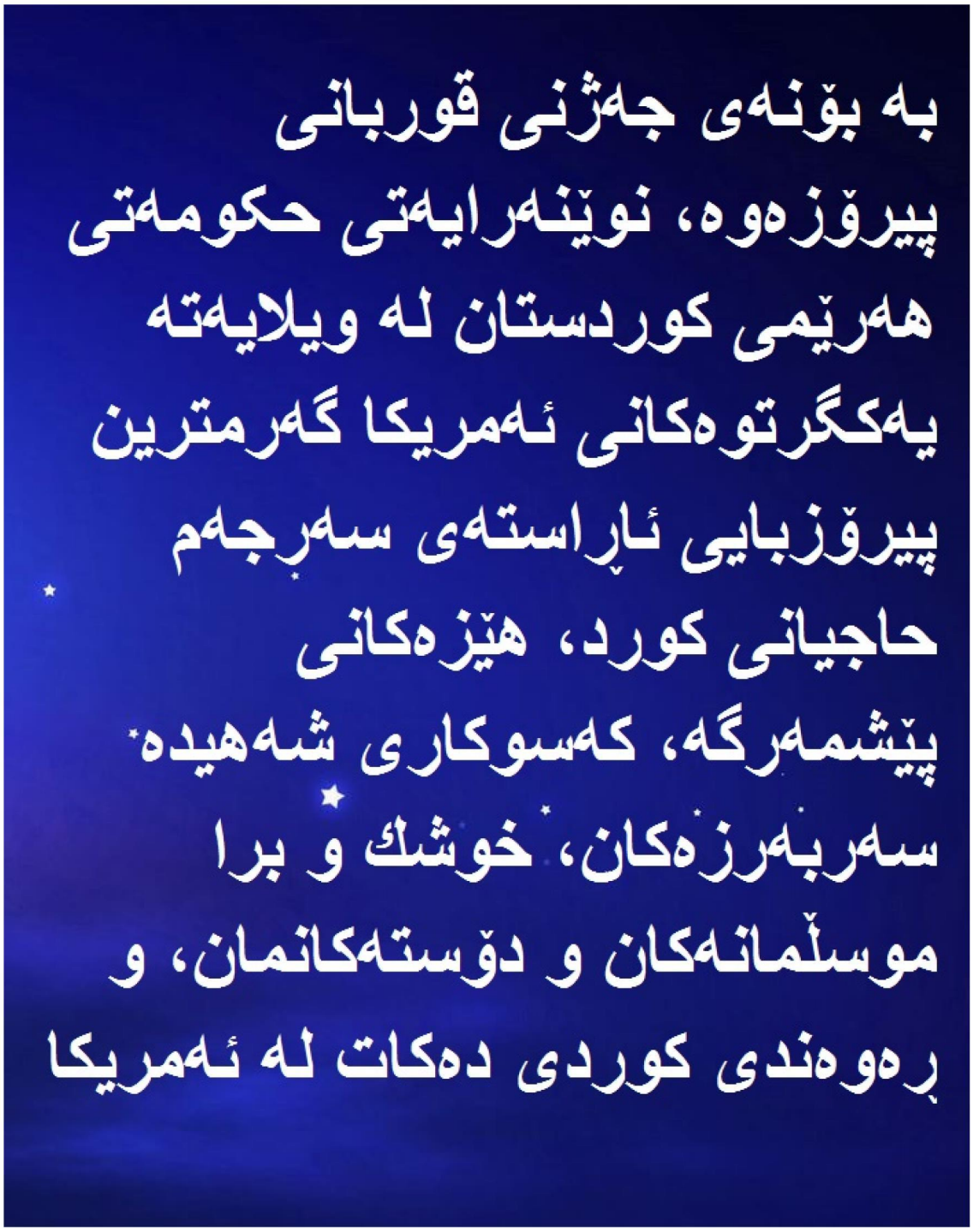
---------- Forwarded message ----------
From: **Kurdistan Regional Government - USA** <us@gov.krd>
Date: Mon, Sep 12, 2016 at 11:59 AM
Subject: Eid (Cejin) Greetings from KRG Representation in the USA
To: jmichaelslocum@slocumboddie.com

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Kurdistan Regional Government
Representation in the United States
Washington, DC


On the occasion of Eid of Qurban, the KRG Representation in the United States of America sends warmest wishes to all Kurdish pilgrims of the Hajj, Peshmerga forces, families of our beloved martyrs, the Muslim community and our friends, and the Kurdistani community in the United States





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Fwd: FARA 2016

1 message

J. Michael Slocum <jmichaelslocum@slocumboddie.com> Wed, Jul 13, 2016 at 1:05 PM
Reply-To: jmichaelslocum@slocumboddie.com
To: farakrg@gmail.com

J. Michael Slocum
Slocum & Boddie, PC
5400 Shawnee Rd. Suite 300
Alexandria, VA 22312
703-451-9001
703-451-8557 (fax)
jmichaelslocum@slocumboddie.com

---------- Forwarded message ----------
From: **Remziya Suleyman** <remziya.suleyman@us.gov.krd>
Date: Mon, Jul 11, 2016 at 12:53 PM
Subject: Re: FARA 2016
To: Dianne Slocum <jmichaelslocum@slocumboddie.com>

I left one document out but you should already have this.

Sincerely,

On Mon, Jul 11, 2016 at 12:49 PM, Remziya Suleyman <remziya.suleyman@us.gov.krd> wrote:

> Should've been first half. Also don't we just file twice a year Jan-June and the June to December?
>
> **From:** J. Michael Slocum [mailto:jmichaelslocum@slocumboddie.com]
> **Sent:** Monday, July 11, 2016 12:38 PM
> **To:** Remziya Suleyman
> **Subject:** Re: FARA 2016
>
> You said first quarter, but the attachment seems to be first half.
>
> J. Michael Slocum
> Slocum & Boddie, PC
> 5400 Shawnee Rd. Suite 300
> Alexandria, VA 22312
> 703-451-9001
> 703-451-8557 (fax)
> jmichaelslocum@slocumboddie.com

On Thu, Jul 7, 2016 at 3:19 PM, Remziya Suleyman <remziya.suleyman@us.gov.krd> wrote:

Hi Michael,

Please find my FARA report for the first quarter in 2016. Please confirm once you receive this.

Thanks!

--

Remziya Suleyman
Director of Congressional & Academic Affairs
Kurdistan Regional Government
Representation in the United States
1532 16th St., NW | Washington, DC 20036
(Tel) + 1 202 821 1854 | (Fax) + 1 202 821 1870 | us.gov.krd | gov.krd
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BUSINESS CONFIDENTIAL: Exempt from FOIA please contact KRG-US concerning any request to release any document.

--

Remziya Suleyman
Director of Congressional & Academic Affairs
Kurdistan Regional Government
Representation in the United States
1532 16th St., NW | Washington, DC 20036
(Tel) + 1 202 821 1854 | (Fax) + 1 202 821 1870 | us.gov.krd | gov.krd
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H.R. 5747.pdf
261K

Gmail **Slocum FARA account <farakrg@gmail.com>**

Fwd: Friday August 19 - Commemoration of World Humanitarian Day at KRG-US

1 message

J. Michael Slocum <jmichaelslocum@slocumboddie.com> Wed, Aug 17, 2016 at 5:19 PM
Reply-To: jmichaelslocum@slocumboddie.com
To: farakrg@gmail.com

J. Michael Slocum
Slocum & Boddie, PC
5400 Shawnee Rd. Suite 300
Alexandria, VA 22312
703-451-9001
703-451-8557 (fax)
jmichaelslocum@slocumboddie.com

---------- Forwarded message ----------
From: **Kurdistan Regional Government - USA** <us@gov.krd>
Date: Wed, Aug 17, 2016 at 4:03 PM
Subject: Friday August 19 - Commemoration of World Humanitarian Day at KRG-US
To: jmichaelslocum@slocumboddie.com

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Kurdistan Regional Government
Representation in the United States

Washington, DC

تکایە بڕۆ خوارەوەی لاپەڕەکە بۆ نوسخە کوردییەکە

Friday, August 19, 2016
11:00 am

The Kurdistan Regional Government
Representation in the United States

invites you to join us for a discussion

in commemoration of

World Humanitarian Day

1532 16th St NW
Washington, DC

RSVP HERE



Violence in Iraq and Syria has displaced more than 15 million people. In the Kurdistan Region alone, over 1.8 million Syrians and Iraqis have found refuge from terrorism, genocide, and war.

Over the past decades, international organizations have played a crucial role in alleviating the suffering of humanitarian disasters. This year marks the 25th anniversary of Operation Provide Comfort, a military and humanitarian operation that saved thousands of Kurdistani lives. Humanitarian organizations also provided important food, medicine, clothing, and livelihood support throughout the Oil-for-Food program, Operation Iraqi Freedom, and today.

We thank and honor these humanitarian workers who sometimes put themselves in harm's way to serve those who need it most.

هەینی، ١٩ ی ئابی ٢٠١٦
کاتژمێر 11:00 ی بەیانی

نوێنەرایەتیی حکومەتی هەرێمی
کوردستان
لە ویلایەتە یەکگرتووەکانی ئەمریکا

بانگهێشتت دەکات بۆ تاوتوێیەک

بۆ بەرز ڕاگرتنی

ڕۆژی جیهانیی مرۆیی

ناونیشان:
1532 16th St NW
Washington, DC

لێرەوە ناوی خۆت تۆمار بکە



زەبروزەنگ لە عێراق و سوریا بووەتە مایەی ئاوارەبوونی زیاتر لە ١٥ ملیۆن کەس. زیاتر لە ١,٨ ملیۆن ئاوارەی عێراقی و پەنابەری سوری پەنایان بۆ هەرێمی کوردستان هێناوە لە تاو تیرۆریزم، جینۆساید، و جەنگ.

لەو چەند دە ساڵانەی ڕابردوودا، ڕێکخراوە نێودەوڵەتییەکان ڕۆڵێکی پڕبایەخیان بینیوە لە کەمکردنەوەی ئازار و مەینەتییەکانی قوربانیانی کارەساتە مرۆییەکان. ئەمساڵ یادی ٢٥ هەمین ساڵیادی ئۆپەراسیۆنی پرۆڤاید کەمفۆرتە، کە ئۆپەراسیۆنێکی مرۆیی سەربازیی بوو و ژیانی هەزاران کوردستانیانی ڕزگار کرد. ڕێکخراوە مرۆییەکان هەروەها خۆراک و دەرمان و پۆشاک دابین دەکەن لە ڕێی بەرنامەی نەوت بەرامبەر خۆراک، ئۆپەراسیۆنی ئازادیی عێراق، ئێمە ئەمڕۆ

سوپاس و پێزانینی خۆمان دەردەبڕین بۆ کارمەندانی مرۆیی کە هەندێک جار ژیانی خۆیان خستۆتە مەترسییەوە بۆ خزمەتکردنی ئەو کەسانەی پێویستییان پێیەتی.

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Fax: +1.202.821.1870

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Fwd: Happy Ramadan

1 message

J. Michael Slocum <jmichaelslocum@slocumboddie.com> Mon, Aug 14, 2017 at 3:48 PM
To: farakrg@gmail.com

---------- Forwarded message ----------
From: **Kurdistan Regional Government - USA** <us@gov.krd>
Date: Mon, May 29, 2017 at 4:45 PM
Subject: Happy Ramadan
To: jmichaelslocum@slocumboddie.com

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Kurdistan Regional Government
Representation in the United States

Washington, DC

The KRG Representation in the United States sends warm wishes to Muslims around the world, Peshmerga forces, security forces, teachers and the families of our beloved martyrs during the holy month of Ramadan.

نوێنەرایەتی حکومەتی هەرێمی کوردستان لە ویلایەتە یەکگرتووەکان گەرمترین
پیرۆزبایی لە موسڵمانانی جیهان، هێزەکانی پێشمەرگە و ئاسایش، و
مامۆستایان و کەسوکاری سەربەرزی شەهیدان دەکات بە بۆنەی هاتنەوەی
مانگی ڕەمەزانی پیرۆز.



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Washington, D.C. 20036 USA

Tel: +1.202.797.7575
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5400 Shawnee Rd. Suite 300
Alexandria, VA 22312
703-451-9001
2d Office: 703-533-3458
703-451-8557 (fax)
jmichaelslocum@slocumboddie.com

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Fwd: Invitation to 28th anniversary of the chemical attacks on Halabja

1 message

J. Michael Slocum <jmichaelslocum@slocumboddie.com> Mon, Feb 29, 2016 at 9:58 AM
Reply-To: jmichaelslocum@slocumboddie.com
To: farakrg@gmail.com

J. Michael Slocum
Slocum & Boddie, PC
5400 Shawnee Rd. Suite 300
Alexandria, VA 22312
703-451-9001
703-451-8557 (fax)
jmichaelslocum@slocumboddie.com

---------- Forwarded message ----------
From: **Kurdistan Regional Government - USA** <us@gov.krd>
Date: Fri, Feb 26, 2016 at 10:52 AM
Subject: Invitation to 28th anniversary of the chemical attacks on Halabja
To: jmichaelslocum@slocumboddie.com

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Kurdistan Regional Government
Representation in the United States

The Kurdistan Regional Government
Representation in the United States

cordially invites you to join us in marking the 28th anniversary
of the

chemical attacks on Halabja

and the

Kurdish Genocide



Wednesday, March 16
10:00 am

Center for Transatlantic Relations SAIS
Johns Hopkins University
Kenney Auditorium
1740 Massachusetts Ave NW
Washington, DC 20036

CLICK HERE TO REGISTER

Event will include

Opening remarks
Sasha Toperich
Senior Fellow and Director of the Mediterranean Basin Initiative, CTR- SAIS

Keynote address
H.E. Karim Sinjari
Minister of the Interior, Kurdistan Regional Government

Moderator
Bayan Sami Abdul Rahman
Kurdistan Regional Government Representative to the United States of America

Panelists
Luis Moreno Ocampo
First Prosecutor at the International Criminal Court

Gavriel Mairone

Human Rights Attorney

Twenty-eight years ago, the regime of Saddam Hussein committed one of modern history's most horrific crimes. The use of chemical weapons to indiscriminately bomb the town of Halabja in the Kurdistan Region killed thousands of innocent men, women and children, and permanently debilitated many more. The incident was one of many genocidal attacks against the Kurds including the disappearances of Failys in the 1970s-80s, murder of thousands of Barzanis in 1983, and the notorious Anfal campaign in 1988.

In 2014, we again witnessed heinous atrocities committed against Yezidis, Christians, and other minorities at the hands of the Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant (ISIL).

As we commemorate the victims of the past, the panel will also look ahead and discuss justice, accountability, and the legacy of genocide.

Please join us in commemorating these tragic events and honoring the victims of genocide.

All guests must register with Eventbrite by using the link above.

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Representation in the United States

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Washington, D.C. 20036 USA

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Fax: +1.202.821.1870

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Fwd: Iraq's Economy: Challenges and Opportunities - June 2

1 message

J. Michael Slocum <jmichaelslocum@slocumboddie.com> Mon, May 23, 2016 at 10:56 AM
Reply-To: jmichaelslocum@slocumboddie.com
To: farakrg@gmail.com

J. Michael Slocum
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703-451-8557 (fax)
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---------- Forwarded message ----------
From: **Kurdistan Regional Government - USA** <us@gov.krd>
Date: Mon, May 23, 2016 at 10:42 AM
Subject: Iraq's Economy: Challenges and Opportunities - June 2
To: jmichaelslocum@slocumboddie.com

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Kurdistan Regional Government
Representation in the United States

Washington, DC

The Kurdistan Regional Government Representation in the United States

invites you to join

The Center for Transatlantic Relations at Johns Hopkins University SAIS

for

Iraq's Economy: Challenges and Opportunities

Thursday, June 2nd 08:30 a.m. - 6:30 p.m.

RSVP here

Kenney Auditorium
Johns Hopkins University
School of Advanced International Studies
1740 Massachusetts Avenue, NW
Washington, DC 20036

8.30 - 9.30 a.m. Registration and light breakfast

9.30 a.m. Opening remarks

- Sasha Toperich, Senior Fellow and Director, Mediterranean Basin Initiative, CTR-SAIS
- Michael J. Delaney, Assistant U.S. Trade Representative for South Asia
- Lukman Faily, Ambassador of the Republic of Iraq to the United States

10 a.m.- 11 a.m. Economic Mosaic of Iraq

Speakers:

- Noori Abdulrahman, Chairman, Board of Investment and Minister of Coordination and Follow Up, Kurdistan Regional Government
- Justin Carney, Regional Vice-President, Middle East North Africa at Business Impact Networks
- Sami Al-Araji, Head of the Iraq National Investment Commission (Via Skype)

Commentator:

- Mark Kimmitt, Brigadier General (U.S. Army, ret.)

Moderator:

- Andrew Parasiliti, Director, Center for Global Risk and Security, RAND Corporation

11 - 11.15 a.m. Coffee break

11.15 a.m. - 12.30 p.m. Centralization or Decentralization of Iraq's Economic and Commercial Policy

Speakers:

- Joseph S. Pennington, Deputy Assistant Secretary of Iraq, Bureau of Near Eastern Affairs, U.S. Department of State
- Hoger Shalli, Deputy Minister, Ministry of Electricity, Kurdistan Regional Goverment
- Bayan Sami Abdul Rahman, Kurdistan Regional Government Representative to the United States
- James Parks, Financial Advisor to the KRG Deputy Prime Minister

Moderator:

- Daniel Serwer, Professor and Director, Conflict Management Program, and Senior Fellow, Center for Transatlantic Relations, SAIS

12:30 - 1 p.m. Doing Business in Iraq

Iraq Commercial Office, Embassy of the Republic of Iraq in Washington, D.C

12.30 - 12.45 p.m. Speech:

- Jasim Husein, Commercial Attache', Iraq Commercial Office, Embassy of the Republic of Iraq

12.45 - 1 p.m. Presentation:

- Qasim Basry, Executive Assistant, Iraq Commercial Office, Embassy of the Republic of Iraq

1 - 2.15 p.m. Lunch Break

2.15 - 3.45 p.m. Business Challenges and Opportunities

Speakers:

- Steve Lutes, Executive Director, Middle East Affairs, U.S. Chamber of Commerce
- Ginger Cruz, CEO, Mantid International LLC

Moderator:

- Sasha Toperich

3.45 p.m. - 5 p.m. Economic Growth and Trade Competitiveness Through Job Creation and SME's

Speakers:

- Zainab Allawi, Advisor to Executive Director, The World Bank
- Marc Tejtel, Deputy Chief Counsel for the Commercial Law Development Program (CLDP), US Department of Commerce

Moderator:

- Rebeen Pasha, Founder & President SDH/REbuild Iraq and Middle East Young Entrepreneurs' Dreams

5 - 5.15 p.m. Coffee Break

5.15 p.m. - 6.30 p.m. Private Sector Growth - Strengthening Transatlantic Partnership

Speakers:

- John J. Sullivan, Mayer Brown LLP
- Jorge Restrepo, Managing Partner, New Frontiers Legal Consulting Services

Moderator:

- Sasha Toperich

6.30 p.m. Reception

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Fwd: Jan 10-13 - Rep. Abdul Rahman speaking in Southern California

1 message

J. Michael Slocum <jmichaelslocum@slocumboddie.com> Fri, Jan 6, 2017 at 10:35 AM
Reply-To: jmichaelslocum@slocumboddie.com
To: farakrg@gmail.com

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From: **Kurdistan Regional Government - USA** <us@gov.krd>
Date: Thu, Jan 5, 2017 at 4:25 PM
Subject: Jan 10-13 - Rep. Abdul Rahman speaking in Southern California
To: jmichaelslocum@slocumboddie.com

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Kurdistan Regional Government
Representation in the United States

Washington, DC

تکایە بڕۆ خوارەوەی لاپەڕەکە بۆ نوسخە کوردییەکە

The Kurdistan Regional Government
Representation in the United States

invites you to join

Bayan Sami Abdul Rahman
KRG Representative to the United States

at the following upcoming events in southern California:

January 10
University of Southern California
5:00 PM
Doheny Memorial Library
Room 240 Lecture Hall
Los Angeles, CA
RSVP here

January 11
San Diego World Affairs Council
6:00 PM
AMN Healthcare Auditorium
12400 High Bluff Drive
San Diego, CA
RSVP here

January 12
World Affairs Council of Inland Southern California
5:30 pm
Marriott Hotel Riverside Convention Center
3400 Market Street
Riverside, CA
RSVP here

January 13
City of Calabasas Special Speaker Series
7:00 PM
Founders Hall
Calabasas, CA
RSVP here

==========

نوێنەرایەتی حکومەتی هەرێمی کوردستان
لە ویلایەتە یەکگرتووەکانی ئەمریکا

بانگهێشتت دەکات بۆئامادەبوونت، بە بەشداریی

بەیان سامی عبدالرحمن
نوێنەری حکومەتی هەرێمی کوردستان لە ویلایەتە یەکگرتووەکان

لەم بۆنە و ڕێوڕەسمانەی خوارەوە کە لە باشووری کالیفۆرنیا ساز دەکرێت لە

10 ی کانونی دووەم
زانکۆی ساوزەرن کالیفۆرنیا University of Southern California
5:00 ی ئێوارە
Doheny Memorial Library
Room 240 Lecture Hall
Los Angeles, CA
لێرە ناوت تۆمار بکە

11 ی کانونی دووەم
San Diego World Affairs Council
6:00 ی پاش نیوەڕۆ
AMN Healthcare Auditorium
12400 High Bluff Drive
San Diego, CA
لێرە ناوت تۆمار بکە

12 ی کانونی دووەم
World Affairs Council of Inland Southern California
5:30 ی پاش نیوەڕۆ
Marriott Hotel Riverside Convention Center
3400 Market Street
Riverside, CA
لێرە ناوت تۆمار بکە

13 ی کانونی دووەم
City of Calabasas Special Speaker Series
7:00 PM
Founders Hall
Calabasas, CA
لێرە ناوت تۆمار بکە

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Representation in the United States

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Fwd: Join Free Yezidi Foundation for candlelight vigil - Aug 3, 8 PM, White House

1 message

J. Michael Slocum <jmichaelslocum@slocumboddie.com> Thu, Aug 4, 2016 at 8:54 AM
Reply-To: jmichaelslocum@slocumboddie.com
To: farakrg@gmail.com

J. Michael Slocum
Slocum & Boddie, PC
5400 Shawnee Rd. Suite 300
Alexandria, VA 22312
703-451-9001
703-451-8557 (fax)
jmichaelslocum@slocumboddie.com

---------- Forwarded message ----------
From: **Kurdistan Regional Government - USA** <us@gov.krd>
Date: Tue, Aug 2, 2016 at 12:43 PM
Subject: Join Free Yezidi Foundation for candlelight vigil - Aug 3, 8 PM, White House
To: jmichaelslocum@slocumboddie.com

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Kurdistan Regional Government
Representation in the United States

Washington, DC

The KRG Representation in the United States

invites you to join

the Free Yezidi Foundation

August 3, 2016

8:00 PM

in front of the White House

for a candlelight vigil to mark the second anniversary of the genocide perpetrated by ISIS against the Yezidis, and honor the memory of those killed and the 3,200 women and children still held in captivity.



The genocide survivors face immense challenges and are trying to rebuild their lives in northern Iraq. Survivors need humanitarian assistance, options to seek asylum abroad and justice for the crimes committed. Women and children are being held in Mosul and Raqqa; they must be protected during efforts to liberate those cities and provided with immediate medical and psychological assistance when freed.

Bring a candle and show your support.

Speakers

- Pari Ibrahim, Founder and Executive Director of the Free Yezidi Foundation
- Naomi Kikoler, Deputy Director of the Simon-Skjodt Center for the Prevention of Genocide, United States Holocaust Memorial Museum
- With Women for Women International

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Fax: +1.202.821.1870

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Fwd: Join us October 20 for discussion on 'Kurdistan on the cusp of statehood'

1 message

J. Michael Slocum <jmichaelslocum@slocumboddie.com> Mon, Oct 17, 2016 at 9:25 AM
Reply-To: jmichaelslocum@slocumboddie.com
To: farakrg@gmail.com

J. Michael Slocum
Slocum & Boddie, PC
5400 Shawnee Rd. Suite 300
Alexandria, VA 22312
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703-451-8557 (fax)
jmichaelslocum@slocumboddie.com

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From: **Kurdistan Regional Government - USA** <us@gov.krd>
Date: Mon, Oct 17, 2016 at 9:04 AM
Subject: Join us October 20 for discussion on 'Kurdistan on the cusp of statehood'
To: jmichaelslocum@slocumboddie.com

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Kurdistan Regional Government
Representation in the United States

Washington, DC

تکایە بڕۆ خوارەوەی لاپەڕەکە بۆ نوسخە کوردییەکە

The Kurdistan Regional Government Representation in the United States
invites you to to join
The Center for Transatlantic Relations at
Johns Hopkins University School of Advanced International Studies

Thursday, October 20
2 PM



Panel discussion

From Tribe to Nation: Iraqi Kurdistan on the Cusp of Statehood

by Amberin Zaman

Public Policy Fellow, Woodrow Wilson International Center for Scholars

RSVP HERE

BOB 500
The Johns Hopkins University School of Advanced International Studies
1717 Massachusetts Avenue, NW
20036 Washington, DC

Panelists

- **Amberin Zaman**, Public Policy Fellow, Woodrow Wilson International Center for Scholars
- **Bayan Sami Abdul Rahman**, Kurdistan Regional Government (KRG) Representative to the United States of America
- **Hardin Lang**, Senior Fellow, Center for American Progress

Moderator

- **Sasha Toperich**, Senior Fellow, CTR - SAIS

نوێنەرایەتی حکومەتی هەرێمی کوردستان
لە ویلایەتە یەکگرتووەکانی ئەمریکا
بانگهێشتت دەکات بۆ ئامادەبوون لە
ناوەندی پەیوەندییەکانی ترانزئەتلانتیک لە
زانکۆی جان هۆپکنز، پەیمانگەی لێکۆڵینەوەی گەشەسەندووی
نێودەوڵەتی

پێنجشەممە، 20 ی تشرینی یەکەم
2 ی پاش نیوەڕۆ



پانێلێک بۆ تاوتوێی

لە هۆزەوە بۆ نەتەوە: کوردستانی عێراق لە کەناری بوون بە دەوڵەت

عەمبەرین زەمان

سیاسەتی گشتیی، بنکەی وودرۆ ویلسنی نێودەوڵەتی

بەڕێوەبردنی

لێرە ناوی خۆت تۆمار بکە

BOB 500 **ناونیشان**

The Johns Hopkins University School of Advanced International Studies
1717 Massachusetts Avenue, NW
20036 Washington, DC

پێشکەشکاران

- ئەمبەڕین زەمان، سیاسەتی گشتیی، هەڤاڵی ناوەندی وودرۆ وڵسنی نیودەوڵەتی بۆ لێکۆڵەران،
- بەیان سامی عەبدولڕەحمان، نوێنەری حکومەتی هەرێمی کوردستان لە وڵایەتە یەکگرتووەکانی ئەمریکا
- هاردین لانگ، گەورە هەڤاڵ لە ناوەندی ئەمریکا بۆ گەشەسەندن.

ڕێکخەر

SAIS ساشا تۆپریچ، گەورە هەڤاڵ لە بنکەی بنکەی پەیوەندییەکانی ترانزێتڵانتیک،

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Fwd: June 2 - Iraq's Economy: Challenges and Opportunities

2 messages

J. Michael Slocum <jmichaelslocum@slocumboddie.com> Thu, May 26, 2016 at 9:03 AM
Reply-To: jmichaelslocum@slocumboddie.com
To: farakrg@gmail.com

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From: **Kurdistan Regional Government - USA** <us@gov.krd>
Date: Thu, May 26, 2016 at 9:02 AM
Subject: June 2 - Iraq's Economy: Challenges and Opportunities
To: jmichaelslocum@slocumboddie.com

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Washington, DC

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Representation in the United States

invites you to join

The Center for Transatlantic Relations at Johns Hopkins University SAIS

for

Iraq's Economy: Challenges and Opportunities

Thursday, June 2nd 08:30 a.m. - 6:30 p.m.

RSVP here

Kenney Auditorium
Johns Hopkins University
School of Advanced International Studies
1740 Massachusetts Avenue, NW
Washington, DC 20036

8.30 - 9.30 a.m. Registration and light breakfast

9.30 a.m. Opening remarks

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- Michael J. Delaney, Assistant U.S. Trade Representative for South Asia
- Lukman Faily, Ambassador of the Republic of Iraq to the United States

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Speakers:

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- Justin Carney, Regional Vice-President, Middle East North Africa at Business Impact Networks
- Sami Al-Araji, Head of the Iraq National Investment Commission (Via Skype)

Commentator:

- Mark Kimmitt, Brigadier General (U.S. Army, ret.)

Moderator:

- Andrew Parasiliti, Director, Center for Global Risk and Security, RAND Corporation

11 - 11.15 a.m. Coffee break

11.15 a.m. - 12.30 p.m. Centralization or Decentralization of Iraq's Economic and Commercial Policy

Speakers:

- Joseph S. Pennington, Deputy Assistant Secretary of Iraq, Bureau of Near Eastern Affairs, U.S. Department of State
- Hoger Shalli, Deputy Minister, Ministry of Electricity, Kurdistan Regional Goverment
- Bayan Sami Abdul Rahman, Kurdistan Regional Government Representative to the United States
- James Parks, Financial Advisor to the KRG Deputy Prime Minister

Moderator:

- Daniel Serwer, Professor and Director, Conflict Management Program, and Senior Fellow, Center for Transatlantic Relations, SAIS

12:30 - 1 p.m. Doing Business in Iraq

Iraq Commercial Office, Embassy of the Republic of Iraq in Washington, D.C

12.30 - 12.45 p.m. Speech:

- Jasim Husein, Commercial Attache', Iraq Commercial Office, Embassy of the Republic of Iraq

12.45 - 1 p.m. Presentation:

- Qasim Basry, Executive Assistant, Iraq Commercial Office, Embassy of the Republic of Iraq

1 - 2.15 p.m. Lunch Break

2.15 - 3.45 p.m. Business Challenges and Opportunities

Speakers:

- Steve Lutes, Executive Director, Middle East Affairs, U.S. Chamber of Commerce
- Ginger Cruz, CEO, Mantid International LLC

Moderator:

- Sasha Toperich

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- Marc Tejtel, Deputy Chief Counsel for the Commercial Law Development Program (CLDP), US Department of Commerce

Moderator:

- Rebeen Pasha, Founder & President SDH/REbuild Iraq and Middle East Young Entrepreneurs' Dreams

5 - 5.15 p.m. Coffee Break

5.15 p.m. - 6.30 p.m. Private Sector Growth - Strengthening Transatlantic Partnership

Speakers:

- John J. Sullivan, Mayer Brown LLP
- Jorge Restrepo, Managing Partner, New Frontiers Legal Consulting Services

Moderator:

- Sasha Toperich

6.30 p.m. Reception

RSVP here

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J. Michael Slocum <jmichaelslocum@slocumboddie.com> Tue, May 31, 2016 at 9:29 AM
Reply-To: jmichaelslocum@slocumboddie.com
To: farakrg@gmail.com

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From: **Kurdistan Regional Government - USA** <us@gov.krd>
[Quoted text hidden]

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Fwd: KRG Representation in Washington commemorates second anniversary of Yezidi Genocide

1 message

J. Michael Slocum <jmichaelslocum@slocumboddie.com> Thu, Aug 4, 2016 at 8:53 AM
Reply-To: jmichaelslocum@slocumboddie.com
To: farakrg@gmail.com

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From: **Kurdistan Regional Government - USA** <us@gov.krd>
Date: Wed, Aug 3, 2016 at 12:49 PM
Subject: KRG Representation in Washington commemorates second anniversary of Yezidi Genocide
To: jmichaelslocum@slocumboddie.com

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Kurdistan Regional Government
Representation in the United States

Washington, DC

KRG Representation in Washington commemorates second anniversary of Yezidi Genocide

August 3, 2016

Washington, DC, USA (us.gov.krd) - On the second anniversary of the attack on Shingal (Sinjar), the Kurdistan Regional Government Representation in the United States conveys its deepest condolences to families that lost their loved ones in the genocide committed by the Islamic State of

Iraq and al-Sha'm (ISIS). Our thoughts are especially with the women and children still held captive, who suffer unthinkable horrors at the hands of ISIS criminals.

When ISIS terrorists overran the Yezidi-majority city of Shingal on August 3, 2014, they killed and kidnapped thousands, sending tens of thousands more to seek refuge on Mount Shingal and in the Kurdistan Region.

Since then, the KRG has worked tirelessly on four main fronts:

1) To eradicate ISIS from areas under its control and ensure that it cannot harm the citizens under the protection of the Kurdistan Regional Government. To date, more than 14,000 square miles have been liberated from ISIS, including Shingal, its environs and strategic villages and towns around Mosul. More than 1,500 Peshmerga have been killed and 8,000 injured in the liberation operations and the constant attacks by ISIS against the Peshmerga's defensive positions.

2) To provide humanitarian assistance to the 400,000 Yezidis who have sought shelter in Kurdistan. They are among the 1.8 million displaced Iraqis and Syrian refugees who have fled to the Region.

3) To continue to facilitate the rescue of the women and children held as slaves by ISIS. Many have been rescued but more than 3,200 are still captive.

4) To collect evidence and protect mass graves while also lobbying governments around the world for the United Nations to refer the genocide to the International Criminal Court.

The Kurdistan Region is the last refuge for many Yezidis that managed to escape. In Duhok governorate alone, 65 percent of the displaced are Yezidi. The KRG was the first government to designate ISIS's crimes as genocide. Overseas, KRG Representations continue to advocate for more support for all of the religious and ethnic components of Kurdistan and Iraq.

The KRG understands that the Yezidi community has expressed a sense of abandonment and Yezidis feel forsaken by security forces throughout Iraq. The KRG has borne its responsibility in this regard and remains committed to making every effort to ensure security, freedom of expression, and equal rights for all minorities. It is now more essential than ever that Yezidis, Assyrian Christians and other components of our society are given every opportunity to play meaningful roles in the social and political future of the Kurdistan Region.

Over the past decades, Iraq has seen cyclical genocide. Instrumental to this cycle is a culture of impunity, where many of those who are guilty of committing atrocities are never brought to justice.

After crimes of such magnitude, it is the responsibility of the entire world to help the shattered communities of Shingal and Nineveh reconcile with each other and to prevent future genocides. But there can be no reconciliation without robust, meaningful and clear justice and accountability. The KRG is prepared to play a leading role in this effort, but needs technical assistance and capacity-building in its legal system to handle the volume and complexity of cases. We call on the international community to help provide such assistance as essential to future peace in the region. We also urge the International Criminal Court to open the case against ISIS whose crimes are well-known and of such enormity that they warrant a global judicial response.

Representative Abdul Rahman said, 'There is no crime more terrible than genocide, and the sorrow created by this horrible tragedy will be felt for generations. So many times we have heard the call of "Never Again", but today this phrase rings hollow. We must stop the cycle of genocide in Iraq and we must support the victims who continue to need our help.'

نوێنەرایەتی حکومەتی هەرێمی کوردستان لە واشنگتۆن یادەوەریی دووەم ساڵگەڕی جینۆسایدەکان بەرز ڕادەگرێت

٣ ی ئابی ٢٠١٦

واشنگتۆن، دی سی (us.gov.krd) – لە دووەم ساڵگەردی پەلاماردانی شەنگال، "نوێنەرایەتی حکومەتی هەرێمی کوردستان لە ویلایەتە یەکگرتووەکانی ئەمریکا" هاوخەمی خۆی دەردەبڕێت بۆ ئەو خێزانانەی کە ئازیزانیان بوون بە قوربانیی لەو جینۆسایدەدا کە داعش ئەنجامی دا. خەمێکی گەورەی ئێمە بە تایبەت ئەو منداڵ و ئافرەتانەیە کە هێشتا دەستبەسەرن، کە هێشتا ڕۆژانە مەینەتی و ئازار دەچێژن بە دەستی تاوانبارەکانی داعش.

کاتێک تیرۆریستانی داعش لە ٣ ی ئابی ٢٠١٤ شاری شەنگالیان داگیر کرد، کە زۆرینەی ئێزیدین، هەزاران کەسیان کوشت و ڕفاند، دەیان هەزار کەسیان ئاوارە کرد، ئەمانە پەنایان بۆ چیای شەنگال و هەرێمی کوردستان برد.

لەو کاتەوە، حکومەتی هەرێمی کوردستان بێوچان لەسەر چوار بەرەوە خەباتی کردووە:

1) ڕیشەکێشکردنی داعش لەو ناوچانەی کە دەستی بەسەردا گرتوون و جەختکردنەوە لەوەی نەتوانێت ئازاری ئەو هاوواڵتیانە بدات کە لەژێر فەرمانڕەوایی حکومەتی هەرێمی کوردستان دەژین. تا ئەمڕۆ، زیاتر لە ١٤٠٠٠ میلی چوارگۆشە لە داعش پاک کراوەتەوە، بە شەنگالیشەوە، لەگەڵ دەوروبەری، و هەروەها گوند و شارۆچکە ستراتیجییەکانی دەوروبەری موسڵیش. تا ئێستا زیاتر لە ١٥٠٠ پێشمەرگە شەهید بوون و زیاتر لە ٨٠٠٠ ی تریش بریندار بوون لە کاتی پرۆسەکانی ئازادکردنەوە و لە پەلاماردانەکانی داعش بۆ سەر سەنگەرەکانی پێشمەرگە.

2) دابینکردنی هاوکاریی مرۆیی بۆ زیاتر لە ٤٠٠٠٠٠ ئێزیدی کە پەنایان بۆ هەرێمی کوردستان هێناوە. ئەمان و ئەو ١.٨ ملیۆن ئاوارە عێراقی و پەنابەرە سوریاییانەش کە پەنایان بۆ کوردستان هێناوە.

3) دڕێژەدان بە هەوڵەکانی ڕزگارکردنی ئەو ئافرەت و منداڵانەی کە داعش کردوونی بە کۆیلە. ژمارەیەکی زۆر لەوانە ئازاد کراون بەڵام هێشتا زیاتر لە ٣٢٠٠ دیلی تر ماون لای داعش.

4) کۆکردنەوەی بەڵگەنامە و پاراستنی گۆڕە بەکۆمەڵەکان و هاوکات لۆبیکردن لەلای حکومەتان لە سەرتاسەری جیهان تا نەتەوە یەکگرتووەکان کەیسی جینۆسایدەکە ڕەوانەی دادگای تاوانی نێودەوڵەتیی بکات.

هەرێمی کوردستان دواپەناگەیە بۆ ژمارەیەکی زۆر لەو ئێزیدییانەی هەڵهاتن. تەنێ لە پارێزگای دهۆک نزیکەی ٦٥ دەرسەت لە ئاوارەکان، ئێزیدین. "حکومەتی هەرێمی کوردستان" یەکەمین حکومەت بووە کە تاوانەکانی داعشی بە جینۆساید ناساندووە. نوێنەرایەتییەکانی حکومەتی هەرێمی کوردستان لە دەرەوە بەردەوامن لە داکۆکی و هەوڵ بۆ دابینکردنی پشتگیری و هاوکاری بۆ سەرجەم پێکهاتە ئایینی و نەتەوەییەکانی کوردستان و عێراق.

حکومەتی هەرێمی کوردستان ئاگادارە لەو هەستەی کۆمەڵگەی ئێزیدی دەربڕیوە کە وا هەست دەکات هێزەکانی ئاسایش لە سەرتاسەری عێراقدا ئەوانی بەجێهێشتووە. حکومەتی هەرێمی کوردستان بەرپرسیارێتیی خۆی لەم بوارەدا لە ئەستۆ گرتووە و پابەند دەبێت بە هەموو هەوڵێکەوە بۆ پاراستنی تەناهی و ئازادی ڕادەربڕین و مافی یەکسان بۆ سەرجەم پێکهاتەکان. ئێستا زیاتر لە هەر کاتێکی تر ئەوە گرنگە کە ئێزیدی و ئاسوری و پێکهاتەکانی تری کۆمەڵگەکەمان دەرفەتیان هەبێت کە ڕۆڵی پڕبایەخی خۆیان ببین لە ئایندەی کۆمەڵایەتی و سیاسی هەرێمی کوردستاندا.

لە دەیان ساڵانی ڕابردوودا چەند جارێک جینۆساید لە عێراق دووبارە بۆتەوە. یەکێک لە هۆکارەکانی ئەم سووڕە بریتی بووە لەو پارێزراوێتییەی کە هەبووە، ئەوەی کە

زۆر لەو کەسانەی تاوانبارن بە ئەنجامدانی تاوانی قیزەون هەرگیز پەلکیش نەکراون بۆ پێش دادگا.

لە پاش تاوانی ئاوا قیزەون، ئەوە بەرپرسیارێتیی هەموو جیهانە کە هاوکاری کۆمەڵگە مەینەتبەشەکان بدەن لە شەنگال و نەینەوا بۆ ئاشتەوایی لەگەڵ یەکتر و بۆ ڕێگری لە جینۆسایدی تر لە ئایندەدا. بەڵام بە بێ هەبوون و سەپاندنی توند و ئاشکرای دادپرسی و بەرپرسیاربوون، ئاشتەوایی نایەتە دی. حکومەتی هەرێمی کوردستان ئامادەیە بۆ بینینی ڕۆڵی پێشەنگ لەم بوارەدا بەڵام پێویستی بە هاوکاری تەکنیکی و تواناسازیی سیستمی داپەروەرێتیە بۆ ئەوەی کار لەسەر کەیسی ئاوا ئاڵۆز و گەورە بکات. داوا لە کۆمەڵگەی نێودەوڵەتی دەکەین لەم بوارەدا هاوکاریمان بکەن چونکە زۆر گرنگە بۆ ئایندەی ئاسایشی ناوچەکە. هەروەها داوا لە دادگای تاوانی نێودەوڵەتی دەکەین فایلێک دژ بە داعش بکاتەوە بۆ ئەو تاوانە قیزەونانەیان کە پێویستی بە بەرسڤی دادوەریی هەیە لەسەر ئاستی جیهاندا.

بەیان سامی عبدالرحمان، نوێنەری حکومەتی هەرێمی کوردستان لە ویلایەتە یەکگرتووەکانی ئەمریکا وتی "هیچ تاوانێک لە جینۆساید قیزەونتر نییە، ئەو خەم و ئازارەی ئەم تراژیدیایە دروستی کردووە، هەرگیز لەبیر ناچێتەوە. زۆر جار گوێمان لێ بووە کە دەیانگوت "جارێکی تر نابێت هەرگیز ئەوە ڕووبداتەوە"، بەڵام دەرکەوت ئەو قسەیە مانایەکی نەبوو. پێویستە ئەم سووڕی جینۆسایدە کۆتایی پێ بهێنرێت لە عێراق و پێویستە پشتگیریی پێشکەشی ئەو قوربانییانە بکەین کە پێویستیان بە یارمەتی ئێمەیە."

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Kurdistan Regional Government
Representation in the United States

Washington, D.C.
April 2016 Newsletter

Welcome to our April 2016 Newsletter

The Kurdistan Regional Government Representation in the United States welcomes US Secretary of Defense Ashton Carter's announcement that the Department of Defense will provide $415 million in financial assistance to the Peshmerga forces of the Kurdistan Region.



We thank President Barack Obama, the Department of Defense (pictured with Undersecretary of Defense Christine Wormuth), Congress, and the American people for their timely support for the Peshmerga, who are entrenched along a 650-mile front with the ISIS terror group and are the tip of spear in the US-led coalition's counter-ISIS campaign.

This new financial support by the US is critical as we battle terror and barbarism together. We appreciate the recognition that the current financial crisis -- brought on by the costly war with ISIS, the influx of 1.8 million displaced people seeking refuge in Kurdistan and falling oil prices -- is dire and puts our mutual interests at risk.

The KRG has already begun to implement comprehensive austerity measures aimed at cutting operating expenses, and is embarking on reform programs to improve government efficiency and accountability. At the same time, our focus remains on the fight against ISIS and the liberation of Mosul.

This important financial assistance package underscores the close partnership that the US and Kurdistan have maintained in the fight against tyranny for decades. Once again, the US has demonstrated its commitment to supporting those who fight for freedom and democracy and who oppose extremist groups that threaten our security.

Bayan Sami Abdul Rahman
Kurdistan Regional Government
Representative to the United States

Deputy Prime Minister to Washington: 'State of economy is an existential threat'



Deputy Prime Minister Qubad Talabani was joined in Washington by a delegation of KRG officials including Minister of the Interior and (Acting) Minister of Peshmerga Affairs Karim Sinjari, Head of the Department of Foreign Relations Minister Falah Mustafa Bakir, and KRG Representative to the United States Bayan Sami Abdul Rahman. The purpose of the delegation was to convey the severity of the financial crisis and need for immediate assistance to US administration officials (pictured with Deputy Secretary of State Antony Blinken), members of Congress, and the US media.

'The existential threat to Kurdistan is not a war with ISIS, nor the stress of housing 1.8 million internally displaced Iraqis and Syrian refugees, or even the political turmoil facing the country today. The existential threat facing Kurdistan

today is the state of our economy,' said the Deputy Prime Minister during an event at the Woodrow Wilson Center.

Read a full press release in English and in Kurdish.
Watch delegation at Foundation for Defense of Democracies.
Watch Deputy Prime Minister Talabani at the Woodrow Wilson Center.

President Barzani Meets Chairman of the US Joint Chiefs of Staff General Joseph Dunford



Kurdistan Region President Masoud Barzani met with the Chairman of the US Joint Chiefs of Staff, General Joseph Dunford, and the US Ambassador to Iraq, Steward Jones in Erbil. In a meeting between the two, they discussed preparations for the liberation of Mosul, US assistance to Peshmerga forces, and the political crisis in Baghdad.

General Dunford praised the leadership of President Barzani and the role of Peshmerga forces in the recent military successes against the ISIS terrorists, and reiterated the US' continued commitment to assist the Peshmerga forces in this fight. He also underlined the importance of Peshmerga participation in the liberation of the city of Mosul, adding that the operation would not be successful without Peshmerga participation.

Read a press release here.

President Barzani Meets With U.S. Commander of CENTCOM



President Masoud Barzani received a United States government delegation headed by General Joseph Votel, the Commander of the United States Central Command.

The meeting discussed the current political turmoil in Baghdad and both sides agreed that there needs to be a speedy solution to the crisis as it has a negative effect on the ongoing war against the terrorists of the Islamic State.

President Barzani expressed his appreciation on behalf of the people of the Kurdistan Region to the United States and other allies for their military support against ISIS. General Votel expressed his satisfaction and appreciation for the cooperation and professionalism of the Peshmerga forces.

KRG delegation meets Iraqi and US leaders in Baghdad



A delegation led by Prime Minister Nechirvan Barzani, including Deputy Prime Minister Qubad Talabani, Kurdistan Region President's Chief of Staff Dr. Fuad Hussein and KRG Spokesperson Safeen Dizayee, met the US Secretary of State John Kerry and Ambassador Stuart Jones.

In the meeting held at the US Embassy in Baghdad, KRG and American officials reaffirmed their commitment to further improve bilateral ties. Mr. Kerry reiterated his administration's support to Iraq and the Kurdistan Region in the fight against terrorism and dealing with financial challenges.

Read a press release here.

KRG Representative tours US cities to speak with community leaders



KRG Representative to the United States Bayan Sami Abdul Rahman visited Nashville and Cookeville, Tennessee and Boston, Massachusetts this month.

Representative Abdul Rahman was in Tennessee to speak to students, academics, and Kurdish community members at Tennessee Technological University (Tennessee Tech) and later at an event co-hosted by Lipscomb University, the Tennessee Independent Colleges and Universities Association (TICUA) and the Tennessee World Affairs Council.

Later in the week, Representative Abdul Rahman visited Boston, Massachusetts to speak to academics and community members at the World Affairs Council of Boston as part of the 'Great Decisions in Foreign Policy' speaker series.

Read a press release here.

President Barzani meets heads of humanitarian and development organizations



Kurdistan Region President Masoud Barzani received UN Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon, World Bank President Dr. Jim Yonk Kim, Islamic Development Bank President Ahmad Al-Madani, and Special Representative of the UN Secretary-General in Iraq Jan Kubis, accompanied by senior officials of the United Nations, World Bank, and Islamic Development Bank.

President Barzani described the visit as important and a source of hope and support for the people of Kurdistan. He explained the challenges the Kurdistan Region currently faces, most notably a fierce war against terrorism and a severe financial crisis, as well as accommodating an extraordinary number of displaced Iraqis and Syrians.

Read a press release here.

KRG Minister of Religious Affairs officials hosted by Congressional International Religious Freedom Caucus



Officials from the KRG Ministry for Religious Affairs were hosted at a reception in Congress by the International Religious Freedom Caucus. Director of Relations Mariwan Naqshbandi and Representative to the Jewish Community Sherzad Mamsani spoke alongside US Representative Trent Franks and KRG Representative Abdul Rahman about the importance supporting religious diversity in the Middle East.

Mr Mamsani said, 'One of the best ways to ensure that religious and ethnic diversity in the region continues is to support the Kurdistan Region, where eight religions coexist

and hundreds of thousands have taken refuge from extremism and terrorism.'

Yezidi doctor receives US State Department's 'Women of Courage Award'



Dr Nagham Nawzat, a Yezidi women's health physician and activist, was awarded the prestigious International Women of Courage Award at the US Department of State.

The award annually recognizes women around the globe who have demonstrated exceptional courage and leadership in advocating for peace, justice, human rights, gender equality and women's empowerment, often at great personal risk.

Following the award ceremony, Dr Nawzat visited the KRG Representation for a briefing on her work and the needs of women who were rescued from ISIS.

Prime Minister Barzani meets US Congressional delegation



Prime Minister Nechirvan Barzani received a United States Congressional delegation headed by US Representative Ed Royce, Chairman of House Committee on Foreign Affairs, and US Consul General in Erbil Matthias Mitman.

The American delegation reaffirmed their commitment to support Kurdistan and the Peshmerga forces in the war against terrorism. They also commended the KRG for hosting and sheltering a large number of refugees and internally displaced persons.

Read a press release here.

Kurdistan's top level domain, .KRD launches into general availability



Businesses, individuals and organizations worldwide have a new home on internet as KRG Department of Information Technology, announces Kurdistan's top level domain, '.KRD' to be available for public registration.

'In an era of increasing global connectivity and emergence of billions of new internet users worldwide .KRD eases the limitation of millions of domain names registered in other top level domains such as .com or .net' said Hiwa Afandi, Head of KRG's Department of Information Technology.

Read a press release here.

KRG Delegation and US Representation commemorate Anfal Day in Washington

Deputy Prime Minister Qubad Talabani, Minister of the Interior and Acting Minister of Peshmerga Affairs Karim Sinjar and Head of the Department of Foriegn Relations Falah Mustafa Bakir joined Representative Abdul Rahman and KRG US Representation staff for a moment of silence on April 14 to commemorate the victims of the Anfal Genocide.



Kurdish translation of the International Protocol on Sexual Violence in Conflict launched in London



The Kurdish translation of the International Protocol on Sexual Violence in Conflict, which sets out the basic principles for the collection, documentation and storage of evidence and information of sexual violence as a crime under international law, was launched in the House of Lords on 20 April 2016 by Baroness Anelay, the British Prime Minister's Special Representative on Preventing Sexual Violence in Conflict and the KRG High Representative to the UK Karwan Jamal Tahir.

The Protocol in Kurdish is a result of Baroness Anelay calling for the translation following her visit to the Kurdistan Region in November 2015, meeting representatives from the KRG, survivors of sexual violence and seeing firsthand the trauma that the horrific crimes inflicted upon innocent people by the terror organisation Daesh.

Read a press release here.

Kurdistan in the media

ISIS Is Using Chemical Weapons Against the Kurds. Why Won't the U.S. Help? - Foreign Policy

April 22, 2016

With ISIS launching chemical attacks, Kurdish leaders in Iraq have issued an appeal to the West for gas masks. But they are still waiting for the gear.



Kurds In Iraq Face Economic Woes Amid Refugee Influx, Fight Against ISIS - NPR

April 12,2016

NPR's Robert Siegel interviews Kurdish Regional Government Deputy Prime Minister Qubad Talabani about how the drop in oil prices, the influx of refugees and the fight against ISIS is causing economic devastation for Kurdistan's population in Iraq.

The saddest piece of Barack Obama's legacy - Washington Post

April 17, 2016

Shortly after the fall of Iraq's second-largest city, Mosul, to the Islamic State in June 2014, a delegation of senior officials from Iraqi Kurdistan visited Washington with a troubling question: From where, they asked, would the force come to retake the city?

A suicide attack took away her father and brother. But it gave her a voice. - PRI's The World

April 8, 2016

Interview with Representative Abdul Rahman.

[Peshmerga troops running on empty in fight against ISIS - Fox News]
April 15, 2016
Kurdish Peshmerga forces - arguably the most effective ground troops battling the Islamic State terror group in Iraq - have been fighting for the past three months without a paycheck, according to experts and a top official from the region.

[30 of the world's best national parks - CNN]
April 22, 2016
Halgurd Mountain named one of top 30 national parks in the world by CNN

[Kurdish Officials Say US Aid Will Help Defeat IS in Iraq - Voice of America]
April 19, 2016
An infusion of American aid to Kurdish Peshmerga and Iraqi forces will help step up the fight against the Islamic State group in Iraq, Kurdish officials said.

[Idea 'blossomed' into tour of Nashville's Little Kurdistan - The Tennessean]
April 18, 2016
For two hours each Sunday in April Shirzad Tayyar is leading a group of curious Nashvillians through a guided tour of a section of Nolensville Pike so people can get a glimpse into city's bustling Kurdish community.



[Kurdistan government needs support to plug $100 million monthly deficit - Reuters]
April 13, 2016
The Kurdistan Regional Government (KRG) in Iraq needs budget support to plug a monthly deficit of $100 million and would accept any conditions that might be placed on the aid, KRG Deputy Prime Minister Qubad Talabani said on Wednesday.

[The Kurdish social media sensation, live from Lincoln - Lincoln Journal-Star]
April 20, 2016
Meet Shlovan Saleh -- causing a stir in the Middle East and beyond. Lincoln Northeast grad, Gold's Gym rat, Dillard's watch specialist, Kurdish Vine video superstar.

[Iraqi Kurds plead to allies for financial help - Financial Times]
April 14, 2016
Reeling from the impact of lower oil prices on its budget, the Iraqi Kurds warned on Wednesday that they will be unable to maintain the fight against Isis if the US and other allies do not provide financial help.

[Iraqi Kurdistan's Economy Is a Worse Threat Than ISIS - Daily Beast]
April 11, 2016
If the semi-autonomous government goes bankrupt, the war against the caliphate could go belly-up.

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Kurdistan Regional Government Representation in the United States

Washington, D.C.
April 2017 Newsletter

Welcome to our April 2017 newsletter

This month Kurdistan's political parties made a historic decision to hold a referendum on independence in 2017. As the Peshmerga, Iraqi Security Forces, and Coalition continue to liberate territory from ISIS, we are looking to the future; in the post-ISIS era, the people of Kurdistan will decide their future.

The actions taken as a result of the referendum will be negotiated through dialogue with Baghdad and our aim is achieve independence peacefully and step by step. Our friends and allies in the US and international community will play an important role in encouraging that dialogue and ensuring that the rights of all people are respected.



Spring is always a bittersweet time for the people of Kurdistan. As the countryside turns verdant green, flowers bloom, and the season of picnicking begins. These months also bring traditional celebrations: the Kurdish Newroz, Chaldean, Syriac, and Assyrian Christian Akitu festival, Easter, and Yezidi Charshemme Soor.

However, April 14th is Anfal Day when we remember the 182,000 Kurds murdered during the Anfal Campaign of the 1980s. In this and other genocidal campaigns, the Baa'thist regime used modern military weaponry to break the economic backbone of the Kurdistan Region and destroy the fabric of Kurdish society. In addition to those killed, more that 4,500 of 5,000 Kurdish villages were destroyed over the period of a decade and one million Kurds fled the country to live in exile. Today Kurdistan is playing host to others who have fled genocide, this time by ISIS. We remember those killed in the Anfal and those who murdered by ISIS.

Bayan Sami Abdul Rahman
Kurdistan Regional Government
Representative to the United States

Senior Kurdistan officials inform diplomats that independence referendum will take place this year

KRG's Department of Foreign Relations organized a meeting between senior Kurdistan Region officials and foreign diplomats based in Erbil to officially inform them that the KRG will hold a referendum on independence later this year.



At the outset of the meeting Deputy Prime Minister Qubad Talabani remarked that 14 years ago the people of Kurdistan saw hope in toppling the Ba'ath regime in Baghdad and expected to live in a federal democracy, but unfortunately those hopes turned into insecurity marked by lack of political, economic and social progress. Mr. Talabani said that both the KDP and PUK started talks with all the political parties in the Kurdistan Region to prepare for holding the referendum, which is a right of the people of Kurdistan Region.

Read the full press release here.

KRG officials meet President Trump and Trump administration officials for first time in Washington

Dr Fuad Hussein, Chief of Staff to the President of the Kurdistan Region, completed a two-week visit to the United States on March 30, 2017. The visit marked the first time an official from the KRG met with US President Donald Trump and first time a senior KRG official visited Washington from

Kurdistan to conduct meetings with Trump Administration officials.



Dr Hussein arrived in Washington the previous week as part of Iraqi Prime Minister Haider al-Abadi's delegation to join the Global Coalition meeting on March 22. During the Coalition meeting, which KRG Representative Bayan Sami Abdul Rahman also joined, Secretary of State Rex Tillerson mentioned the role of the Peshmerga and specifically welcomed Dr Hussein to Washington.

Following the departure of the Iraqi delegation on March 23, Representative Abdul Rahman joined Dr Hussein to conduct additional meetings with administration officials, members of Congress, experts, and others. In every meeting, the delegation thanked the United States for providing leadership in the Coalition and material and financial support for the fight against ISIS.

Read the full press release here.

Minister Falah Mustafa attends Sedona Forum in Arizona



Minister Falah Mustafa Bakir and Representative Bayan Sami Abdul Rahman participated in the fifth annual Sedona Forum hosted by the McCain Institute for International Leadership.

The Head of the Department of Foreign Relations and the Kurdistan Regional Government Representative to the United States were among more than 250 representatives of civil society, think tank and research institutions, media, business, sport and political leaders at the forum.

H.R. McMaster, the United States National Security Advisor, and Canada's Foreign Minister Chrystia Freeland were among the speakers, as well as US military commanders, several senators and top business and civil society leaders.

Read a press release here.

Turkish airstrike kills five Peshmerga in Shingal

A Turkish airstrike targeting PKK positions in Shingal mistakenly struck KRG Peshmerga forces, killing five and injuring nine.

The airstrike was widely condemned by KRG officials, including Head of the Department of Foreign Relations Falah Mustafa Bakir. Peshmerga General Command called the airstrikes 'unacceptable' and noted that the airstrikes were a result of PKK presence and called on them to leave.

State Department Spokesman Mark Toner said that they were 'deeply concerned' that Turkey had conducted airstrikes without proper coordination.

KRG statement on the 29th anniversary of Anfal campaign

April 14th marked the 29th anniversary of the so-called Anfal campaign during which former chauvinist Ba'ath regime carried out a systematic genocide attack against Kurdistan and its people.

In a series of brutal military attacks that targeted the civilians of Kurdistan region, nearly 182,000 were martyred, then their remains were buried in mass graves in Iraq's southern deserts. In addition to looting and destroying thousands of villages, the campaign left large areas of Kurdistan in ruins.

Since the fall of the Baathist regime, one of the top priorities of the Kurdistan Regional Government has been finding those mass graves and bringing back remains of Anfal victims to the homeland. In addition to that, the KRG has been striving to serve and improve the living conditions of the families of the victims of Anfal. It is very disappointing that Iraqi government, after the fall of the Baathist regime, have been failing to provide help and support to the families of victims.

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President Barzani and General Dunford meet in Erbil



President Masoud Barzani received a United States delegation headed by General Joseph Dunford, the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff. During the meeting President Barzani and General Dunford spoke of some of the latest developments concerning the Mosul operation. General Dunford made reference to the great role that has been played by the Peshmerga forces during the ongoing war against the terrorists of the Islamic State. He conveyed his condolences to the families and loved ones of those who have paid the ultimate price.

President Barzani expressed his appreciation, on behalf of the people of the Kurdistan Region to the people and government of the United States for their support to the Kurdistan Region while the world faces the threat from the terrorists of the Islamic State.

Read the full press release here.

State Department approves sale of $295.6 million in military equipment to Peshmerga

'We welcome the provision of $295 million worth of equipment and weapons to the Peshmerga, whose courage in the fight against ISIS has been recognized worldwide,' said Representative Abdul Rahman, following the determination by the US State Department approving the possible sale of $295.6 million in military equipment to Kurdistan's Peshmerga Forces.

This sale is a portion of the US 2016 foreign military financing package to the Government of Iraq, which allocated a loan of $2.7 billion in military equipment. This loan stipulates that a certain portion be allocated for the KRG.

She added, 'We appreciate the allocation of funds for this equipment from America's foreign military financing loan to Iraq, and the support in Congress that a portion of the equipment provided through the $2.7 billion loan should go to Kurdistan.'

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KRG Council of Ministers Easter message to Christians

We extend our best wishes for Easter to our Christian sisters and brothers in the Kurdistan Region and the

world, particularly to those who, like other ethnic and religious communities, were forced to leave their places of origin and become displaced people, as the result of the emergence of terrorism...



Christians celebrate Easter in ancient village of Al-Qosh. Credit: Twitter, @Christians_KRG

On this holy occasion, we reiterate that Kurdistan Region's people and government will remain the protector of the culture of tolerance and coexistence, reflecting Kurdistan people's old principles and traditions of which they are proud. We will never allow, under any circumstances, the foundations of this culture be destabilized.

Kurdistan will remain the umbrella under which all the ethnic and religious communities are protected. Our Peshmerga forces will defend all the communities equally.

Read the full statement here.

President Barzani receives a delegation of Christian clergymen



President Masoud Barzani received a delegation of Iraqi Christian clergymen from a variety of sects. During the meeting President Barzani warmly welcomed the delegation and acknowledged the significance of Christians' endurance during these challenging times for all Iraqi components as they face this existential threat from the terrorists of the Islamic State.

President Barzani stated that the diversity of Iraq as a whole and the Kurdistan Region, in particular, is of immense importance to the people and government of the Kurdistan Region.

The delegation began by expressing their gratitude to the people and government of the Kurdistan Region for their continued support to the Christians. They also acknowledged the role of the Peshmerga forces in liberating some of the key areas inhabited by Iraq's Christians. The delegation conveyed their condolences to the families and loved ones of the Peshmerga forces who have paid the ultimate price for the liberation of areas which were controlled by the terrorists of the Islamic State.

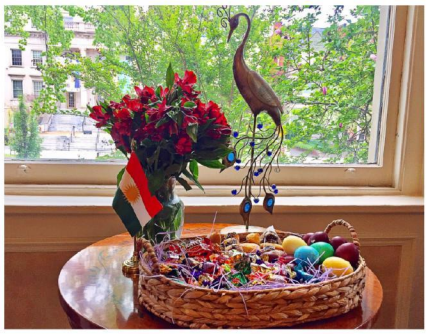
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KRG Council of Ministers and officials send best wishes to Yezidis on Charshemme Soor

The Council of Ministers issued a statement on the occasion of Charshemme Soor, Yezidi New Year, expressing best wishes and support for the Yezidi community in the Kurdistan Region.

Numerous KRG officials including KRG US Representative Abdul Rahman issued similar statements of celebration and solidarity. The KRG Representation in Washington displayed a peacock and a basket of sweets and the traditional colored eggs to celebrate the occasion.

Read the Council of Minister's statement here. [Kurdish]



KRG statement on the use of chemical weapons in Syria and the US response

The people of Kurdistan Region has greatly suffered in the hands of the former deposed Baath regime. One of the most dreadful sufferings was the use of chemical weapon against the town of Halabja, where in few seconds, five thousand people died. If at that time, the international community had not chosen to stay silent and had taken the required measures vis-à-vis the attack, such crimes would not have happened again.

A few days ago, chemical weapons were used against civilian population in Idlib in Syria. This crime reminds us of all the sufferings inflicted upon the people of Kurdistan in late 1980s. We strongly condemn this crime and share the grief of the families of the victims.

In order to prevent the recurrence of such crime, the international community must take a serious stance. We hope that the measures taken by the US forces in Syria will prevent such crimes from being committed again...

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KRG represented at AJC's 25th annual Ambassador Seder



Representative Abdul Rahman joined numerous ambassadors and members of the Washington diplomatic corps for a Seder dinner in celebration of the Jewish holiday of Passover.

During the Passover holiday, Jewish people remember past genocides in ancient and modern times. The dinner included a talk by a representative from Rwanda, who discussed the history of genocide in her country and the progress they have made in seeking justice and building a prosperous nation.

Council of Ministers statement on the Babylonian-Assyrian New Year and Akitu festival

In a statement, the Council of Ministers congratulated the Assyrian, Syriac and Chaldean people in Kurdistan and across the world, as they celebrated the Akitu festival and Babylonian-Assyrian New Year and reiterated that coexistence and tolerance will continue to be safeguarded in Kurdistan.

"The Kurdistan Region will remain a welcoming and peaceful region for all ethnicities and faiths alike.

At a time when a large number of Christian and other ethnic and religious groups are displaced due to the war on terror, the Kurdistan Region continues to provide a welcoming and safe environment for all internally displaced persons. We will continue to support them, share their anguish and stand in solidarity with them. It is our hope to see the displaced people celebrate their future festivities in their liberated homes, with everyone's rights protected and secured."

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Representative Abdul Rahman speaks to World Affairs Council of Vermont



The World Affairs Council of Vermont hosted Representative Abdul Rahman at Champlain College in Burlington, Vermont for a panel discussion alongside retired US Ambassador Robert Ford and Turkish journalist Abdulhamit Bilici about the future of the Middle East.

The event was attended by more that 90 members of the Burlington community including business leaders, academics, journalists, and students. Representative Abdul Rahman focused on the upcoming referendum on independence, arguing that a sovereign Kurdistan would prove to be a strategic asset for the region. She also warned of upcoming challenges in Iraq, saying 'The end of ISIS' caliphate will not be the end of terrorism in Iraq. Without long term solutions we will see the next version of ISIS' Ambassador Ford predicted that at the end of ISIS, the Middle East would see the emergence of an independent Kurdistan.

During the visit, the Representative also met with the Lake Champlain Regional Chamber of Commerce and was interviewed on Channel 17 local television.

Watch the Vermont World Affairs Council event here.

DFR and WFP call on the international community to provide urgent humanitarian assistance to IDPs



Head of the KRG Department of Foreign Relations Minister Falah Mustafa received a United Nations World Food Program delegation that included Celebrity Partner Ms. Suhair Al-Qaisi and Deputy Representative for Iraq, Ms. Maha Ahmed, to discuss the humanitarian situation of the IDPs arriving at IDP camps from conflicts zones in the West of Mosul.

After a meeting, Minister Mustafa and Ms. Al Qaisi held a press conference in which both sides called on the international community to take immediate action to provide humanitarian assistance to the IDPs from Mosul.

Ms. Al-Qaisi thanked the KRG for opening its doors to the Mosul IDPs and said around 7,000 IDPs arrive at the IDP camps from Mosul every day.

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Secretary General Guterres also commented on the great role of the Kurdistan Region in sheltering the IDPs from the rest of Iraq, a step which has has a great positive impact on the management of the crisis caused by the terrorists of the Islamic State since June of 2014.

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President Barzani meets with foreign diplomats in Erbil



President Masoud Barzani held a gathering of foreign diplomats and representatives from a number of countries which have diplomatic representations in the Kurdistan Region. The meeting coincided with Newroz, the Kurdish New Year, which is also celebrated by a number of other ethnic communities.

During the gathering Minister Falah Mustafa, the Head of the Department of Foreign Relations warmly welcomed the attendees and expressed the KRG's appreciation for the support that has been provided to the Kurdistan Region during this ongoing and existential war against ISIS.

Read a full press release here.

Niyaz Barzani joins KRG-US Representation as Special Advisor



Niyaz Barzani joined the KRG-US team this month to act as Special Advisor to the Representative. Mr. Barzani transferred to Washington after having served several years in the Department of Foreign Relations as the Director of Media and Communications.

Mr. Barzani is a Fulbright scholar and received a Master's degree from the University of Texas San Antonio in International Relations. He is pictured here with Representative Abdul Rahman and US Representative Scott Taylor.

Follow Mr. Barzani on Twitter here.

Representative Abdul Rahman and Representation staff join Kurdish community to celebrate Newroz

Representative Abdul Rahman and the staff of the KRG Representation in Washington joined more that 900 members of the Kurdish community in the DC-Virginia-Maryland area to celebrate the Newroz holiday. The event featured Kurdish signers Foad and Gelawezh and Kurdish dancing.

The event was organized by a committee of distinguished community members with coordination from KRG-US.

The celebration was one of many Newroz gatherings around the country including in Nashville, San Diego, Houston, and others.



Kurdistan in the media

For Iraqi Kurds, Trump Brings Hope for Independence - Foreign Affairs
April 12, 2017
Why the new administration inspires optimism

Thousands of Iraqi Christians to celebrate another Easter away from home - Stars and Stripes
April 15, 2017
Iraqi Christians displaced by violence take refuge in Ankawa.

US needs military presence in Kurdistan after IS defeat - Kurdistan24
April 11, 2017
Michael Pregent, a long-time US intelligence officer whose work has focused on the Middle East and included a year with the Peshmerga, explained to Kurdistan24 why it was important for the US to maintain a military presence in the Kurdistan Region after the defeat of the Islamic State (IS).

Iraq's Kurds declare independence in cyberspace with .krd domain name - Reuters
April 14, 2017
Denied their own state in reality, Iraq's Kurds have declared independence in cyberspace with a new domain name that has provoked the ire of a neighbor hostile to their aspirations.

Army Veteran Fights Terrorism by Funding Education for Refugee Children - Points of Light
April 20, 2017
"For U.S. Army veteran Zack Bazzi, protecting our national security and making sure Americans are safe is an ongoing mission. However, he believes that the solution to keeping our nation safe goes well beyond our borders."

TEDxNishtiman tells world Kurdish youth are doing something for the country - Rudaw
April 1, 2017
TEDx Nishtiman kicked off in Erbil with 12 Kurdish and international speakers speaking to an audience of hundreds who came from across Kurdistan and the world to experience the one-day event.

Iraq's Kurds restore ancient sites, envision a tourist-friendly future - CS Monitor
April 24, 2017
While Islamic State sends out suicide bombers and snipers in Mosul to the east, the Kurdish authorities in Erbil are already looking ahead to the day when they can pull in more visitors.

Meet the Iraqi Kurdish men inspiring social change through fashion - Metro
April 9, 2017
"Based in Erbil, Kurdistan, Mr. Erbil is made up of men who share a common interest in designing and styling their own clothes, but also a wish to bring about positive change in the region."

Restored Erbil citadel open to visitors - Rudaw
April 24, 2017
At least 18 sites within the 6,000 year old Erbil citadel have been restored and are now open to visitors.

Capturing the Beauty of Springtime in Iraqi Kurdistan - Time
April 24, 2017
Photographs of spring in Kurdistan by photographer Erin Trieb.

Rosneft Said to Prepay About $1 Billion for Kurdistan Oil - Bloomberg

April 6, 2017
"The Russian state-run producer's trading arm will buy Kurdish oil from now until 2019"

Iraq's Shi'ite ruling coalition opposes Kurds' independence referendum - Reuters
April 20, 2017 - "Iraq's Shi'ite ruling coalition would oppose Kurdish plans to hold a referendum on independence after the defeat of Islamic State, its president, Ammar al-Hakim, has said."

Peshmerga yet to receive arms supplies provided by Canada- NRT
April 24, 2017
Peshmerga fighting Islamic State (ISIS) are yet to receive arms supplies that were to be provided by the Canadian government a year ago, reported Canadian media outlets.

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J. Michael Slocum <jmichaelslocum@slocumboddie.com> Mon, Aug 14, 2017 at 3:50 PM
Reply-To: jmichaelslocum@slocumboddie.com
To: farakrg@gmail.com

J. Michael Slocum
Slocum & Boddie, PC
5400 Shawnee Rd. Suite 300
Alexandria, VA 22312
703-451-9001
703-451-8557 (fax)
jmichaelslocum@slocumboddie.com

---------- Forwarded message ----------
From: **J. Michael Slocum** <jmichaelslocum@slocumboddie.com>
Date: Mon, Aug 14, 2017 at 3:49 PM
Subject: Fwd: KRG-US April 2017 Newsletter
To: farakrg@gmail.com

J. Michael Slocum
Slocum & Boddie, PC
5400 Shawnee Rd. Suite 300
Alexandria, VA 22312
703-451-9001
703-451-8557 (fax)
jmichaelslocum@slocumboddie.com

---------- Forwarded message ----------
From: **Kurdistan Regional Government - USA** <us@gov.krd>
Date: Thu, Apr 27, 2017 at 11:11 AM
Subject: KRG-US April 2017 Newsletter
To: jmichaelslocum@slocumboddie.com

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Kurdistan Regional Government Representation in the United States

Washington, D.C.
April 2017 Newsletter

Welcome to our April 2017 newsletter

This month Kurdistan's political parties made a historic decision to hold a referendum on independence in 2017. As the Peshmerga, Iraqi Security Forces, and Coalition continue to liberate territory from ISIS, we are looking to the future; in the post-ISIS era, the people of Kurdistan will decide their future.

The actions taken as a result of the referendum will be negotiated through dialogue with Baghdad and our aim is achieve independence peacefully and step by step. Our friends and allies in the US and international community will play an important role in encouraging that dialogue and ensuring that the rights of all people are respected.



Spring is always a bittersweet time for the people of Kurdistan. As the countryside turns verdant green, flowers bloom, and the season of picnicking begins. These months also bring traditional celebrations: the Kurdish Newroz, Chaldean, Syriac, and Assyrian Christian Akitu festival, Easter, and Yezidi Charshemme Soor.

However, April 14th is Anfal Day when we remember the 182,000 Kurds murdered during the Anfal Campaign of the 1980s. In this and other genocidal campaigns, the Baa'thist regime used modern military weaponry to break the economic backbone of the Kurdistan Region and destroy the fabric of Kurdish society. In addition to those killed, more that 4,500 of 5,000 Kurdish villages were destroyed over the period of a decade and one million Kurds fled the country to live in exile. Today Kurdistan is playing host to others who have fled genocide, this time by ISIS. We remember those killed in the Anfal and those who murdered by ISIS.

Bayan Sami Abdul Rahman
Kurdistan Regional Government
Representative to the United States

Senior Kurdistan officials inform diplomats that independence referendum will take place this year



KRG's Department of Foreign Relations organized a meeting between senior Kurdistan Region officials and foreign diplomats based in Erbil to officially inform them that the KRG will hold a referendum on independence later this year.

At the outset of the meeting Deputy Prime Minister Qubad Talabani remarked that 14 years ago the people of Kurdistan saw hope in toppling the Ba'ath regime in Baghdad and expected to live in a federal democracy, but unfortunately those hopes turned into insecurity marked by lack of political, economic and social progress. Mr. Talabani said that both the KDP and PUK started talks with all the political parties in the Kurdistan Region to prepare for holding the referendum, which is a right of the people of Kurdistan Region.

Read the full press release here.

KRG officials meet President Trump and Trump administration officials for first time in Washington

Dr Fuad Hussein, Chief of Staff to the President of the Kurdistan Region, completed a two-week visit to the United States on March 30, 2017. The visit marked the first time an official from the KRG met with US President Donald Trump and first time a senior KRG official visited Washington from Kurdistan to conduct meetings with Trump Administration officials.

Dr Hussein arrived in Washington the previous week as part of Iraqi Prime Minister Haider al-Abadi's delegation to join the Global Coalition meeting on March 22. During the Coalition meeting, which KRG Representative Bayan Sami Abdul Rahman also joined, Secretary of State Rex Tillerson mentioned the role of the Peshmerga and specifically welcomed Dr Hussein to

Washington.



Following the departure of the Iraqi delegation on March 23, Representative Abdul Rahman joined Dr Hussein to conduct additional meetings with administration officials, members of Congress, experts, and others. In every meeting, the delegation thanked the United States for providing leadership in the Coalition and material and financial support for the fight against ISIS.

Read the full press release here.

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In a series of brutal military attacks that targeted the civilians of Kurdistan region, nearly 182,000 were martyred, then their remains were buried in mass graves in Iraq's southern deserts. In addition to looting and destroying thousands of villages, the campaign left large areas of Kurdistan in ruins.

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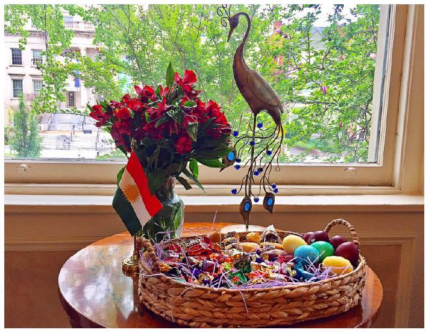
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Niyaz Barzani joins KRG-US Representation as Special Advisor



Niyaz Barzani joined the KRG-US team this month to act as Special Advisor to the Representative. Mr. Barzani transferred to Washington after having served several years in the Department of Foreign Relations as the Director of Media and Communications.

Mr. Barzani is a Fulbright scholar and received a Master's degree from the University of Texas San Antonio in International Relations. He is pictured here with Representative Abdul Rahman and US Representative Scott Taylor.

Follow Mr. Barzani on Twitter here.

Representative Abdul Rahman and Representation staff join Kurdish community to celebrate Newroz

Representative Abdul Rahman and the staff of the KRG Representation in Washington joined more that 900 members of the Kurdish community in the DC-Virginia-Maryland area to celebrate the Newroz holiday. The event featured Kurdish signers Foad and Gelawezh and Kurdish dancing.

The event was organized by a committee of distinguished community members with coordination from KRG-US.

The celebration was one of many Newroz gatherings around the country including in Nashville, San Diego, Houston, and others.



Kurdistan in the media

For Iraqi Kurds, Trump Brings Hope for Independence - Foreign Affairs
April 12, 2017
Why the new administration inspires optimism

Thousands of Iraqi Christians to celebrate another Easter away from home - Stars and Stripes
April 15, 2017
Iraqi Christians displaced by violence take refuge in Ankawa.

US needs military presence in Kurdistan after IS defeat - Kurdistan24
April 11, 2017
Michael Pregent, a long-time US intelligence officer whose work has focused on the Middle East and included a year with the Peshmerga, explained to Kurdistan24 why it was important for the US to maintain a military presence in the Kurdistan Region after the defeat of the Islamic State (IS).

Iraq's Kurds declare independence in cyberspace with .krd domain name - Reuters
April 14, 2017
Denied their own state in reality, Iraq's Kurds have declared independence in cyberspace with a new domain name that has provoked the ire of a neighbor hostile to their aspirations.

Army Veteran Fights Terrorism by Funding Education for Refugee Children - Points of Light
April 20, 2017
"For U.S. Army veteran Zack Bazzi, protecting our national security and making sure Americans are safe is an ongoing mission. However, he believes that the solution to keeping our nation safe goes well beyond our borders."

TEDxNishtiman tells world Kurdish youth are doing something for the country - Rudaw
April 1, 2017
TEDx Nishtiman kicked off in Erbil with 12 Kurdish and international speakers speaking to an audience of hundreds who came from across Kurdistan and the world to experience the one-day event.

Iraq's Kurds restore ancient sites, envision a tourist-friendly future - CS Monitor
April 24, 2017
While Islamic State sends out suicide bombers and snipers in Mosul to the east, the Kurdish authorities in Erbil are already looking ahead to the day when they can pull in more visitors.

Meet the Iraqi Kurdish men inspiring social change through fashion - Metro
April 9, 2017
"Based in Erbil, Kurdistan, Mr. Erbil is made up of men who share a common interest in designing and styling their own clothes, but also a wish to bring about positive change in the region."

Restored Erbil citadel open to visitors - Rudaw
April 24, 2017
At least 18 sites within the 6,000 year old Erbil citadel have been restored and are now open to visitors.

Capturing the Beauty of Springtime in Iraqi Kurdistan - Time
April 24, 2017
Photographs of spring in Kurdistan by photographer Erin Trieb.

Rosneft Said to Prepay About $1 Billion for Kurdistan Oil - Bloomberg

April 6, 2017
"The Russian state-run producer's trading arm will buy Kurdish oil from now until 2019"

Iraq's Shi'ite ruling coalition opposes Kurds' independence referendum - Reuters
April 20, 2017 - "Iraq's Shi'ite ruling coalition would oppose Kurdish plans to hold a referendum on independence after the defeat of Islamic State, its president, Ammar al-Hakim, has said."

Peshmerga yet to receive arms supplies provided by Canada- NRT
April 24, 2017
Peshmerga fighting Islamic State (ISIS) are yet to receive arms supplies that were to be provided by the Canadian government a year ago, reported Canadian media outlets.

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1 message

J. Michael Slocum <jmichaelslocum@slocumboddie.com> Fri, Aug 26, 2016 at 2:36 PM
Reply-To: jmichaelslocum@slocumboddie.com
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Kurdistan Regional Government
Representation in the United States

Washington, D.C.
August 2016 Newsletter

Welcome to our August 2016 Newsletter

On August 3, my staff and I joined the Free Yezidi Foundation and US Holocaust Museum for a candle vigil in solidarity with the 3,200 Yezidi women and children who are still held ISIS. The horrors that they face every day are unimaginable - the knowledge that they can be freed strengthens our resolve to destroy these barbaric terrorists.

This month the Peshmerga advanced again against ISIS, opening up another front to the south of Mosul and tightening the noose around the city where ISIS scored its biggest victory and declared its so-called caliphate.



The operations to liberate Mosul must also include a robust humanitarian response. The UN anticipates that this will be the most complex humanitarian operation in 2016. We expect upwards of one million people to be displaced, many of whom will seek safety in the Kurdistan Region. In addition to the 1.8 million displaced Iraqis and Syrians, this will prove a tremendous strain not only on emergency humanitarian response, but on our security apparatus, utilities and services.

In Kurdistan, we deeply appreciate the role that humanitarians have played in our own region since the 1990s. We marked that relationship this month on World Humanitarian Day, and I thanked aid workers worldwide for their service. Now, once again, we need to support of aid workers and international partners to stave off a humanitarian disaster.

Bayan Sami Abdul Rahman
Kurdistan Regional Government
Representative to the United States

KRG commemorates World Humanitarian Day

'Today there are 60 million people worldwide who are in need of humanitarian assistance. The UN estimates it will cost $60 billion to provide for them,' said Nancy Wilson, President and Chief Executive Officer of Relief International, at the KRG Representation in the United States' commemoration of World Humanitarian Day on August 19.



The KRG Representation in Washington hosted a group of representatives of NGOs, State Department, diplomats from the Iraqi Embassy and other diplomatic missions in Washington, and the media, as well as members of the Yezidi, Christian, and Kurdish communities, for a discussion on the role that humanitarians have played in Kurdistan over the years, the current humanitarian crisis in Kurdistan, and the state of humanitarian work around the world.

KRG Representative to the United States Bayan Sami Abdul Rahman said, 'On behalf of the Kurdistan Regional Government, I thank humanitarian workers who have helped the people of Kurdistan and around the world for decades.'

Read a press release here.

President Barzani Holds a Joint Meeting with Iraqi NSA and US Delegation



President Masoud Barzani held a joint meeting August 13 with Iraqi National Security Adviser Falih al-Fayadh and a United States delegation which included Brett McGurk, the Special Presidential Envoy for the Global Coalition to Counter ISIS, and US Ambassador to Iraq Stuart Jones. President Barzani and Mr. al-Fayadh briefed the US delegation about the progress made by the Iraqi and Kurdistani forces to prepare for the Mosul operation.

President Barzani reiterated his position on the importance of planning for post-liberation Mosul and how that preparation may well be of equal significance to the military operation.

Read a press release here.

KRG participates in meetings on diversity protection at US Department of State



The US Department of State on July 29 hosted a meeting of representatives from 30 countries, the European Union, UNESCO, UNHCR, Organization for Islamic Cooperation and the United Nations to discuss ways that the international community can help protect the religious and ethnic diversity of regions that have been under control by the Islamic State of Iraq and al-Sha'm (ISIS).

Delegates from the KRG participated as part of the Iraqi delegation, alongside representatives of the Yezidi, Assyrian and Turkman communities and the Iraqi Embassy on July 29.

During the opening remarks of the conference, Deputy Secretary of State Antony Blinken said that the assistance of the international community is part of the, 'back-breaking, painstaking work of stabilization, reconciliation, and governance that will ensure that Daesh, once defeated, stays defeated.'

Read a press release here.

Outgoing US Ambassador praises role of Kurdistan Region



Minister Falah Mustafa received the U.S. Ambassador to Iraq Stuart Jones to express KRG's appreciation and gratitude for his service in Iraq as he approaches the end of his term. Minister Mustafa thanked the Ambassador for his role in further advancing ties between the U.S. and Iraq as a whole and the Kurdistan Region in particular.

Ambassador Jones thanked the KRG for its important humanitarian and military role in the past two years and for its continued support to the U.S. Missions in Baghdad and Erbil.

Read a press release here.

KRG Representation in Washington commemorates second anniversary of Yezidi Genocide



On the second anniversary of the attack on Shingal (Sinjar), the Kurdistan Regional Government Representation in the United States conveys its deepest condolences to families that lost their loved ones in the genocide committed by the Islamic State of Iraq and al-Sha'm (ISIS). Our thoughts are especially with the women and children still held captive, who suffer unthinkable horrors at the hands of ISIS criminals.

When ISIS terrorists overran the Yezidi-majority city of Shingal on August 3, 2014, they killed and kidnapped thousands, sending tens of thousands more to seek refuge on Mount Shingal and in the Kurdistan Region.

Read a press release here.

KRG represented at Republican and Democratic National Conventions

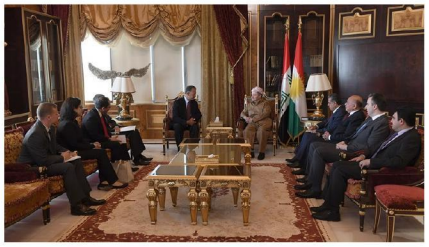


The Kurdistan Regional Government Representation in the United States attended both the Republican National Convention (RNC) in Cleveland, Ohio, and the Democratic National Convention (DNC) in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania.

Karwan Zebari, Director of Political and Diplomatic Affairs at the KRG Representation in Washington, traveled to Cleveland for the RNC from July 18-21. The following week, KRG Representative to the United States Bayan Sami Abdul Rahman was in Philadelphia to watch the nomination of Hillary Clinton as the Democratic Nominee for President. Ms Abdul Rahman was invited by the National Democratic Institute's International Leaders Forum.

Read a press release here.

President Barzani receives US Embassy delegation



President Masoud Barzani received a United States Embassy delegation headed by Jonathan Cohen, the Deputy US Ambassador to Iraq. President Barzani and Mr. Cohen spoke of the ongoing military efforts against the terrorists of the Islamic State and also made references to the relations between Erbil and Baghdad.

President Barzani conveyed his unease at the exclusion of a Kurdish representative for the Global Coalition against the terrorists of ISIS in Washington.

Read a press release here.

Prime Minister Barzani condemns terrorist attacks in Qamishli

KRG Prime Minister Nechirvan Barzani condemned the July 2016 attacks in Qamishli. He said, 'I strongly condemn the terrorist attacks in Qamishli, which claimed the lives of dozens of civilians. I convey my

condolences to the families of the victims, and wish a speedy recovery to the injured.

By committing this heinous crime, terrorists have once again proved that they are true enemies of the Kurds and humanity in general. However, the Kurds will remain steadfast in the fight to eliminate terrorism in the region.

The Kurdistan Regional Government is ready to use all its resources to assist those affected by the terrorist attacks.'

Read a press release here.

President Barzani receives General Dunford



President Masoud Barzani received a United States delegation headed by General Joseph Dunford, the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff. The meeting included a number of military officials from both the United States and the Kurdistan Region as well as Ambassador Stuart Jones, the U.S. Ambassador to Iraq.

President Barzani and General Dunford spoke of the upcoming military operations against the terrorists of the Islamic State, particularly the Mosul operation.

Read a press release here.

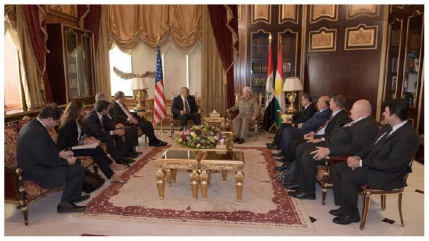
KRG publishes monthly production and export revenue overview for July 2016

The KRG Ministry of Natural Resources published its monthly production and revenue figures for July 2016.

MNR reported that Kurdistan produced an average of 572,750 barrels per day of crude oil and 306.6 million cubic feet of natural gas per day. Through the month, 14,176,761 barrels of crude were sold to Ceyhan, netting an average of $32.53 per barrel.

Read the report here.

President Barzani meets US Senator Booker



President Masoud Barzani received US Senator Cory Booker. During the meeting Senator Booker said that the role of the Peshmerga forces against ISIS is of essential value and that the US-led coalition highly appreciates that role. The Senator went on to make reference to the role of the Kurdistan Region in providing a safe haven to the refugees from Syria and the IDPs from the rest of Iraq.

President Barzani expressed his gratitude on behalf of the people of the Kurdistan Region to the government and people of the United States for their support. The President added that the U.S. support to the Kurdistan Region in the war against ISIS has a great impact on the success of the Peshmerga forces.

Read a press release here.

President Barzani condemns Gaziantep terrorist attack

The Kurdistan Region Presidency released a statement strongly condemning the terrorist attack at a wedding in Gaziantep, Turkey. The attack took the lives of over 50 people.

The statement expressed the condolences of the people and government of the Kurdistan Region to the families and loved ones of the deceased and wished for speedy recovery for the wounded.

Read the statement here [Kurdish]

Kurdistan in the media

Inside the real US ground war with ISIL - Buzzfeed
August 16, 2016
As the US and its allies prepare to launch a major offensive for Mosul, US service members are on the ground in growing numbers - and increasingly in harm's way.

Kurdish forces open new front on Islamic State capital Mosul - Reuters
August 15, 2016
Kurdish Peshmerga forces on Monday said they had secured a river crossing point enabling them to open a new front against Islamic State and further tighten their grip on the militants' capital Mosul.

Kurdish start-up aims to help budding entrepreneurs reach for their dreams - Rudaw
August 15, 2016
A young Kurdish startup has a vision to enable budding entrepreneurs fulfill their dreams.

Kirkuk oil export increased after five-month halt- Rudaw
August 21, 2016
The export of crude oil from Kirkuk will rise after a ban was lifted Saturday on several oil fields in the province, increasing the total export of the crude to 300,000 barrels per day (bpd) from previous 150,000 bpd.

Former US war crimes ambassador calls for UN investigative probe into Yazidi genocide - Justice Tribune
July 21, 2016
Former US war crimes ambassador Stephen Rapp calls for UN investigative probe into Yazidi genocide after a United Nations Inquiry commission found last month that the crimes of ISIS against Yezidis amounted to genocide the call for accountability and prosecution of the perpetrators increased.

The Hunt: A new warning for ISIL - WTOP
August 10, 2016
Interview with Representative Abdul Rahman

KRG, refugees, ISIS - International Dialogues Radio
August 20, 2016
Interview with Representative Abdul Rahman

Painting in the shadow of ISIS - The Hill
August 17, 2016

"Art awakens us to the dimensions of life that we wouldn't be able to see otherwise," Marwan said.

[Sulaimani council elects Gorran candidate as governor - Rudaw]
August 25, 2016
The Sulaimani Provincial Council has elected Gorran movement candidate and former head of the Sulaimani Provincial Council, Haval Abubakir, as new governor of the province on Thursday.

[PM Barzani and Deputy PM Talabani commemorate 'deep wound' of Yezidi massacre - Rudaw]
August 3, 2016
The Kurdistan Region's Prime Minister, Nechirvan Barzani, and Deputy Prime Minister, Qubad Talabani, have issued statements condemning the Sinjar massacre of Yezidis and vowed to bring life back to the Shingal region.

[Why Kurdistan Is a Pillar of Hope in a Turbulent Middle East - Huffington Post]
August 14, 2016
Dr Sasha Toperich - 'I truly admire the spirit of the people in Kurdistan, tirelessly working to reinvent their lives and to create a better future.'

[With thousands still missing, Sinjar's deep wounds remain raw - WTOP]
August 3, 2016
"My first thoughts were, 'I just can't believe we're undergoing yet another genocide,'" said Bayan Sami Abdul Rahman

[Agriculture Minister: Kurdistan products outstrip demands, need international market - Kurdistan 24]
August 17, 2016
Agricultural products in Kurdistan Region outstrip national demand and can be exported, a Kurdish official said on Wednesday

[UAE singer features Kurdistan's nature in new album to bring smile to Iraqis - Rudaw]
August 20, 2016
Hussein Jassmi, a singer from the United Arab Emirates, has put scenes from Kurdistan's nature and Kurdish dance in his latest album in order to bring some smiles to the Iraqi people in this time of war.

[Peshmerga: Pride of All Humanity - But We Need To Help More - USMilitary.com]
August 8, 2016
The temperature is over 120 degrees and I am in a car with Peshmerga General Ato Zebari, visiting several Peshmerga posts at the front lines of the war against ISIS.

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J. Michael Slocum <jmichaelslocum@slocumboddie.com> Tue, Jan 26, 2016 at 2:40 PM
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Kurdistan Regional Government Representation in the United States

Washington, D.C.
January 2016 Newsletter

Welcome to our January 2016 Newsletter

This year will be a difficult year for the people of Kurdistan. The crash in oil prices, the unrelenting war against ISIS, and the presence of 1.8 million Syrian refugees and displaced Iraqis have precipitated a dire financial crisis for the Kurdistan Regional Government. The KRG has not received its proper budget from Baghdad for nearly two years.



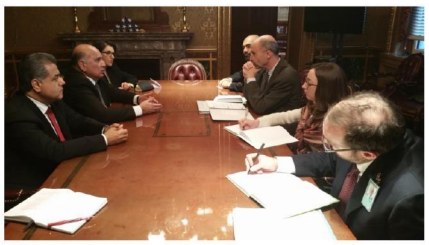
This month, we welcomed Dr Fuad Hussein, Chief of Staff to President Barzani, and Minister Falah Mustafa Bakir, Head of the Department of Foreign Relations, to Washington to convey our situation to our American friends and allies. Among the many meetings with US administration and defense officials, members of Congress, journalists, NGOs, and business leaders, we met with the Commander of US Central Command General Lloyd Austin (pictured here), who met with President Barzani the following week.

As the Peshmerga continue to liberate areas from ISIS control, timely reconstruction of cities and villages decimated by the terror group will be critical to allowing the displaced to return home. This month the KRG Joint Crisis Coordination Center released its Rapid Damage Assessment for Shingal (Sinjar) City, detailing $10.1 million in development that will be required to bring the city to only minimal habitable standards. Full rehabilitation of the city will likely cost hundreds of million of dollars.

The people of Kurdistan once again proved their resilience in the face of extreme challenges in 2015. This year will be no less difficult, and Kurdistan needs its American friends now, more than ever.

Bayan Sami Abdul Rahman
Kurdistan Regional Government
Representative to the United States

KRG delegation calls for US support as it tackles economic crisis



A delegation of KRG officials was in Washington in January to ask the US for assistance in the face of a growing financial crisis.

Throughout the week Dr Fuad Hussein, Chief of Staff to President Barzani, Minister Falah Mustafa Bakir, Head of the Department of Foreign Relations, and Bayan Sami Abdul Rahman, KRG Representative to the United States, met with numerous US Administration and defense officials (pictured with White House National Security Council team), members of Congress, regional experts, and American and Kurdish media outlets to convey the dire financial circumstances facing the Kurdistan Region as a direct result of the humanitarian crisis and the war against ISIS, combined with the fall in oil prices.

Read press releases: January 21, January 18, January 14, January 13

KRG JCC conducts Rapid Damage Assessment of Shingal City



As a necessary step after the liberation of Shingal district mid November 2015, the Ministry of Interior of the Kurdistan Regional Government (KRG), Joint Crisis Coordination Centre (JCC) has conducted a rapid damage assessment on the early recovery needs for the town of Shingal. On the 13th of November 2015, the Peshmerga forces, supported by the International Coalition, launched the Free Shingal Operation and liberated the district. Shingal and 28 villages were retaken after 15 months of ISIS occupation.

Read the report here in English and in Kurdish.

President Barzani hosts General Austin and delegation in Erbil



President Masoud Barzani received a military and diplomatic delegation from the United States headed by General Lloyd Austin, the commander of the U.S. Central Command. The meeting was also attended by the US ambassador to Iraq, Mr. Stuart Jones and other US officials. President Barzani and General Austin reviewed the latest military operations against the ISIS terrorists in Ninawa and Anbar provinces.

Read a press release here.

Kurdistan Region Council of Ministers discusses financial crisis



The current financial crisis was discussed at a meeting of the Kurdistan Region Council of Ministers, chaired by Prime Minister Nechirvan Barzani, with Deputy Prime Minister Qubad Talabani.

Prime Minister Barzani said that meeting extraordinary expenses caused by the war against the Islamic State terrorist organization that the Kurdistan Region fights also on behalf of the world, and accommodating close to two million refugees and displaced persons, has been greatly worsened by the dramatic decrease in the price of oil that is the primary source of public revenue.

Read a press release here.

Kurdistan Council of Ministers discusses financial crisis with US delegation

Following a recent visit by a senior KRG delegation to the United States to brief the US Administration about the financial crisis in the Kurdistan Region, and to request US support, Prime Minister Nechirvan Barzani received the US Ambassador to Iraq, Mr. Stewart Jones and his accompanying diplomatic team.

In the meeting, which was also attended by Deputy Prime Minister Qubad Talabani, the current financial crisis in the Region, was discussed. The visiting delegation expressed concern and eagerness to find a solution to overcome the difficulties.



Read a press release here.

KRG and US-Kurdistan Business Council host reception



The KRG Representation and US-Kurdistan Business Council hosted a reception in honor of Dr Fuad Hussein and Minister Falah Mustafa Bakir at the Representation in Washington, DC. Dr Hussein thanked the companies for their dedication to Kurdistan, especially in the difficult times it has faced in recent months.

The event was attended by American business executives, many of whom have significant investments in Kurdistan. Last month, Representative Abdul Rahman and the USKBC led over 25 companies on a trade delegation through the Kurdistan Region, meeting with KRG officials and Kurdish business leaders.

Head of DFR receives Head of EU Delegation to Iraq

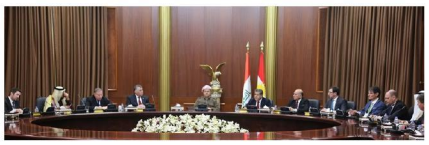


Minister Falah Mustafa Bakir, Head of KRG Foreign Relations received the European Union Delegation to Iraq headed by Chargé d'Affaires, Mr. Konstatinos Vardakis. Mr. Vardakis was accompanied by Consuls General resident in Erbil from France, Holland, Italy, Hungary, Poland, Romania and the United Kingdom.

Minister Mustafa and Mr. Vardakis exchanged views on a range of issues including the political process in Kurdistan Region, steps taken by KRG to tackle the financial crisis, advances of Peshmerga forces in the fight against ISIS, and situation of refugees and displaced people in Kurdistan Region and Erbil-Baghdad ties.

Read a press release here.

President Barzani hosts annual diplomatic corps meeting



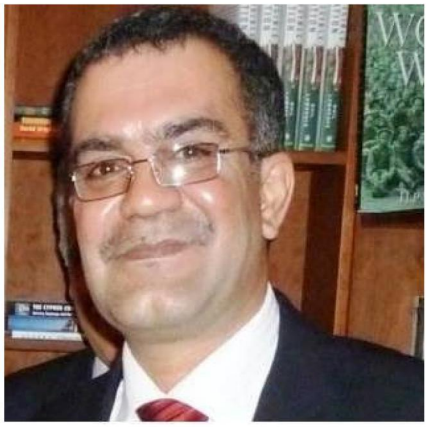
President of Kurdistan Region Masoud Barzani hosted foreign diplomats and representatives of international organizations based in Erbil to discuss the developments in Kurdistan and the wider region and to reflect on 2015.

The President thanked the members of the counter ISIS coalition for their military support to the Peshmerga forces but stressed that continued support is needed, as ISIS remains a threat to regional and international peace and security. He encouraged all regional powers to unite forces against ISIS and stated that the Kurdistan Region will not be part of the ongoing sectarian rivalry across the Middle East.

Read a press release here.

Barzan Ardalan joins KRG Representation as Director of

Consular Services



The KRG Representation in the US is pleased to announce the addition of Barzan Ardalan as Director of Consular Services.

Mr Ardalan is a graduate of Mosul University with a bachelor degree in engineering. Prior to joining the KRG Representation, he worked for the United Nations' World Food Program and United Nations' Office for Project Services in Kurdistan. A translator by profession, he is a member of the National Languages Service Corps and American Translators Association, as well as the Kurdistan Engineers Association.

Kurdistan in the media

Kurdish Delegation In Washington Looks For U.S. Assistance To Fight ISIS - NPR
January 12, 2016
Interview with Representative Bayan Sami Abdul Rahman.



Kurdish officials say they're facing a financial crisis - Associated Press
January 14, 2016
Interview with Minister Falah Mustafa Bakir.

Prime Minister Nechirvan Barzani interview with Christian Amanpour - CNN
January 12, 2016
Prime Minister Barzani speaks with CNN about strategy against ISIS.

US help for Kurds is critical in defeating ISIS - Philadelphia Inquirer
January 24, 2016
Trudy Rubin Worldview column - Any U.S. effort to uproot the Islamic State from Iraq and Syria in 2016 will have to rely on Kurdish fighters to play a critical role.

KRG Rep. to US: Americans emphasized partnership - Kurdistan 24
January 21, 2016
Interview with Representative Abdul Rahman



Why U.S. support for the Kurds is more important than ever - The Hill
January 21, 2016
Oped - How American strategic interests and moral imperative converge in Kurdistan.

The Kurds should not be denied our support - The Guardian
January 16, 2016
Oped - The Kurds are our allies against ISIS

The Kurds are ready to retake Mosul. Now they just need the Iraqi army. - Washington Post
January 14, 2016
Kurdish officials say they are waiting for their Iraqi allies to commit to the coming campaign.

Voice of America, Kurdistan TV
January 19, 2016
Interview and press conference [in Kurdish] with Dr Fuad Hussein, Minister Falah Mustafa Bakir, and Representative Bayan Sami Abdul Rahman.

Reaching isolated children on Sinjar Mountain - UNICEF
January 5, 2016



Fifteen year-old Falah is playing an animated game of foosball in an unlikely place - a tent atop Sinjar Mountain, Iraq, 1,400 metres above the city he fled when militants attacked last year.

Where ISIS Ends and Kurdistan Begins - The National Interest
January 4, 2016
Interview with Peshmerga Commander and former Speaker of Parliament Kemal Kirkuki.

Archaeologists Return to Neanderthal Cave as ISIS Pushed from Iraq - LiveScience
January 4, 2016
As the terrorist group ISIS is pushed out of northern Iraq, archaeologists are resuming work in the region, making new discoveries and figuring out how to conserve archaeological sites and reclaim looted antiquities.

Iraq risks losing generation due to lack of schools, healthcare - Reuters
December 30, 2015
Preventing violence from depriving millions of children in Iraq of education and decent healthcare is a key humanitarian priority for the country in 2016, a senior U.N. official said.

Security, Stability, and State-Building in Iraqi Kurdistan - Washington Kurdish Institute
January 19, 2016
The battle for Sinjar is just one example of security cooperation between the US and the KRG.

The Reality of Kurdistan - Huffington Post
December 28, 2015
Just about the only good news that emerges from the war in Iraq and Syria against the Islamic State is about the military prowess of Kurdish forces, the Peshmerga.

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Fwd: KRG-US January 2017 Newsletter

1 message

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Kurdistan Regional Government
Representation in the United States

Washington, D.C.
January 2017 Newsletter

Welcome to our January 2017 newsletter

Like many others, I was honored this month to attend the inauguration of President Donald Trump as a guest of Senator Bob Corker and the Tennessee Republican Party, alongside members of the Tennessee Kurdish-American community, to watch the peaceful transfer of executive power and the beginning of a new era in American history.

In President Trump's inaugural address and in conversations with his advisors (pictured with Newt Gingrich) over the previous weeks, I have been encouraged that the new President is serious about defeating the ISIS terrorist organization.



The KRG was proud to fight ISIS alongside the Obama Administration, which provided critical military, financial, and humanitarian support in Kurdistan's time of need. We look forward to working with the new Trump Administration on these issues and growing the partnership between our people.

Bayan Sami Abdul Rahman
Kurdistan Regional Government
Representative to the United States

President Barzani Meets with Biden and Brende



As part of President Masoud Barzani's participating in the 2017 World Economic Forum annual conference, the President had a number of meetings including with the U.S. Vice President Joseph Biden whose friendship of almost two decades has certainly strengthened the bilateral relations between the Kurdistan Region of Iraq and the United States of America. Vice President Biden and President Barzani reviewed the latest developments with the war against the terrorists of the Islamic State with the former congratulating the Peshmerga forces for their victories against the terrorists.

President Barzani also met with Mr. Borge Brende, Norway's Minister of Foreign Affairs. The two sides spoke of the general situation of the Kurdistan Region of Iraq and the current war on the terrorists of the Islamic State.

Read a press release here.

Representative Abdul Rahman visits southern California



Representative Abdul Rahman was in southern California to speak with civil society institutions and local Kurdistani communities.

Ms. Abdul Rahman spoke to the distinguished members of the World Affairs Councils of San Diego, Southern Inland California, and Orange County. She was also hosted for a talk at the University of Southern California and the AJC in Los Angeles.

She also had the opportunity to meet with Dr Joel Day, the Executive Director of the International Affairs Board Human Relations Commission for the City of San Diego, to discuss the role of the Kurdistani community in San Diego and how both the City of San Diego and the KRG can work together to serve those communities.

Mayor of the City of Calabasas Mary Sue Maurer welcomed Representative Abdul Rahman for the city's Special Speaker Series, where she spoke with more than one hundred members of that community.

This was Representative Abdul Rahman's first visit to the west coast as Representative to the United States.

American doctors spend holiday season treating wounded Peshmerga



A group of American doctors, surgeons, and medics with the Global Surgical and Medical Support Group spent the 2016 holiday season in Kurdistan to provide top medical care to injured Peshmerga and civilians.

The group also conducted combat medical training sessions for Peshmerga in Erbil, Slemani, and Duhok, and delivered badly-needed medical and surgical supplies to KRG Ministry of Health.

GSMSG is currently recruiting medical professionals for another upcoming visit to Kurdistan. Qualified individuals are encouraged to contact GSMSG for more details.

Joint Crisis Coordination Center Director-General: Hundreds of thousands displaced by Mosul operations



The number of the Internally Displaced Persons (IDPs) in the Kurdistan Region camps are increasing, only since the beginning of the second phase of Mosul operation, 3,000 people have displaced on daily basis in which 70 percent have come to the Kurdistan Region.

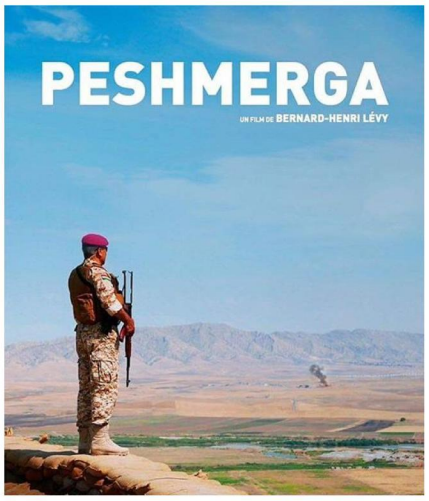
Hoshang Mohamed, Director General of the Joint Crisis Coordination Center said, 'Since the start of Mosul operation on October 17, 2016, hundreds of thousands of people have been displaced, 90,000 of them, which is around 25,000 families, have arrived in the Kurdistan Region and were sheltered at Khazir, Hassan Sham and Debaga camps in Erbil as well as Qaymawa and Nergizli camps in Duhok.'

Mohamed stated that 'KRG has provided all basic services for the IDPs including shelter, security and protection, food, non-food items and medical services in coordination and cooperation with the Iraqi Ministry of Migration and Displaced, UN agencies, local and international NGOs.'

Read a press release here.

'Peshmerga' film screens at New York Jewish Film Festival

'Peshmerga', a film by French director and philosopher Bernard Henri-Levy about Kurdistan's ongoing war with ISIS terrorists, screened at the New York Jewish Film Festival. The film follows individual Peshmerga troops, telling a story of struggle and triumph over the forces of extremism.



Bernard Henri-Levy was hosted at the festival for a question and answer session.

Representative Abdul Rahman and KRG US staff attended the screening, as did Peshmerga Brigadier General Hajar Ismail.

Watch a trailer for the film here.

President Barzani welcomes President Hollande in Erbil



President Masoud Barzani received a high level French delegation headed by Francois Hollande, the President of France. The French delegation included the Minister of Defense and Veteran Affairs, Mr. Jean-Yves Le Drian and a number of other officials. Accompanying the President were a number of KRG officials including Mr. Kosrat Rasul, the Vice President of the Kurdistan Region, Prime Minister Nechirvan Barzani and Kurdistan Region Security Council Chancellor Masrour Barzani.

As a sign of gratitude to the support of France to the Kurdistan Region, President Hollande was welcomed at the airport by the family members of the martyrs of the Peshmerga forces who had paid the ultimate price during the ongoing war against ISIS, most notably the mother of the three brothers who were martyred on the same day during the liberation of Zummar.

Read a press release here.

World Council of Churches praises role of Kurdistan Region



Minister Falah Mustafa received a delegation of World Council of Churches headed by Rev. Dr. Olav Fykse Tveit, General Secretary of the Council. Rev. Dr. Fykse said that the purpose of the visit was to identify the humanitarian needs of refugees and displaced people and to gain a better understanding of the situation of minorities.

The General Secretary said, 'The World Council of Churches acknowledges and appreciates the role played by the Kurdistan Regional Government in receiving and supporting civilians fleeing from ISIS brutality.' He added, 'We also recognize and value the heavy price paid by Peshmerga forces in defending members of different ethnic and religious groups and liberating their territories.'

Read a press release here.

KRG biometric registration project meets 500K enrollments milestone



The biometric registration of KRG's public sector payroll beneficiaries met a major milestone at 500,000 enrollments.

All public sector payroll beneficiaries will be enrolled using a network of 270 registration units placed at 80 locations across the region connected to KRG's first data center.

Preliminary result of the collected data confirms the required quality of biometric and biographic data for the purpose of unique identification as well as the success of system integration and workflow.

Read a press release here.

Kurdistan in the media

Kurdish president: Independence is 'neither a rumor nor a dream' - Washington Post
January 19, 2017
President Barzani spoke to The Washington Post's Lally Weymouth in Davos, Switzerland at the World Economic Forum.

President Barzani from Davos: We will not give up on the independence process for the Kurdistan Region - Rudaw
January 19, 2017
If diplomatic efforts between Kurdistan Region and the government of Iraq fail, the Kurdistan Regional Government (KRG) will make moves toward independence, Masoud Barzani, president of the Kurdistan Region, informed Rudaw.

Jonathan Gold tells you what to order at the only Kurdish restaurant in the western United States - LA Times
January 6, 2017
Imagine you are visiting a restaurant that is as comfortable and familiar as a friend's living room, where the music is good, but where you are largely ignorant of the cuisine. Some of the dishes you recognize - hummus, falafel, chicken kebab - while others, like hesandin and mele gej, you do not.

KRG provides for return of 1.8 million IDPs and refugees - NRT
January 25, 2017
The KRG said it has facilitated, upon their free choice, the safe, voluntary and dignified return of almost 1.8 million Internally Displaced Persons (IDPs) and refugees hosted in the region.

Mr. Erbil: Kurdish Dandies Start Iraq's First Fashion Club - Vocativ
January 17, 2017
It's not just about bringing fashion to Iraq. For these Kurdish peacocks it's also about promoting a positive image of their homeland to the world

Two ruling Kurdish parties seek to rekindle strategic alliance - Rudaw
January 24, 2017
Officials from Kurdistan Region's two major political parties have spoken of renewing an old strategic alliance they once had and creating a united platform for future talks domestically and with Baghdad, which the leader of the Socialist Party, who is a veteran Kurdish politician believes will be the beginning of an end to the gridlock currently choking the region.

Mosul IDPs leave Kurdistan with $85M medical debt: Health Minister - Kurdistan 24
January 24, 2 017
Almost 99 percent of Internally Displaced Persons (IDPs) and wounded Iraqi troops from Mosul receive treatment at Erbil hospitals, said a Kurdish Health Minister on Sunday.

A look inside Kurdish restaurant The Gundis - Chicago Tribune
January 18, 2017
Chicago welcomed a Kurdish restaurant to its ranks when The Gundis opened at the beginning of the month in Lakeview.

Peshmerga complete training in chemical warfare protection in Germany - Rudaw
January 24, 2017
[Photo gallery] The 15 Peshmerga who recently went to Germany for two weeks of training on how to protect against possible chemical attacks have successfully completed their course.

Iraqis leave the cares of war behind on the slopes of Kurdistan - The National
January 3, 2017
The resort, which first opened in 2013, boasts glistening ski slopes, several restaurants and amusement park-style attractions, and quickly became popular with Iraqis and Kurds seeking respite in the snowy landscape.

Yazda: Offices in Kurdistan to reopen after talks - Rudaw
January 18, 2017
The Yezidi rights organization Yazda said in a statement on Wednesday that their facilities in the Kurdistan Region will be reopened as they have reached an agreement with the KRG.

Filmmaker Documents Battle To Retake Mosul With Those Fighting It - NPR
December 28, 2016
As Iraqi army and Kurdish forces battle to take the city of Mosul away from ISIS forces, a Kurdish filmmaker is shooting a real-time war drama about some of those giving their lives in the struggle.

Photo gallery: Iraqi Kurdistan, Caught Between Worlds - The New Yorker
January 8, 2017
The Kurdistan Region of northern Iraq stands between different worlds: present and past, modernity and tradition, freedom and danger.

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Kurdistan Regional Government

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Kurdistan Regional Government
Representation in the United States

Washington, D.C.
July 2016 Newsletter

Welcome to our July 2016 Newsletter

On August 3, we will mark the second anniversary of the Yezidi genocide at the hands of ISIS. The suffering of the Yezidis persists as the community bears the scars of mass murder, rape, beheadings and sexual enslavement of its daughters. It is incumbent on us all to help the Yezidis to heal whether it is through advocacy, humanitarian assistance to the displaced or finding ways to bring back those still in captivity.



Other groups, including the Assyrian Christians, Shabaks and Kakaiis, have also been the victims of genocide and, while most wish to return to their homes after ISIS is defeated, the question remains as to how their province of Nineveh and city of Mosul will be governed so that another ISIS does not spring up.

As we look toward the future - the liberation of Mosul and the eradication of ISIS from Iraq - we must ensure that peace is sustainable. Most importantly, we must seek justice for the crimes committed, to break the cycle of genocide in the region.

I was privileged this month to witness the signing of a landmark Memorandum of Understanding in Erbil between the United States and the Kurdistan Regional Government. The agreement, which outlines the provisions and protocols for delivering financial and logistical support to Peshmerga forces in the fight against ISIS, underscores a partnership that continues to grow between the people of America and the people of Kurdistan.

Later in Washington, I joined the Iraqi delegation as members of the Global Coalition to Counter ISIS for meetings to raise funds for the humanitarian response and plan counter-ISIS strategies in Iraq, the Middle East and around the world. Over 40 countries pledged to contribute more than $2 billion for humanitarian operations and stabilization. With the Kurdistan Region hosting 1.8 million displaced Iraqis and Syrian refugees and the Peshmerga making the ultimate sacrifice against ISIS, it is vital that the voice of the KRG is heard at these conferences.

Bayan Sami Abdul Rahman
Kurdistan Regional Government
Representative to the United States

Kurdistan Region and the US sign military agreement



KRG and American officials signed a memorandum of understanding in Erbil on July 12 that includes provisions of military support to the Peshmerga forces.

The agreement was signed by Acting Minister of Peshmerga Affairs Karim Sinjari and Acting US Assistant Secretary of Defense for International Security Affairs Elissa Slotkin. Prior to the signing of the agreement, Kurdistan Region President Masoud Barzani met with the U.S. delegation headed by Ms. Slotkin. The meeting followed a telephone conversation between President Barzani and the U.S. Secretary of Defense Ashton Carter.

President Barzani and Ms. Slotkin discussed the liberation of Mosul and the preparations of the Coalition, Iraqi and Kurdish forces. President Barzani focused on the importance and urgency of the liberation of Mosul and used the opportunity to highlight the importance of planning for post-liberation of Mosul.

Read a press release here.

KRG joins Global Coalition conference in Washington



The KRG Representative to the United States joined Foreign and Defense ministers from 42 countries from the Global Coalition to Counter the Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant (ISIL) on Thursday as part of the delegation from Iraq.

Bayan Sami Abdul Rahman attended the meeting hosted by US Secretary of State John Kerry, US Secretary of Defense Ashton Carter and Special Presidential Envoy Brett McGurk, which was held to discuss priorities for the Coalition's multiple lines of effort to degrade, defeat and destroy ISIL, including political-military coordination, combatting foreign terrorist fighters, counterterrorist financing, counter-messaging, and stabilization of liberated areas.

Read a press release here.

Deputy Prime Minister Talabani joins Peshmerga at frontlines for Eid al-Adha celebration



The KRG Deputy Prime Minister joined Peshmerga forces in south of Kirkuk on July 6 to celebrate the first day of the Eid al-Adha holiday.

Deputy Prime Minister Talabani thanked the soldiers for their bravery and sacrifice as they spent the holiday away from their families.

On the same day, he visited families of Peshmerga in Kirkuk who were captured by ISIS. 'Nothing would have been achieved had it not been for the heroism of our Peshmerga,' Deputy Prime Minister Talabani told their families.

Read a press release here [Kurdish]

President Barzani welcomes General Votel



President Masoud Barzani received a United States military and diplomatic delegation headed by General Joseph Votel, the Commander of the United States Central Command and included a number of State and Defense officials including Ambassador Stuart Jones.

The President and General Votel spoke of the details of the planning for the Mosul operation and how that operation is a key to the collapse of the terrorists of the Islamic State. Additionally President Barzani repeated his stance on the planning for post liberation management of Mosul. General Votel agreed with the President and stated that that planning also needs to be carefully drawn.

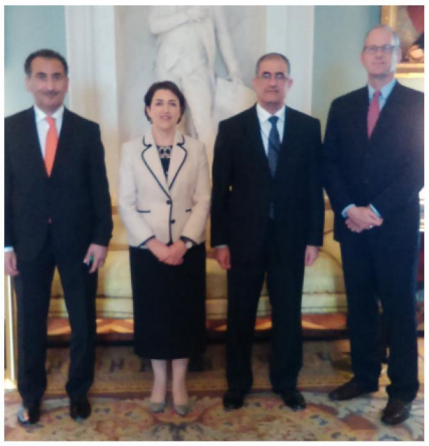
Read a press release here.

Bayan Sami Abdul Rahman represents KRG at Pledging Conference in Support of Iraq in Washington

Kurdistan Regional Government Representative to the United States Bayan Sami Abdul Rahman joined the Iraqi delegation led by Foreign Minister Ibrahim al-Jaaferi at the State Department on Wednesday for the Pledging Conference in Support of Iraq in Washington.

Representative Abdul Rahman said, 'I am very pleased to see the international community showing

such a strong commitment to the people of Iraq. The support pledged today, over $2 billion, will be critical to the stabilization of the region.'



Ms Abdul Rahman thanked US Administration officials including Special Presidential Envoy for the Global Coalition to Counter ISIL Ambassador Brett McGurk for their support of Iraq and the Kurdistan Region.

Read a press release here.

KRG welcomes US Congress support for Peshmerga and Kurdistan Region

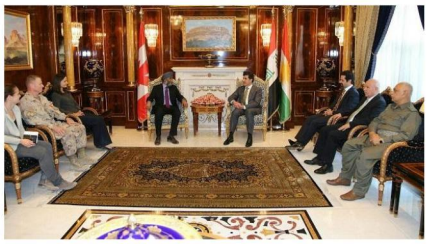
On July 7 the US Senate passed Senate Resolution 340 , sponsored by Senator Bill Cassidy of Louisiana, which expresses 'the sense of the Senate that the atrocities perpetrated by the Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant (ISIL) against religious and ethnic minorities in Iraq and Syria include war crimes, crimes against humanity, and genocide.' The House of Representatives' version of the resolution was passed in December 2015.

Senate Concurrent Resolution 41 sponsored by Republican Senator Joni Ernst of Iowa and Democratic Senator Barbara Boxer of California passed the Senate Foreign Relations Committee on July 14. The non-binding resolution recognizes the Peshmerga as 'vital partners' and 'one of the most effective fighting forces in the military campaign against ISIS.'

Read a press release here.

Canadian Minister of Defense visits Erbil

Canadian Minister of Defense Harjit Sajjan met with Prime Minister Nechirvan Barzani to discuss Canada's role in the fight against ISIS and the upcoming operation to liberate the city of Mosul.



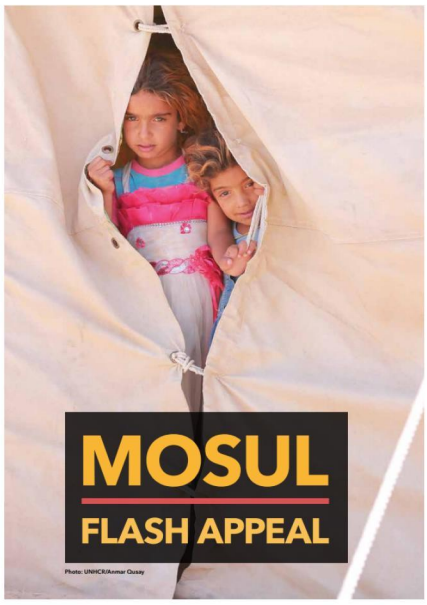
Mr. Sajjan was accompanied by a military and diplomatic delegation. He thanked the KRG for providing a sanctuary to the IDPs and refugees.

Prime Minister Barzani thanked Canada for providing military training, equipment, and supplies to Peshmerga forces.

Deputy Prime Minister Qubad Talabani, Acting Minister of Peshmerga Affairs Karim Sinjari, and Peshmerga Commander Jaafer Mustafa attended the meeting as well.

Read a press release here [Kurdish].

UNHCR launches Mosul Flash Appeal - $284 million urgently needed

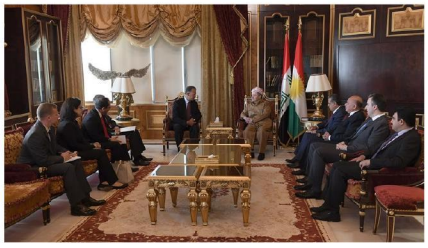


The UN High Commissioner for Refugees launched an urgent appeal for $284 million needed to prepare for the Mosul humanitarian operation. As many as 1.2 million to 1.5 million civilians are likely to require protection and assistance once the military operations to retake Mosul begin. The report says that the humanitarian operation 'is likely to be the single largest, most complex in the world in 2016.'

The report says, 'In the lead-up to the Mosul operation and in an effort to alleviate what are expected to be some of the worst humanitarian conditions in the world, partners are seeking urgent funding to pre-position stocks, medical supplies, tents, shelter materials, food, water, sanitation facilities, and hygiene items along exit routes and in the areas where families will be received and accommodated.'

Download the appeal here.

President Barzani receives US Embassy delegation



President Masoud Barzani received a United States embassy delegation on July 23, headed by Jonathan Cohen, the Deputy U.S. Ambassador to Iraq. President Barzani and Mr. Cohen spoke of the ongoing military efforts against the terrorists of the ISIS and also made references to the relations between Erbil and Baghdad.

President Barzani conveyed his message of discomfort with the concerned parties vis-a-vis the exclusion of an official Kurdish delegation at the meeting of the Global Coalition in Washington. The President stated that the Peshmerga forces play a key role in the global battle against the terrorists of the Islamic State and such recognition needs to be very clearly noted by the international community.

Read a press release here.

KRG publishes monthly production and export revenue overview for June 2016

The KRG Ministry of Natural Resources published its monthly production and revenue figures for June 2016.

MNR reported that Kurdistan produced an average of 567,068 barrels per day of crude oil and 311.9 million cubic feet of natural gas per day. Through the month, 15,427,074 barrels of crude were sold to Ceyhan, netting an average of $36.43 per barrel.

Read the report here.

Kurdistan in the media

Exclusive: Kurdish PM Says Mosul Operation Still in 'Planning Stage'- Voice of America
July 24, 2016

KRG Prime Minister Nechirvan Barzani spoke to VOA's Ali Javanmardi at his office in Erbil about plans with the US to regain control of the Iraqi city of Mosul from ISIS.

Harrowing images show what war against the Islamic State on Iraqâ€™s front lines looks like - Washington Post
July 26, 2016
Photographs by Spanish photographer Garcia Vilanova of Peshmerga forces at the front lines.

The 'biggest strategic concern' about Mosul? Putting it back together after ISIS loses - Washington Post
July 20, 2016
As leaders from across the U.S.-led coalition against the Islamic State group meet in Washington this week, they are increasingly facing a crucial question: How will the coalition help the Iraqi government put the city of Mosul back together after it is taken back from the militants?

Tourist arrivals reach record high in Kurdistan Region - NRT
July 12, 2016
The number of visitors to the Kurdistan Region reached a record high in July 2016, according to the region's board of tourism.

A Critical Turning Point in Washington's Partnership With Iraqi Kurds - AlterNet
July 16, 2016
The Kurdish peshmerga are our "boots on the ground."

Barzani: Iraqi FM put obstacles in KRG Washington summit participation - Kurdistan 24
July 25, 2016
The Kurdistan Region President said that the Iraqi Foreign Ministry created obstacles for the Region's representative to be present in the anti-Islamic State (IS) summit in Washington.

Mosul minorities call for independent administration post-ISIS - Rudaw
July 24, 2016
Kurdistan Region President Masoud Barzani expressed his support for establishing a protected area for the Christian community in Nineveh to be run by the joint administration of different entities from Mosul.

KRG Representative to US: America admires Kurds' fearlessness and hospitality - Kurdistan 24
July 12, 2016
Signing the military memorandum of understanding between the US and the Kurdistan Regional Government (KRG) shows how highly Washington regards Peshmerga in the fight against jihadists, said KRG Representative to the US

After-action plan lacking as Iraq amps up fight to free Mosul - TribLive
July 23, 2016
Kurdish officials in Erbil warn that a strategy to care for the city's beleaguered survivors must be in place well before the battle for Mosul begins.

US volunteer teacher who passed away, buried in Yezidi shrine - Rudaw
July 21, 2016

An American English teacher who was teaching English to Yezidi Kurds voluntarily died of a stroke on July 2 and was buried in Kurdistan, as he requested.

RIT professor travels to Iraqi Kurdistan - Democrat and Chronicle
July 3, 2016
A trip to learn more about Iraqi Kurdistan became a lesson in hope and strength for a Pittsford woman.

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Kurdistan Regional Government
Representation in the United States

Washington, D.C.
June 2016 Newsletter

Welcome to our June 2016 Newsletter

Two years ago this month, the terrorists of the Islamic State in Iraq and al-Sham (ISIS) attacked Mosul and began their rampage across Nineveh Province which by August 2014 saw the terrorists committing genocide against the Yezidis, Christians and other minorities. Many of you will remember the images of the

Yezidis who fled to Mount Sinjar and eventually to the Kurdistan Region where they found a welcoming embrace and safety.



With this dark anniversary in mind, a delegation from Sinjar is currently in Washington DC for meetings with US government officials, members of Congress, think tanks and humanitarian organisations. This follows their meetings in New York at the United Nations last week.

Mahma Khalil (pictured), the Mayor of Sinjar, and Saido Haso Shingali, Head of the Kurdistan Brotherhood and Coexistence Bloc in the Nineveh Assembly, are calling for US assistance on key issues, including:

- help bring back the thousands of Yezidi women, girls and children who are still held as slaves by ISIS
- help bring the perpetrators of genocide to justice at the International Criminal Court
- help with the protection, exhumation and evidence-gathering from the mass graves of Yezidis murdered by ISIS
- assist in the reconstruction of Sinjar which has been utterly destroyed by ISIS and in the fighting to liberate the area. The destruction and lack of services make it impossible for the hundreds of thousands of displaced people to return to their homes

The KRG Representation in the United States is honored to host this delegation and to assist in delivering its message to our American friends.

A Kurdish photographer, Younis Mohammed, who captured some of terrible tragedies of the past two years on camera has been awarded first prize this week at the Moscow International Foto Awards. Another photographer with a growing following is Jemal Penjweny whose pictures depicting the hopes and tragedies of people across Iraq was profiled in the UK's Guardian newspaper this week. You can read about their photographic storytelling in the media section below.

Bayan Sami Abdul Rahman
Kurdistan Regional Government
Representative to the United States

Head of DFR delivers President Barzani's message at 25th anniversary commemoration of Operation Provide Comfort

A message from Kurdistan Region President Masoud Barzani was delivered by Minister Falah Mustafa, the Head of the Department of Foreign Relations at an event marking the 25th anniversary of Operation Provide Comfort.

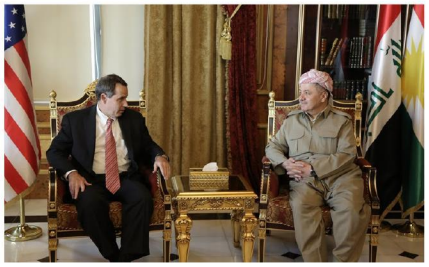
The statement was delivered at a conference hosted by the Middle East Institute, titled 'Operation Provide Comfort: Reflections and Lessons for Today'.

Others speakers included retired US generals Anthony Zinni and Jay Garner, who were involved in the operation, and diplomats, academics and military and humanitarian experts from the US and Kurdistan, including Khaled Salih, an independent Kurdish scholar and former KRG advisor and spokesman. Iraq's Ambassador Lukman Faily was also present.



Watch a video of the event here.
Read a press release here.
Read a transcript of President Barzani's message here.

Kurdistan Region President meets US Ambassador to Iraq



President Masoud Barzani met with US Ambassador to Iraq Stuart Jones and General Sean MacFarland, commander of the coalition forces against ISIS in Syria and Iraq. The meeting focused on the latest military and security developments in the country and the campaign against the ISIS terrorists.

The US delegation hailed the recent gains by the peshmerga forces in the east of Mosul, saying that these advances will contribute to the eventual liberation of the city. They also reiterated the US commitment to continue to support the peshmerga forces in the fight against ISIS.

The President and the US delegation also discussed wider preparations underway to recapture Mosul, and the importance of the role of peshmerga forces in this effort.

Read a press release here.

KRG officials speak about investment opportunities and reforms in Kurdistan



Economic reforms and investment opportunities in the Kurdistan Region of Iraq were highlighted during a one-day conference in the United States.

The conference, titled 'Iraq's Economy: Challenges and Opportunities', was hosted by the Johns Hopkins University's Center for Transatlantic Relations on Thursday, June 2.

Dr. Noori Othman, acting chairman of the Kurdistan Board of Investment and Head of Coordination and Follow-up Department, who joined the conference by internet video conference, said, 'the region has great opportunities for investment and promising growth in minerals, industry, agriculture, education, tourism, health, and trade sectors.'

Read a press release and see video here.
Read the Center for Transatlantic Relation's event summary here.

KRG Spokesperson's statement on Orlando attack



The Kurdistan Regional Government strongly condemns the attack in the city of Orlando in the United States of America that claimed the innocent lives of 49 civilians and injured more than 50 others.

We express our heartfelt condolences and deep sorrow to the families and friends of the victims and to the people and Government of the United States of America, wishing a speedy and complete recovery for the wounded.

This heinous crime is another reminder that terrorism is a serious threat to humanity. Therefore, cooperation in the fight against terrorism should be intensified and anti-terror front strengthened.

See the original here.

KRG and World Bank Group launch road map for structural economic reform



The KRG and World Bank announced a road map for economic reforms in Erbil. Prime Minister Nechirvan Barzani delivered remark at an event launching the road map.

He said, 'The KRG's reform plan, which is prepared in cooperation with the World Bank, the United Nations, local and international institutions, and the KRG Ministry of Planning, demonstrates the determination of the KRG to conduct meaningful reforms and to improve the life of the people of Kurdistan Region in all aspects.

'We have plans to confront the challenges and financial crisis facing us, to diversify our economy, to reduce dependence on natural resources, to improve other sectors such as agriculture, industry, tourism, transportation, communication, trade, investment, and to increase the role of private sector in our economy. We will do whatever it takes to achieve these goals, and we are in need of the support of international institutions and our friends in the international community to help us achieve our objectives.'

Read the full transcript of the speech here.

President Barzani's statement on progress of reform process



Kurdistan Region President Masoud Barzani issued a statement on the progress of the reform initiative that he had announced in February 2016.

The President lauded the reform plan recently announced by KRG in consultation with the World Bank, the UN, and other international and national organizations. He also thanked the World Bank, the UN and other organizations for their role in preparing this reform plan. In his statement, the President emphasized the importance of the objectives of the KRG's reform plan which include the strengthening of the private sector, the banking system, diversification of government sources of revenue other than oil, creating job opportunities and protecting the poor and the vulnerable.

Read a press release here.

Business leaders from Kurdistan in Washington as part of leadership

program



Leaders of chambers of commerce and industry from around Kurdistan met US business community representatives, academics, humanitarian workers, and journalists in Washington at a meeting on June 23 hosted by the US-Kurdistan Business Council, an American organization that seeks to improve trade relations between the US and Kurdistan Region. KRG Representative Bayan Sami Abdul Rahman moderated the event alongside USKBC President David Tafuri.

Dara Jaleel Khayat, the President of the Federation of Commerce Chambers and Industry of Kurdistan, addressed the group, encouraging them to view Kurdistan as a friendly place for investments and highlighting the numerous opportunities that exist.

He said, 'We welcome any and all - small, medium and large-sized companies - with different kinds of fields of expertise. Once you do come and discover the opportunities that Kurdistan has to offer first hand, we [the Chambers of Commerce] will be there to help you invest in the Kurdistan Region.'

Representative Abdul Rahman and staff also met separately with the delegation, pictured here.

Read a press release here.

US Consul General visits wounded Peshmerga



The US Consul General in Erbil Matthias Mitman visited wounded Peshmerga fighters at the Erbil Emergency Hospital, who were injured in the ongoing war against ISIS at the Khazir frontline near Mosul.

'This visit took place on Memorial Day, a US holiday that honors those military men and women who have given their lives in defense of their country,' said a statement from the US Consulate.

Mitman commended the Peshmerga's courage, and thanked them for their service and sacrifice in the fight against IS, saying 'they are a credit to their country.'

Read the statement here.

President Barzani Receives a Joint U.S. and Iraqi Delegation



President Masoud Barzani received a delegation which included a number of security and diplomacy officials from Baghdad and the United States including Mr. Falih al-Fayadh, the Iraqi National Security Adviser and Mr. Brett McGurk, President Obama's Envoy for the Global Coalition to Counter the Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant. President Barzani was accompanied by a number of military and security officials from the Kurdistan Region including Masrour Barzani, the Chancellor of the Kurdistan Region Security Forces.

President Barzani began by expressing his praises to the Iraqi forces who had completed the liberation of the town of Fallujah from the terrorists of the Islamic State and stated that that was a major drawback for the terrorists. President Barzani and Mr. McGurk and Mr. al-Fayadh spoke of other recent and upcoming military operations against the terrorists in both Iraq and Syria.

Read a press release here.

Head of DFR and KRG Representative to US continue outreach to US Administration and Congress



During a week-long visit to Washington, Representative Abdul Rahman accompanied Head of the Department of Foreign Relations Minister Falah Mustafa Bakir for a series of meetings with US Administration officials and members of Congress. Included among them was Presidential Envoy to Counter ISIL Ambassador Brett McGurk, Assistant Secretary of State Anne Patterson, Ambassador-at-Large for International Religious Freedom David Saperstein, and Assistant Secretary of Defense Elissa Slotkin.

In Congress, Minister Bakir and Representative Abdul Rahman met with Senators John McCain, Jack Reed, and Bob Corker, as well as Representatives Kay Granger and Nita Lowey.

Head of DFR speaks at 240th anniversary of the signing of the Declaration of Independence of the United States of America



The US Consulate in Erbil held a commemoration ceremony of the 240th anniversary of the signing of the Declaration of Independence. The event was attended by President Masoud Barzani, US Ambassador to Iraq Stuart Jones, and other dignitaries.

Speaking at the event, Head of the Department of Foreign Relations Falah Mustafa Bakir said, 'Independence Day is not only a day that Americans celebrate, but also other people around the world celebrate freedom, liberty and democracy. The US is a global leader and we are proud of the relationship that has developed between our peoples and governments.'

'Today, on this important occasion, I would like to reiterate our commitment to a long term strategic partnership with the United States of America.'

Read a transcript of Minister Bakir's remarks here.

KRG Representative congratulates Eric Fanning on his appointment as Secretary of the Army

KRG Representative Bayan Sami Abdul Rahman on June 17 met with the United States' newly appointed Secretary of the Army Eric Fanning to thank the US military and congratulate him on his new post.

Ms Abdul Rahman and Secretary Fanning discussed recent developments in the fight against ISIS and the economic and humanitarian crises that face the people of Kurdistan and Iraq. Ms Abdul Rahman thanked the United States for supporting the peshmerga with weapons and training and for the expected financial assistance that was announced by the Department of Defense in April.

She also expressed the condolences of Kurdistan Regional Government following the terrorist attack in Orlando on June 12 in which 49 people were killed, including members of the US military.



UNHCR joins forces with KRG to support urban communities hosting large displaced populations



The findings of the Erbil chapter of a regional profiling exercise for out of camp populations were officially presented by UNHCR along with the KRG and various humanitarian and development partners gathered in Erbil.

The study, "Displacement as Challenge and Opportunity", addresses the need for an in-depth analysis of urban displacement. Its impact on both displaced and host populations in the Governorate is scrutinized with the objective to guide future long-term responses to the urban challenges created by large-scale displacement.

Local authorities have been involved in the exercise from the inception and welcomed the approach as innovative since few available studies take the host population's perspective into account and the vast majority focus on camp population.

Read UNHCR press release here.

Representative Abdul Rahman's message on occasion of Memorial Day

On the occasion of Memorial Day Representative Abdul Rahman issued a statement of gratitude and condolence to the families, friends, and colleagues of US military personnel who have lost their lives.

She said, 'Supported by the bravery and selflessness of American men and women in uniform over the years - who provided humanitarian aid and safety in Operation Provide Comfort in 1991, liberated us from a dictator in 2003, and are today providing training and air support against the terrorists of ISIS - the Kurdistan Region has become a beacon of stability and a safe haven for those fleeing violence.'

'On behalf of the people of Kurdistan, I thank all American service members, who serve and sacrifice so that others may live free. Our Peshmerga are proud to stand shoulder to shoulder with you against terrorism and injustice.'

Read the full statement here.

Kurdistan represented at Global Entrepreneurship Summit in San Francisco



Three Kurdish entrepreneurs participated in the Global Entrepreneurship Summit in San Francisco, hosted by President Barack Obama. The summit brought together 700 entrepreneurs from 170 countries in Silicon Valley with top officials and private sectors leaders.

Rebeen Pasha of My(Entrepreneurial)Dream Incubator, Talan Aouny of the human resources firm Erbil Manpower, and Behar Ali met with US Secretary of Commerce Penny Pritzker and the President's Ambassadors on Global Entrepreneurship to discuss the needs of small and medium-enterprises in Kurdistan, inclusive economic growth, and youth engagement and entrepreneurship.

Also during the summit, President Obama spoke in a 'shared portal' with young entrepreneurs from five cities from around the world, one of which was Erbil.

Worcester World Affairs Council hosts KRG Representative



A crowd of 60 distinguished members of the World Affairs Council of Worcester, Massachusetts gathered for a talk by KRG Representative Abdul Rahman.

Ms Abdul Rahman gave a brief history of the Kurdistan Region, and described the complex financial, humanitarian, and security crises facing the KRG. During a question and answer session, the crowd was interested to learn about the war with ISIS, plight of the 1.8 million people displaced in to the Kurdistan Region from Syria and the rest of Iraq.

Peshmerga liberate 120 square kilometers near Mosul from ISIS



On May 30, a major ground offensive east of Mosul liberated 120 square kilometers from ISIS control. Over the course of the two-day operation, approximately 140 terrorists were eliminated, with 14 car bombs destroyed. Coalition airstrikes destroyed 75 ISIS positions.

Counter-IED teams will continue to clear nine liberated villages and other heavily mined areas.

Read a press release here.

Kurdistan in the media

Kurdish photographer's 'In the name of religion' photos win Moscow Int'l award - Rudaw
June 27, 2017
Younis Mohammed, 44, told Rudaw that his photos show the misery ISIS brought to the region and the fight against the radical group by the Kurdish Peshmerga.

Jamal Penjweny: rose-tinted dreams from Iraq - The Guardian
June 26, 2016
The Iraqi artist rewrites his country's suffering by sketching 'pink dreams' over black-and-white photographs of ordinary people

The Legendary Tribe That's Fought Everyone from the Ottomans to ISIS - VICE News
June 15, 2016
Agha is no stranger to war, though. As a scion of the Hamawand tribe, one of Kurdistan's oldest and most venerated clans, this is essentially his birthright.

Memorial Day, Bayan from Kurdistan - Talk Back Missoula
June 3, 2016
Representative Abdul Rahman's interview with KGVO Missoula, Montana.

Meet Dr Michael Chyet, the American Polyglot Who is in Love with Kurdish - Ziv Magazine
June 15, 2016
Interview with renowned American polyglot and folklorist Dr Michael Chyet.

Interview with Representative Abdul Rahman - Cipher Brief
June 9, 2016
Representative Abdul Rahman explained that it is 'remarkable how stable and peaceful Kurdistan is' despite the chaos that surrounds it and that 'it is in the best interest of Kurdistan to become an independent state.'

Why Kurdish independence matters - Washington Times
June 23, 2016
US policy now wedded to a unified Iraq misses an opportunity

Harrowing story of Nihad's captivity by ISIS - Women Against Radicalisation Network
June 17, 2016

Islamic State 'Could Be Defeated In Months' - SkyNews
May 31, 2016
A commander in the elite Zerevani unit of the Peshmerga has told Sky News that Islamic State is suffering considerable setbacks on multiple fronts and can be defeated before the end of the year - if there is a concerted military push across Iraq and Syria.

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1 message

J. Michael Slocum <jmichaelslocum@slocumboddie.com> Mon, Aug 14, 2017 at 3:46 PM
To: farakrg@gmail.com

---------- Forwarded message ----------
From: **Kurdistan Regional Government - USA** <us@gov.krd>
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Kurdistan Regional Government Representation in the United States

Washington, D.C.
June 2017 Newsletter

Welcome to our June 2017 newsletter



Earlier this month, 15 of the 17 political parties in Kurdistan Region's parliament and government agreed to hold a referendum on September 25 on Kurdistan's independence. This is the democratic right of all peoples and a historic moment for Kurdistan, a leap forward in a liberation movement that so many people have sacrificed for.

After the liberation of Iraq in 2003, we in Kurdistan envisioned an Iraq that would be federal and democratic, one that would allow us to pursue the prosperity and peace we have always dreamed of. We helped draft the Constitution and voted overwhelmingly to join the Iraq that it laid out.

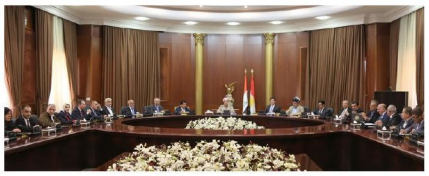
Unfortunately, the Constitution of Iraq has failed to deliver the state that we envisioned. Major components of it, like Article 140 which provided a mechanism for determining the status of the disputed territories, have not been implemented. Since February 2014, Baghdad has failed to provide the KRG's share of the federal budget, also guaranteed in the Constitution and defined in the Budget Law as 17% - despite the fact that Kurdistan hosts nearly all Syrian refugees in Iraq and almost half of displaced Iraqis.

As President Barzani said in the Washington Post, after the referendum, Kurdistan's leaders will enter negotiations with the federal government in Baghdad, to determine our future relationship. We continue to inform Baghdad and our international partners of our intentions and goals and we seek a peaceful and negotiated, amicable settlement with Baghdad.

Over the past century, our people have suffered tremendously in Iraq. It is time for the people of Kurdistan to finally be able to determine their future. Although the potential upset of the status quo may be inconvenient for some, it is a status quo that has caused cycles of violence and genocide. We hope that the world will respect our democratic right to self-determination.

Bayan Sami Abdul Rahman
Kurdistan Regional Government
Representative to the United States

President Barzani meets with Kurdistan Region's political parties to set date for the referendum



President Masoud Barzani held a meeting on June 7 with the representatives of the political parties across the Kurdistan Region. During the meeting, President Barzani and the attendees discussed several salient issues including the upcoming parliamentary elections, the current political and economic situations and the issue of the independence referendum.

The President, along with the representatives of the political parties and slates decided that the date for the independence referendum shall be Monday, September 25, 2017. It will be on that day when the people of the Kurdistan Region, as well as those living in the disputed areas, will cast their votes on whether they accept independence for the Kurdistan.

The political parties also agreed to resolve some of the outstanding political and economic issues prior to the date of the referendum. They also agreed to establish a special council for the referendum which will be supervised by President Barzani and that council will be tasked to form a number of teams to supervise the details of the referendum.

Read a press release here.

KRG US Representation hosts referendum briefing for journalists

International journalists joined KRG Representative to the United States Bayan Sami Abdul Rahman at the KRG Representation in Washington on June 19 for a roundtable briefing on



Kurdistan's referendum on independence. The referendum, which is scheduled for September 25, will give the people of Kurdistan the chance to say if they support an independent Kurdistan.

The journalists had numerous questions regarding the conduct and timing of the referendum, as well as the reasons for Kurdistan's desire for independence.

Representative Abdul Rahman said, 'If we don't do it now, when should we [have a referendum]? We didn't do it earlier because we were hoping that this was a new Iraq, an Iraq of partnership... If we delay, when should we delay to? When things get better, or when things get worse?'

She added that, 'We recognize that having a referendum is not risk-free, but not having a referendum also has risks.'

Representative Abdul Rahman said that the relationship between Iraq and Kurdistan would be healthier if they could negotiate as sovereign nations, highlighting that they could form economic and security pacts.

See a tweet and pictures from the briefing here.

Deputy Prime Minister Talabani meets with European leaders



Kurdistan Regional Government Deputy Prime Minister Qubad Talabani met with a number of European leaders during his visit to the continent this week.

In the Netherlands, Mr. Talabani met separately with the Dutch Foreign Minister Bert Koenders and Defense Minister Jeanine Hennis-Plasschaert.

The Kurdistan Region's fight against terror topped the agenda of the Brussels meetings, along with the scheduled independence referendum.

In the meetings, Mr. Talabani discussed the fight against ISIS, KRG's reform programs, and bilateral ties.

Read a press release here.

American doctors complete medical mission to Kurdistan



The largest American medical mission ever to Kurdistan returned after performing 60 complex cancer, brain, trauma, kidney, cardiac, and transplant surgeries.

The goal of the mission, which was led by Kurdish-American Dr. Gazi Zebari, was to help grow the capabilities of Kurdistan's health professionals, as well as provide world-class treatment to Peshmerga, refugees, internally displaced people, and local Kurdistan residents. The KRG US Representation's Director of Policy and Advocacy, Karwan Zebari, joined the mission to lead the coordination effort between the American delegation and Kurdistani health professionals.

The delegation was made up of 24 doctors and 10 supporting staff, and included citizens of the US, Canada, and Argentina.

The mission was a joint project with The American Kurdish Medical Group, Global Medical and Surgical Support Group, World Surgical Foundation, Operation Hope, Americas Hepato-Pancreato-Biliary Association, and International Hepato-Pancreato-Biliary Association.

President Barzani and General Votel meet



President Masoud Barzani received a United States military delegation headed by General Joseph Votel, the Commander of the Central Command. During the meeting President Barzani and General Votel spoke of the latest updates on the ongoing operations against the terrorists of the Islamic State, particularly the Mosul operation which is reaching its end.

President Barzani reiterated his position of the significance of the post-liberation plan for the management of Mosul, adding that that step is of equal importance to the military operation of Mosul as the people of Mosul deserve to be fairly represented in the upcoming local government of the city.

Read a press release here.

Representative Abdul Rahman in New York to meet with UN reporters and officials



KRG Representative to the United States Bayan Sami Abdul Rahman visited New York to brief the UN press corps and meet with UN officials.

In a press conference hosted by the United Nations Correspondents Association at the United Nations Headquarters, Representative Abdul Rahman delivered remarks, highlighting current humanitarian, military, and political developments and answered questions from international journalists covering UN affairs. She stressed that the war against ISIS remains a top priority and underscored that military cooperation with Baghdad against the terror group would be ongoing. This was the first press conference featuring a KRG official ever held at the UN.

She also outlined the reasons for Kurdistan's referendum on independence, which is set to be held September 25, 2017.

President Barzani and Secretary Tillerson review Mosul updates



President Masoud Barzani spoke with US Secretary of State Rex Tillerson on the latest developments in the operations against the terrorists of the Islamic State, in particular, the Mosul operation which is in its final stages. Secretary Tillerson commended the Peshmerga forces for their great role in the operations against the terrorists and expressed his appreciation for the great coordination between the Iraqi and Peshmerga forces. Secretary Tillerson stated that the support to the Kurdistan Region from the United States will continue in the ongoing operations against the terrorists.

President Barzani expressed his gratitude to the people and government of the United States for their support to the Kurdistan Region, particularly the Peshmerga forces during these challenging times as the world faces an existential threat from the terrorists.

World Bank hosts photographer Reza to speak about his work in Kurdistan

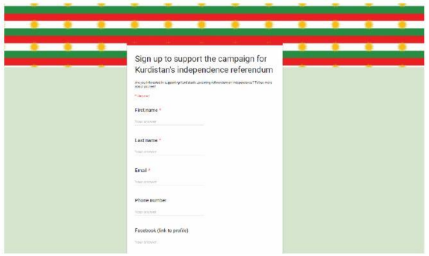


The World Bank hosted renowned National Geographic photographer Reza for a discussion about his work photographing and supporting refugee arts programs in the Kurdistan Region. Representative Abdul Rahman and KRG US Representation staff were among those that attended the event.

Reza recently finished a book of photography on Kurdistan, which captures the resiliency, diversity, and natural beauty of the Kurdistan Region.

Reza also started the Reza Visual Academy, which provides photography instruction to young refugees in the Kawergosk Refugee Camp near Erbil. See photos taken by young refugees here.

Sign up to learn how you can support the referendum campaign



The KRG Representation in the US has launched a sign up form for people interested in helping to support the referendum campaign.

Fill out the form to learn how you can be part of the campaign!

Click here to fill out the form.

President Barzani receives a United States military delegation



President Masoud Barzani received a United States military delegation headed by Lieutenant General Stephen Townsend, the Commander of the Combined Joint Task Force - Operation Inherent Resolve. During the meeting President Barzani and General Townsend reviewed the latest developments in the operations against the terrorists of the Islamic State, most particularly the Mosul operation which is in its final stages.

The President reiterated his position of the importance of planning for post-liberation Mosul where its management must first and foremost be representative of all the religious and ethnic components of Mosul.

Read a press release here.

KRG conveys concerns about deportation of community members to Iraq

The US Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) is targeting 1,400 Iraqis, including Chaldeans, Kurds and Arabs who have final deportation orders against them in sweeps across the United States. This has caused alarm and dismay among the community.

The KRG US Representation has discussed this with the State Department and conveyed its concerns and those of the community. The KRG advises anyone who thinks they may be affected to immediately seek legal advice. A federal judge has halted the deportation of all Iraqi nationals detained until July 10.

Read KRG US statement about the deportations [in Kurdish]

KRG and Rosneft sign strategic cooperation agreements in oil and gas sector



The KRG and Russia's oil major Rosneft in St Petersburg signed agreements on increasing cooperation in the oil and gas sector. The agreements will strengthen the existing relationship between the two sides, which started in February 2017 when Rosneft began purchasing KRG's crude oil for its international refineries.

With KRG Prime Minister Nechirvan Barzani and Deputy Prime Minister Qubad Talabani in attendance, the series of agreements was signed by Rosneft's Chief Executive Officer Mr Igor Sechin and KRG Minister of Natural Resources Dr. Ashti Hawrami, at the 21st St Petersburg International Economic Forum.

Regarding the Kurdistan Region's relations with the Russian Federation, Prime Minister Barzani said, "We have long historic relations with Russia and for us this is an opportunity again in St Petersburg to expand the relationship in all fields - in the energy sector, politically and economically."

Read a press release here.

JCC holds second quarter meeting with international NGOs



The Joint Crisis Coordination Center (JCC) held its second quarterly coordination meeting with the international NGOs operating in the Kurdistan Region to discuss the challenges surrounding the current humanitarian crisis, such as response, approaches and areas of priorities.

The meeting focused on the current issues and challenges facing the process of delivering humanitarian assistance to the displaced people in the Kurdistan Region and providing more services to the IDPs, refugees and host community in the Kurdistan Region.

Hoshang Mohammed, the Director General of the JCC welcomed the representatives of the NGOs and on behalf of Ministry of Interior extended thanks and appreciation for their role and contribution to support and help the displaced people and the host communities in the Kurdistan Region.

Read a press release here.

Kurdistan in the media

The time has come for Iraqi Kurdistan to make its choice on independence - Washington Post
June 28, 2017
Editorial by President Masoud Barzani

Masoud Barzani: Why It's Time for Kurdish Independence - Foreign Policy

June 15, 2017
Interview with President Barzani

The quest for an independent Kurdistan enters a new phase - Washington Post
June 21, 2017
For many Iraqi Kurds, the time has come. Earlier this month, Masoud Barzani, president of the Kurdistan Regional Government in northern Iraq, said a nonbinding referendum on independence will be held Sept. 25.

ISIS' Yazidi Genocide - Foreign Affairs
June 8, 2017
On August 3, 2014, the Islamic State (or ISIS) attacked the region around Mount Sinjar in northwestern Iraq, near the country's border with Syria. The region was home to approximately 400,000 Yazidis, the members of an ancient and often-persecuted religious minority whose beliefs and practices incorporate elements of Christianity, Islam, and other monotheistic religions.

'No turning back' on independence vote, Iraqi Kurdish leader tells FRANCE 24 - FRANCE 24
June 21, 2017
In an exclusive interview with FRANCE 24, the president of Iraqi Kurdistan Massoud Barzani says he will not back down on plans to hold a referendum on the semi-autonomous region's full independence from Baghdad.

KRG Rep. to US calls diaspora Kurds to lobby support for Kurdistan referendum - Kurdistan24
June 21, 2017
Kurds in the diaspora can play a vital role in lobbying support for the Kurdistan Region's independence referendum set to be held on Sep. 25, 2017, said

Who are the Kurds and why are they in Nashville? - The Tennessean
June 22, 2017
They are biologists, professors, lawyers and grocers. The man helping from behind the counter at a T-Mobile store in Green Hills or the mother waiting for her son to board the bus to middle school. They are our neighbors.

"I Want to Die in the Shadow of the Flag of an Independent Kurdistan" - Foreign Policy
June 15, 2017
In a career spanning 55 years as an independence fighter, the president of Iraqi Kurdistan is intent this year on reaching a landmark in his lifelong dream. President Masoud Barzani recently announced plans to hold a referendum on Kurdish independence, scheduling the vote for Sept. 25.

Voting for Independence - ETWN
June 17, 2017
Interview with Bayan Sami Abdul Rahman

No International Support for Kurdistani Referendum? No Problem, Says Erbil - Foreign Policy
June 20, 2017
The European Union joined the United Nations, the United States, Turkey, and Iraq to discourage Iraqi Kurds from holding an independence referendum on Sept. 25. That was to be expected, and won't deter regional government authorities in Erbil, said Bayan Sami Abdul Rahman, the Kurdistan Regional Government (KRG) representative in Washington.

IRAQI TROOPS LAUNCH BATTLE FOR LAST IS STRONGHOLD IN MOSUL - The Associated Press/New York Times
June 18, 2017
U.S.-backed Iraqi troops pushed into the last Islamic State stronghold in Mosul on Sunday, launching a major battle for the Old City where some 150,000 civilians are believed to be trapped and risk being used as human shields by the extremists."

Kurds should not have to wait any longer for referendum, says KRG rep to US - Rudaw
June 16, 2017
Amid calls from all directions for the Kurdistan Region to focus on the war against ISIS rather than a referendum on independence, the KRG Representative to the United States asked why Kurds should have to wait and requested the international community and Iraq to recognize the democratic right of the people of Kurdistan.

[The Future of Iraq's Shiite Militias after ISIS' Defeat](#) - Foreign Affairs
May 22, 2017
In the arid desert south of Tal Afar, members of Hash'd al-Sha'bi, which comprises nearly 60 predominately Shiite paramilitary units, have set up operations in this barren region outside of Mosul. Since last October, the group, also known as the Popular Mobilization Forces (PMF), has severed the Islamic State's (ISIS') supply routes to Syria using only their Jeeps, Hummers, and light tank weaponry, and in December, drove ISIS from the area.

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Reply-To: jmichaelslocum@slocumboddie.com
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Kurdistan Regional Government Representation in the United States

Washington, D.C.
March 2016 Newsletter

Welcome to our March 2016 Newsletter

As we enter the new year with Newroz, we are reminded of the sacrifices that are being made by so many people in Kurdistan in the struggle against terrorism and genocide. Our thoughts are



especially with the friends and families of over 1,300 Peshmerga who have sacrificed their lives defending Kurdistan from ISIS, as well as the tens of thousands of Peshmerga deployed to the front lines over the holiday. The financial crisis in Kurdistan has delayed salary payments to these soldiers and all KRG employees. KRG Minister of Planning Dr Ali Sindi (pictured with KRG US staff) was in Washington this month to convey the severity of this crisis to US, World Bank, and IMF officials.

This month we commemorated the 28th anniversary of the Halabja chemical gas attacks, atrocities we thought we had seen the end of. And yet, in the past few months alone, ISIS has used chemical weapons several times against Peshmerga and civilians, each attack increasing in sophistication.

We were pleased to see the House of Representatives and State Department announce that they have found ISIS responsible for genocide, an important step towards justice. As former International Criminal Court Prosecutor Luis Moreno Ocampo said at our Halabja commemoration, 'Without justice there can be no reconciliation, only revenge'.

On behalf of all of us at the KRG Representation in Washington, I wish you happiness and prosperity in the new year. We hope that this year will bring peace.

Bayan Sami Abdul Rahman
Kurdistan Regional Government
Representative to the United States

State Department finds ISIS responsible for genocide



Secretary of State John Kerry said that the United States has determined that ISIS' action against Yezidis, Christians, Shi'a, and other minority groups in Iraq and Syria constitutes genocide.

Secretary Kerry said that in 2014, ISIS trapped Yezidis, killed them, enslaved thousands of Yezidi women and girls, 'selling them at auction, raping them at will and destroying the communities in which they had lived for countless generations,' executed Christians 'solely for their faith' and also 'forced Christian women and girls into slavery.'

Read Secretary Kerry's statement here

KRG and Johns Hopkins University host commemoration of

Halabja attacks and Kurdish Genocide



The Center for Transatlantic Relations (CTR) at Johns Hopkins University School of Advanced International Studies and KRG US Representation hosted an event in commemoration of the 1988 chemical attacks on Halabja, the greater Kurdish Genocide, and the recent genocide against Yezidis, Christians, and other minorities by ISIS.

Following remarks by Sasha Toperich, Senior Fellow at CTR, there was a panel discussion moderated by Representative Bayan Sami Abdul Rahman. Panelists included member of City of Peace (Halabja) Yerevan Saeed, International Criminal Court Prosecutor Luis Moreno Ocampo, Naomi Kikoler of the US Holocaust Memorial Museum, and human rights attorney Gavriel Mairone. The event also included a film by the director Gwynne Roberts and the Kurdistan Memory Programme.

Read English press release here
Read Kurdish press release here
Watch a video of the event here
Read statement by the Halabja Chemical Weapons Survivors organization in English
Read statement by the Halabja Chemical Weapons Survivors organization in Kurdish

President Barzani's Newroz Message



On the occasion of Newroz, the Kurdish New Year, Kurdistan Region President Masoud Barzani sent his best wishes to the people of Kurdistan and hailed the sacrifices and bravery of the Peshmerga forces in defending Kurdistan against ISIS.

The President thanked the people for their patience and resilience during the ongoing financial crisis. He said that the reform package that has been announced will soon deliver positive results and will help ease the economic crisis.

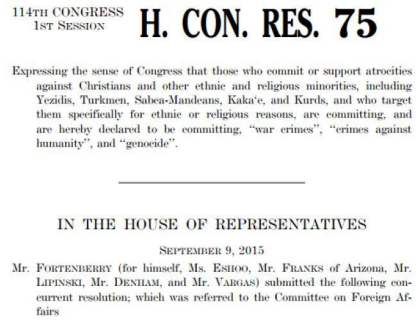
Read a press release here

Unanimous US House of Representatives calls ISIS crimes against minorities a 'genocide'

The US House of Representatives voted unanimously to condemn the crimes committed by ISIS against Yezidis, Christians, Turkmen, Sabea-Mandeans, Kaka'e, and Kurds as a genocide.

The US Department of State is expected to announce the Administration's policy on the issue of genocide soon.

Read the bill here
Watch the vote on CSPAN here



114TH CONGRESS
1ST SESSION

H. CON. RES. 75

Expressing the sense of Congress that those who commit or support atrocities against Christians and other ethnic and religious minorities, including Yezidis, Turkmen, Sabea-Mandeans, Kaka'e, and Kurds, and who target them specifically for ethnic or religious reasons, are committing, and are hereby declared to be committing, "war crimes", "crimes against humanity", and "genocide".

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

SEPTEMBER 9, 2015

Mr. FORTENBERRY (for himself, Ms. ESHOO, Mr. FRANKS of Arizona, Mr. LIPINSKI, Mr. DENHAM, and Mr. VARGAS) submitted the following concurrent resolution; which was referred to the Committee on Foreign Affairs

Kurdish Relief Fund delivers critical humanitarian supplies to hundreds of displaced families

In coordination with Spirit of America and Operation Give, the Kurdish Relief Fund completed a distribution of over $250,000 in medical, hygiene, education, and children's supplies.

KRF President Najat Abdullah and Spirit of America Middle East Director Zack Bazzi delivered the goods to displaced families in 11 camps in Amedi, Akre, and Rawanduz areas. Many of the families

were from Yezidi, Christian, and Shabak groups.

Kurdish Relief Fund website and Twitter
Spirit of America website, Twitter, and a press release
Operation Give website



28th anniversary of Halabja chemical attacks commemorated across Kurdistan



KRG offices, military outposts, schools, and other organizations throughout Kurdistan marked the passing of the 28th anniversary of the Halabja chemical attacks on March 16 with 5 minutes of silence.

Officials at the Council of Ministers commemorated the day with a moment of silence and words of remembrance, pictured here.

Senior US officials meets President Barzani in Erbil to discuss war with ISIS



Kurdistan Region President Masoud Barzani met with a senior US delegation that included Brett McGurk, US Special Presidential Envoy for the Global Coalition to Counter ISIL, Stuart Jones, US Ambassador to Iraq, and other US military officials.

Amb. McGurk updated the President on the steps that the US is considering to further help the Peshmerga forces with military supplies and training. They also discussed preparations for the recapturing of Mosul from ISIS. Both sides stressed the need for a prior political agreement between the KRG and Baghdad on the governance of Mosul after its liberation.

Read a press release here.

KRG Mission hosts Erbil Consul General for meeting on strengthening relationship



Representative Bayan Sami Abdul Rahman and KRG US staff hosted Matthias Mitman, Consul General of the US Consulate in Erbil, for a meeting on a range of issues aimed at growing the partnership between the KRG and US Government. During the meeting they discussed the financial crisis in Kurdistan, in particular the needs of the Kurdish Peshmerga Forces.

The KRG has been requesting emergency financial assistance from its international partners. The US officials reiterated that the US Government views the KRG as an important partner in the Middle East.

Read a press release here.

KRG Minister of Planning updates Washington on financial crisis



KRG Minister of Planning Dr Ali Sindi was in Washington to speak at the World Bank Fragility Forum, as well as meet with World Bank, International Monetary Fund, and State Department officials.

Speaking at the World Bank Fragility Forum, Dr Sindi discussed how the financial crisis in Kurdistan has affected the KRG. He said, 'At this moment, I have 4,000 [infrastructure] projects, including 500 schools which have stopped because of a lack of financial resources.' He added, 'I think we can say that we have a lost generation of youth growing up today.'

Read a press release here
Read another press release here
Watch the Fragility Forum here

KRG High Council of Women's Affairs delegation in United States for meetings with UN and American government officials

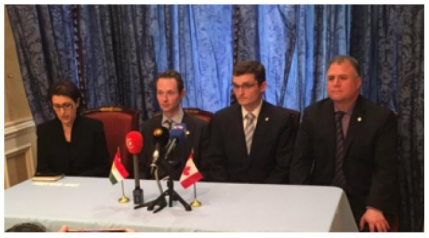


A delegation from the Kurdistan Regional Government (KRG) High Council for Women's Affairs is in the United States this month to participate in the 60th Commission on the Status of Women (CSW) at the United Nations in New York, and to meet with US government officials and regional experts in Washington.

The High Council for Women's Affairs' Secretary General H.E. Pakhshan Zangana and Director General Florin Gorgis delivered a speech at one of four sessions of the CSW, calling on the UN to support 'the extraordinarily dire crisis in Kurdistan with an extraordinary response.' They highlighted the importance of women's empowerment as a pillar of stability and economic and social sustainability. They also asked that the UN support Iraq and the KRG to overcome problems, particularly the financial crisis in the region.

Read a press release here

Canadian MPs announce formation of Parliamentary group focusing on Kurdistan



KRG Representative to the United States Bayan Sami Abdul Rahman welcomed the founders of a new Canadian parliamentary group focusing on Kurdistan for a meeting at the KRG Representation in Washington.

Canadian Members of Parliament (MPs) Tom Kmiec, Gord Johns, and Michael Cooper said that the purpose of the 'Parliamentary Friends of the Kurds' is to grow the relationship between Canada

and Kurdistan. The group was founded by Mr Kmiec and is co-chaired by Mr Johns, both of whom have significant Kurdish populations as part of their constituencies.

Read a press release here

American University of Duhok opens campus



The American University of Duhok was opened in Duhok in a ceremony attended by President Masoud Barzani and numerous senior KRG officials and foriegn diplomats.

During his keynote speech, Prime Minister Nechirvan Barzani said, 'Opening a university during this challenging period is the right message to our enemies that no matter how hard they try, they will not be able to stop our path to prosperity and growth. It is also a sign that the love of our people for life, development, and building a brighter future cannot be eliminated by difficulties facing our region.'

Read Prime Minister Barzani's speech here
Visit AUDK's website here

KRG calls for an international conference on reconstruction of Shingal

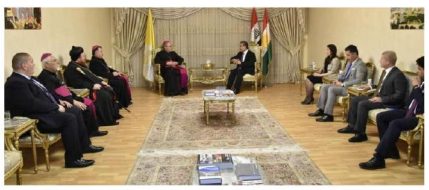


DFR hosted a special session for the KRG Minister of Interior and Mayor of Shingal to brief diplomats and representatives of UN agencies and INGOs based in Erbil on the needs of the city.

The Mayor of Shingal Mahma Khalil gave a brief overview of the history of Shingal, the crimes committed against the Yezidi Kurds, and the needs of the local administration to restore life in the city. Mayor Khalil also called for international support to free the Yezidi women from ISIS and to provide rehabilitation programs to those who have been rescued. He said that still 3,878 Yezidi women remain in ISIS captivity.

Read a press release here.
Read the KRG Joint Crisis Coordination center initial damage assessment for Shingal.

Vatican ambassador to Jordan and Iraq commends Kurdistan's culture of peaceful co-existence

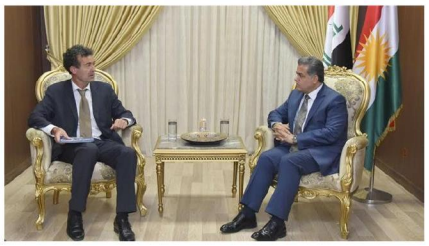


KRG Head of Foreign Relations Minister Falah Mustafa Bakir received a delegation from the Holy See headed by the apostolic nuncio to Jordan and Iraq, Mr. Alberto Ortega Martin.

The Vatican Ambassador praised KRG's welcoming policy towards refugees and displaced people who have taken refuge in the region and noted Kurdistan's culture of peaceful co-existence and religious tolerance. The Ambassador expressed the gratitude of Vatican for Kurdistan's treatment of the Christian IDPs who have escaped the brutality of the terrorists of ISIS.

Read a press release here.

UNHCR Coordinator for Kurdistan: We are committed to helping KRG



Minister Falah Mustafa Bakir received Mr. Jozef Merkx, UNHCR Coordinator for the Kurdistan Region to discuss the situation of Iraqi displaced people and Syrian refugees in the Kurdistan Region.

The UNHCR coordinator briefed Minister Mustafa on their activities and expressed the commitment of UNHCR to continue helping KRG in providing humanitarian assistance for the refugees and displace people in the region. Both sides discussed the humanitarian needs of the Kurdistan Region and ways of securing continued international assistance.

Read a press release here.

UN Special Representative and G7 ambassadors meet with KRG leadership



Mr. Jan Kubis, Special Representative of the United Nations Secretary-General for Iraq, a delegation of Ambassadors of G7 countries, Iraq's World Bank Representative and the Head of EU Delegation in Iraq visited the Kurdistan Region to discuss economic challenges facing the region

Following the meeting Mr Kubis said, 'Considering the current economic challenges and fiscal crisis, we focused on the ways that the international community can help the Kurdistan Regional Government, notably promoting and implementing the reform plan, which have already been announced by the government.'

Read Mr Kubis' full statement here

KRG responds to Amnesty International report after extensive investigation

Following an extensive study, the KRG High Committee to Evaluate and Respond to International Reports responded to the Amnesty International report 'Iraq: Banished and Dispossessed', which alleged misconduct and violations by Peshmerga forces serving at the front lines with ISIS.

The report detailed the fate of many villages where Amnesty had found alleged misconduct, finding that they had been destroyed as a result of fighting or explosive devices planted by ISIS.

Read the full report here
See a table of the status of villages here

Asuda director accepts prestigious Vital Voices Human Rights Award

Khanim Latif, Director of Asuda, a women's rights NGO based in Slemani, was one of four women honored at the 15th annual Vital Voices conference in Washington. Ms Latif was honored with the Human Rights Award for her work with Yezidi women who have been rescued from ISIS, as well as her advocacy for women's rights in general.



Kurdistan in the media

In the shadow of conflict - UNA-UK
March 1, 2016
Representative Abdul Rahman on the need for humanitarian assistance as a strategic element of the fight against ISIS

Kurdistan needs help now - The Hill
March 9, 2016
Editorial by Dr Fuad Hussein and Minister Falah Mustafa Bakir

John Kerry: ISIS responsible for genocide - CNN
March 18, 2016
Secretary of State John Kerry declares ISIS committed genocide.

Interview with Bayan Sami Abdul Rahman - Rubin Report
March 21, 2016
Interview with Representative Abdul Rahman

Conference call with Bayan Sami Abdul Rahman - Institute for Global Engagement
March 19, 2016
Updates from Representative Abdul Rahman

Trudy Rubin's Worldview: Time to rethink boundaries? - Philadephia Inquirer
March 13, 2016
Trudy Rubin's interview with President Barzani

Kurds Fight to Preserve 'the Other Iraq' - National Geographic Magazine
March 2016 issue
The Kurds 'golden decade' of stability in the north is under threat as young men heed the call to battle ISIS.

Don't let Iraq's Kurds be erased from the conversation about the Middle East - New Statesman
March 15, 2016
Editorial by Gary Kent

U.S. Considers Emergency Aid for Peshmerga in Islamic State Fight- Wall Street Journal
March 14, 2016
The Obama administration is in talks to provide an emergency aid package to the cash-strapped Kurdistan Regional Government in Iraq after concluding that the KRG's inability to pay Peshmerga fighters their salaries poses a threat to the U.S.-led campaign against Islamic State, U.S. officials said.

If the Kurds Go Broke, It's Lights Out for Obama's War on the Islamic State - Foreign Policy
March 2, 2016
Here's a worrying bit of news: America's best ally in the war against the Islamic State, Iraq's Kurdistan Regional Government (KRG), is nearly broke.

Yazidi activist: My escape from 'Islamic State' - BBC
February 29, 2016
When extremists from the so-called Islamic State entered Nadia's village, they killed all the men: six of her brothers were murdered. She and hundreds of other Yazidi women were taken captive and, in the months that followed, they were passed from one group of men to another.

Interview with Khanim Latif of Asuda organization - NPR
March 10, 2016
Khanim Latif's interview on Morning Edition before receiving this year Vital Voices award for Human Rights.

We cannot simply leave the Kurds to get gassed- Telegraph
March 4, 2016
Our Peshmerga allies in Iraq must be protected from the chemical weapons which Isil is now preparing to wield against them

Peshmerga defuse over 11,000 IEDs - Kurdistan 24
March 10, 2016
Since the beginning of the war with the Islamic State (IS) in Iraq, the Kurdish Peshmerga Engineering Team has defused over 11,000 Improvised Explosive Devices (IEDs)

U.S. forces in Iraq capture ISIS chemical weapons expert - CBS News
March 9, 2016
U.S. Special Operation forces in northern Iraq have captured an ISIS commander who was developing chemical weapons.

The time for an indepedent Kurdistan is now - Foreign Policy
March 4, 2016
Editorial by Aziz Ahmed

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Fwd: KRG-US March 2017 Newsletter

1 message

J. Michael Slocum <jmichaelslocum@slocumboddie.com> Thu, Mar 23, 2017 at 1:44 PM
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Date: Thu, Mar 23, 2017 at 1:33 PM
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Kurdistan Regional Government Representation in the United States

Washington, D.C.
March 2017 Newsletter

Welcome to our March 2017 newsletter

This month we celebrate the start of a new year, Newroz. The beginning of spring, the holiday is a time for celebrating, picnicking, dancing, and visiting with relatives. Pictured here are men on the traditional march to light the

Newroz fire in the city of Akre. In the spirit of the new year, I wish you good health, peace and prosperity, especially those like the frontline Peshmerga who are far from their families this holiday.



credit: John Beck, Twitter: @JM_Beck

March is always bittersweet for the people of Kurdistan. Every March 16 we commemorate the chemical bombardment of Halabja by Saddam Hussein. This year was the 29th since the Halabja genocide, and we marked the day with a ceremony in the US Capitol Visitors' Center. We also had a chance to reflect on the hundreds of thousands of others killed in repeated genocides throughout our history and throughout Iraq: the Anfal Campaign, the murders of Barzani men and the Failys, and today the genocide of Yezidis, Christians, and other minorities.

However, the people of Kurdistan are resilient and optimistic and we hope that next year's Newroz will see a new chapter in our history, when we can look forward with renewed hope to a future of peace and liberty.

Bayan Sami Abdul Rahman
Kurdistan Regional Government
Representative to the United States

29th anniversary of Halabja genocide held in US Capitol Visitor's Center

US Government officials, members of Congress, diplomats, journalists, experts, and Kurdish community members, gathered in the US Capitol Visitors Center on March 16 to commemorate the 29th anniversary of the Halabja genocide.



'Not only did the people of Kurdistan survive Halabja and many other genocides, we have thrived,' said Kurdistan Regional Government Representative to the United States Bayan Sami Abdul Rahman.

The audience heard stories from two survivors of Halabja: Zmnako Ali, who survived the attack as a baby and was only reunited with his Kurdish mother after 22 years; and Mariwan Naqshbandi, who as a young man witnessed the attack first-hand, and now serves as the Director for Government Relations at the Ministry of Endowment and Religious Affairs.

Read a press release here.

Dr Fuad Hussein in Washington to attend Coalition meeting as part of Iraqi delegation

President Barzani's Chief of Staff Dr Fuad Hussein and Representative Bayan Sami Abdul Rahman joined the delegation of Iraqi Prime Minister Haider Al-Abadi this week to attend the Global Coalition to Counter ISIS meeting in Washington on Wednesday. The meeting brought together top officials from all

68 Coalition countries and organizations participating in the campaign against ISIS.

The Prime Minister's delegation met on Monday with US President Donald Trump and on Tuesday with Vice President Mike Pence. Throughout the week Dr Hussein will accompany the delegation on a number of meetings with high level US lawmakers and administration officials.



President Barzani Receives a US Delegation



President Masoud Barzani received a United States government delegation headed by Amb. Brett McGurk, the Special Presidential Envoy for the Global Coalition to Counter the Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant. President Barzani and Amb. McGurk spoke of the latest developments in the Mosul operation. Amb. McGurk reiterated his satistfaction with the level of coordination between the Peshmerga forces and the Iraqi forces. He added that he hopes that this military cooperation between Baghdad and Erbil would further strengthen the bilateral relations between the federal government and the Kurdistan Region.

Mr. McGurk also praised the sacrifices of the Peshmerga forces and conveyed his government's condolences to the families and loved ones of those who paid the ultimate price during this existential war against the terrorists.

Read a press release here.

Deputy Prime Minister Talabani meets Canadian Minister of International Development



Deputy Prime Minister, Qubad Talabani received Ms. Marie-Claude Bibeau, Canadian Minister of International Development and her accompanying delegation.

At the meeting, attended by Falah Mustafa, Head of the Department of Foreign Relations, Deputy Prime Minister Talabani expressed his government's appreciation to the Canadian government for its support to the Kurdistan Region, particularly during the war against ISIS.

He briefed the visiting delegation about KRG's policy of reform that is being adopted recently in various sectors of the government institutions to overcome the financial crisis.

Regarding the war against ISIS, Deputy Prime Minister Talabani discussed the recent victories marked against the so-called Islamic State terrorist group in Mosul.

Read a press release here.

Kurdistan represented at annual Nowruz Commission Gala



Representative Abdul Rahman and KRG US staff joined 22 countries in celebrating Newroz at the eighth annual Nowruz Commission Gala in Washington.

The yearly event brings together embassies and diplomatic representations that celebrate Newroz for an evening of music, dancing, and celebration. This year, KRG Director of Cultural Affairs Najat Abdullah (on *oud*) and the renowned *daf* musician Hussein Zahawy represented Kurdistan with several musical selections.

The event is held for charity and this year the Commission distributed 1,000 backpacks with school supplies to displaced children in Kurdistan. Mr. Abdullah, who orchestrated the distribution, was recognized for his role in the project.

Yezidi Spiritual Council calls on PKK to leave Sinjar area

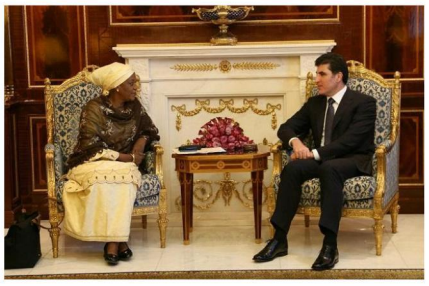


In a statement on yesterday clashes between the Kurdistan Workers Party, PKK, and Roj Peshmerga military forces in Khanasor village in Kurdistan Region, the Yezidi Spiritual Council in Lalesh called upon the PKK to evacuate the region.

The statement, signed by 62 Yezidi religious dignitaries and chiefs of tribes, called for immediate end of the clashes. It stressed that the members of the Council consider Sinjar and its environs are part of Kurdistan Region, and that they stand against the partition of Yezidi areas, which should be run by the Kurdistan Regional Government.

The signatories also stated that as the Kurdistan Regional Government Peshmerga military forces helped to liberate Kobane, we thank PKK for its help in 2014. 'Today, however, we urge them to evacuate Sinjar area so that life and stability return to the region.'

UN to open another support and treatment center for women in Kurdistan Region



Prime Minister, Nechirvan Barzani received Ms. Zainab Bangura, Special Representative of the United Nations Secretary General on Sexual Violence in Conflict, and her accompanying delegation.

Ms. Bangura expressed her appreciation for the collaboration and assistance offered by the Kurdistan Regional Government's institutions to the UN organizations, especially in the field of work on women who have been victims of sexual violence.

The United Nations has classified sexual violence committed against women in conflicts as war crime.

Read a press release here.

KRG High Council of Women's Affairs visits Washington



A delegation the High Council for Women's Affairs visited Washington on March 17 to update US officials on their work advocating for women in the Kurdistan Region and discuss ways for collaboration with the US State Department, senior Congressional staffers from key committees, and officials from the World Bank. The delegation consisted of Secretary-General Pakhshan Zangana and Directors-General Florin G. Seudin, Kosar Mahmood, and Amel Mohammed.

Ms. Zangana and the delegation were hosted at the State Department, World Bank, and Congress for a number of meetings across a range of topics.

The KRG Representation hosted Ms. Zangana and the delegation for a breakfast meeting with US States Department officials, representatives from think tanks, women's rights advocates, and journalists. They briefed the group on their initiatives and issues facing women in Kurdistan.

Kurdistan Regional Presidency Chief of Staff Offers Condolences to Nawshirwan Mustafa and family members of Shuhla Ali

Following the news of the death of Shuhla Ali, wife of Nawshirwan Mustafa, Chief of Staff to President Barzani Dr Fuad Hussein sent condolences.

He said, 'I am deeply saddened by the news your loss; death of Ms. Shuhla Ali. I extend my most sincere condolences. May God forgive and accept her soul into the heavens and grant you the strength needed to get through this.'

Read the message here [Kurdish]

Kurdistan in the media

Kurdish delegation get pledge of support, questions from Trump administration - Rudaw
March 22, 2017
Senior KRG officials joined PM Abadi's delegation to Washington for meetings with President Trump, Vice President Pence, and Secretary of State Rex Tillerson.

Kurdish reporter Shifa Gardi killed in Iraq - CNN
February 25, 2017
A reporter and anchor for an Iraqi Kurdish TV station was killed while working on the front lines as Iraqi forces battle ISIS for the city of Mosul.

Trump will provide more support to Iraq in IS war: PM - Kurdistan 24
March 21, 2017
The Prime Minister of Iraq Haider al-Abadi on Monday revealed the US President Donald Trump assured greater support from Washington in the battle against the Islamic State.

Worldview: Iraqi Kurds say U.S. still has a role to play - Philadelphia Inquirer
March 12, 2017

There's no better place than Iraqi Kurdistan to understand the tortured relationship between Iraq and the United States, and why the two countries are still bound together.

Returning to Iraq: Working with TentEd - Huffington Post
March 13, 2017
At the end of February I returned to Iraq with two fellow veterans who also served in Iraq. Our mission was to be the first team to ski off the top of the tallest mountain fully in Iraq, Mt. Halgurd.

Exclusive: Iraq's Kurdistan negotiates new terms, raises oil pre-payments to $3 billion - Reuters
March 21, 2017
Iraq's Kurdistan has increased the loans guaranteed by future oil sales to $3 billion in new deals with trading houses and Russian state oil firm Rosneft aimed at strengthening its fiscal position as the semi-autonomous region fights Islamic State.

Flag raised at Binghamton City Hall to celebrate Kurdish New Year - Binghamton Homepage
March 21, 2017
The Kurdish flag was raised at Binghamton City Hall today to commemorate Newroz, a celebration of the Kurdish New Year.

Iraqi Kurdistan: intrepid skiers break new ground - The Guardian
February 25, 2017
Three hours' drive from Mosul, the small unspoilt pistes at ski resorts around Mount Halgurd, northern Iraq, are luring the first overseas tour groups

Former ISIS sex slave demands justice for Yazidis - CNN
March 20, 2017
A Yazidi woman who was kidnapped and taken as a sex slave by ISIS told CNN's Fareed Zakaria on Sunday that the Iraqi government and the UN should establish an investigation in order to bring members of the brutal regime to justice.

Kurds ask for stronger Canadian diplomatic presence in northern Iraq - CTV
March 7, 2017
Canada is being asked to upgrade its diplomatic footprint in northern Iraq, as the Kurdish government presses for closer economic and political ties to accompany Canada's sizable military presence.

Working with US Forces to bolster security in one of Iraq's most vulnerable cities - Spirit of America
March 15, 2017
Spirit of America supported counter-terror Peshmerga in Kirkuk with gear to aid in fight against ISIS.

Iraqi ministry accredits first private university in Kurdistan Region - Rudaw
February 23, 2017
For the first time in the Kurdistan Region, Iraq's Ministry of Higher Education and Scientific Research fully accredited a private university, the American University of Iraq Sulaimani (AUIS), the institution announced.

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Kurdistan Regional Government
Representation in the United States

Washington, D.C.
May 2016 Newsletter

Welcome to our May 2016 Newsletter

This month we saw the hundredth anniversary of the Sykes-Picot agreement.

Though much of the world may know of the agreement only as an ill-advised bit of colonial history, in Kurdistan the ramifications have been real and painful. Under different Iraqi regimes, our people have suffered repression, denial of our language and culture, chemical bombardment and genocide.



As President Barzani said in a statement marking the centenary, 'We must acknowledge the new realities; citizenship has not been developed; borders and sovereignty have become meaningless, the Sykes-Picot agreement is over. The international community must shoulder this historical responsibility and instead of insisting on the continuation of the suffering of the people of Iraq, they must seek a real solution for Iraq and the region. Otherwise, we are destined for continued war, extremism, and tragedy, and international peace and security will be under threat.

'In this difficult time, there is a historic opportunity for all of us to prevent tragedy, suffering, and the repetition of previous mistakes.

'On this hundredth anniversary of Sykes-Picot agreement, I call for a serious dialogue between Erbil and Baghdad to reach a new solution. If partnership cannot be achieved, let us be brothers and good neighbors.'

Among the Iraqi communities that have suffered the most in recent years are the Christians, Yezidis and other components of our country. I had the pleasure of visiting the Chaldean, Syriac and Assyrian community in Michigan where I met with local faith, business and community leaders, including Bishop Francis Y. Kalabat (pictured).

On a sad note, we in the Kurdistan Region share in the sorrow of the family, friends and colleagues of US Navy SEAL Charles Keating IV who was killed when ISIS launched a heavy attack on peshmerga positions. We offer our sincere condolences to the people of America on this great loss.

Bayan Sami Abdul Rahman
Kurdistan Regional Government
Representative to the United States

President Barzani welcomes Vice President Biden in Erbil



President Masoud Barzani received a United States government delegation headed by Vice President Joseph Biden and included a number of State and Defense Department officials. President Barzani and Vice President Biden discussed the current and upcoming military operations against the terrorists of ISIS.

President Barzani also expressed his appreciation, on behalf of the people of the Kurdistan Region to the people and government of the United States for their support to Iraq and to the Kurdistan Region, adding that that support has indeed

tremendously strengthened the process of ridding the region of the cruelty of the terrorists of the Islamic State.

Read a full press release here.

Condolences to the family of US Navy SEAL Charles Keating IV



Following a massive ISIS assault on Kurdish Peshmerga positions in Tel Asqof earlier this month, we in the Kurdistan Region were saddened by the death of US Navy SEAL Charles Keating IV. On behalf of the people of Kurdistan we offer our condolences to the family, friends, and colleagues of Mr. Keating - and to the people of America.

Navy SEAL Keating gave his life helping our Peshmerga fighters as they defend a 650-mile front from one of the most brutal terrorist organizations we have ever seen. His loss is not in vain, and we will remain relentless in our fight against terrorism, inspired by the courage and sacrifice of those like Mr. Keating.

This year marks the 25th anniversary of Operation Provide Comfort when the American military provided safety and humanitarian support for hundreds of thousands of Kurds fleeing Saddam's Ba'athist regime. Supported by the bravery and selflessness of American men and women in uniform over the years, the Kurdistan Region has become a beacon of stability and a safe haven for those fleeing tyranny.

On behalf of the people of Kurdistan, we thank American service members like Navy SEAL Keating, who served and sacrificed so that others may live free. Our Peshmerga are proud to stand shoulder to shoulder with you against terrorism and injustice.

President Barzani's statement on 100th anniversary of Sykes-Picot agreement



On May 16, President Masoud Barzani issued a statement to mark the centenary of the Sykes-Picot agreement. He said, 'This agreement led to the carving up of the region following the First World War, disregarding the opinion of the peoples of the region and of the geographical reality in the region. It was a great injustice on the peoples of the region, especially the Kurds.'

'The consequences of this agreement were first and foremost detrimental to the people of Kurdistan in the state of Iraq. An Iraqi state that was originally established to be based on partnership between Kurds and Arabs, in fact decided to marginalize the Kurds. Successive Iraqi regimes have since denied Kurds their rights and have committed great tragedies against the Kurdish people...'

Read the full statement here.

Deputy Prime Minister Talabani briefs the media on KRG delegation visit to Washington



In a press briefing to the media, both Deputy Prime Minister Qubad Talabani and Karim Sinjari, Minister of Interior and acting Minister of Peshmerga Affairs, highlighted the outcome of the Kurdistan Regional Government delegation's visit, headed by Mr Talabani, to Washington.

Deputy Prime Minister Talabani stated that the meetings with the US officials covered four main areas, which included the war against ISIS, the financial crises which Kurdistan Region currently faces, the issue of a large number of refugees and internally displaced persons who took refuge in Kurdistan, and the relations between Erbil and Baghdad.

Read a full press release here.

Spirit of America equips female Peshmerga units with first aid kits



Spirit of America, a citizen-funded nonprofit charity based in the United States, will equip an all-female Peshmerga unit with individual first aid kits (IFAK). Having supported other Peshmerga units in the past, Spirit of America is supporting the all-female unit as they prepare to play a pivotal role in future military operations.

Working closely with the U.S. Army civil affairs team in Erbil, Spirit of America funded IFAKs that include the basic medical necessities for the battlefield: tourniquets, bandages, and more. Soldiers equipped with IFAKs have a better chance of surviving on the battlefield. The charity provided 255 IFAKs, enough to equip an entire all-female Peshmerga battalion.

Colonel Nahida Ahmad Rashid, the commander officer of the unit, called the IFAKs an 'important part of training soldiers and battlefield tactics.'

Donate here.

President Barzani meets with Canadian military delegation



President Masoud Barzani received a Canadian military delegation headed by General Jonathan Vance, the Chief of the Defense Staff. During the meeting President Barzani and General Vance reviewed the events concerning the state of war against the terrorists of ISIS and Canada's role in providing support to the Peshmerga forces.

President Barzani reiterated his gratitude to the government of Canada for its support since the start of the operations against ISIS and added that such support is of enormous effectiveness as the Peshmerga forces fight to completely eradicate the terrorists of this Region and Iraq.

Read a full press release here.

KRG Representative visits diaspora communities in Detroit



KRG Representative to the United States Bayan Sami Abdul Rahman visited Detroit, Michigan to meet with members of the diaspora from Kurdistan's Chaldean, Syriac, Assyrian, and Kurdish communities.

The KRG Representative attended a dinner hosted by the Chaldean Chamber of Commerce, alongside 1,000 members of the the Chaldean, Assyrian, and Syriac community in Michigan, as well as regional business leaders. During the reception she had the opportunity to meet briefly with Michigan's Senators Debbie Stabenow and Gary Peters.

She had a chance to meet with Bishop Francis Y. Kalabat of the Chaldean Catholic Church Eparchy of Saint Thomas the Apostle of Detroit. She also visited the Chaldean Community Foundation and had the opportunity to hear about its important work with newly arrived refugees fleeing the violence in Iraq.

Governor of Kirkuk visits KRG Representation to deliver updates on his visit to Washington



Representative Abdul Rahman welcomed the Governor of Kirkuk Dr Najmaldin Karim to the KRG Representation in Washington. The Governor updated the Representative and KRG US staff on the security and humanitarian situation in Kurdistan and discussed the outcomes of his visit to Washington.

Throughout the week, the Governor Karim had visited with US officials at the State Department, members of Congress, and the think tank community. The KRG Representation hosted the Governor for a briefing with members of the American media.

Prime Minister Barzani: Private sector expansion is a priority



Kurdistan Regional Government Prime Minister Nechirvan Barzani said that expansion of the private sector in Kurdistan Region is a priority of the KRG at the signing ceremony of a contract between the International Finance Corporation and Mass Global, a leading firm of Kurdistan Region's private sector.

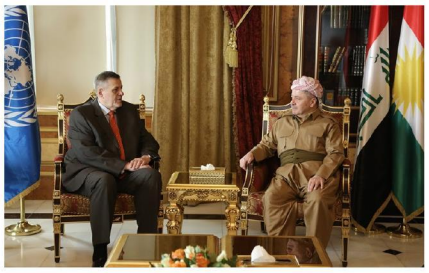
Prime Minister Barzani says as a part of KRG's reform package, he has signed nearly 30 orders, including an order to transfer the majority of services currently provided by the public sector, to the private sector. According to the contract, IFC, which is a member of the World Bank Group, will provide funds to expand Sulaymaniyah power plant.

Read a press release here.

President Barzani meets UN Envoy to Iraq

President Masoud Barzani received a United Nations delegation headed by Mr. Jan Kubis, the Special Representative of the United Nations to Iraq. During the meeting the two sides briefly discussed the current military, political and economic situations in Iraq. Mr. Kubis also spoke of his recent trip to the Islamic Republic of Iran.

President Barzani and Mr. Kubis focused primarily on the relations between Erbil and Baghdad. The President reiterated his position that there needs to be a genuine understanding of the concept of partnership which was a condition of the new, post-2003 formation of the Iraqi state.



Representative Abdul Rahman meets founders of Virginia-based Kurdistan Youth Academy

Representative Abdul Rahman met with the founders of the Kurdistan Youth Academy, a new youth education center providing Kurdish language and other educational services to Kurdish diaspora in northern Virginia. The center recently celebrated its first month of operations.

For more information on the Kurdistan Youth Academy, visit their Facebook page.



Upcoming events

June 2
Iraq's Economy: Challenges and Opportunities
hosted by The Center for Transatlantic Relations at Johns Hopkins University SAIS
REGISTER HERE

June 6
Operation Provide Comfort: Reflections and Lessons for Today
hosted by The Middle East Institute
REGISTER HERE

Kurdistan in the media

Women at War: Meet the Female Peshmerga Fighters Taking on ISIS - ABC News
May 16, 2016
The fighters that ISIS fears the most wear lipstick, according to these troops. Some even let their long, braided hair fall out behind their hats.

Kurdistan deserves an amicable divorce from Baghdad - Washington Post
May 5, 2016
Editorial by Kurdistan Region Security Council Chancellor Masrour Barzani

Why did ISIS attack the Yezidi people? - 60 Minutes
May 8, 2016
The Yezidis of northern Iraq have their own ancient culture and religion -- and that made them a target for ISIS, 60 Minutes reports

Kurdistan is hastening its own journey to independence - New Statesman
May 12, 2016
The chasm between Iraq and Kurdistan is widening but they must co-operate to expel Daesh from Mosul and work out how they coexist. The days of foreign powers insisting

they stay as one country are fading.

Iraqi Kurds Build Washington Lobbying Machine to Fund War Against ISIS - New York Times
May 6, 2016
Pulitzer-prize winning journalist Eric Lipton highlights effectiveness of KRG's lobbying efforts in Washington

The Kurds: The Most Famous Unknown People in the World - TEDxNashville
May 18, 2016
TEDx talk by author Stephen Mansfield on women in Kurdistan

Expanding Commercial Ties - Invest In Group
May 2016
IIG talks to Steve Lutes, Executive Director of Middle East Affairs at U.S. Chamber of Commerce on the Chamber's activities in the Kurdistan Region.

How to put the Middle East back together - Washington Post
May 3, 2016
David Ignatius on the future of Iraq, Syria, and the Middle East

For travelers in on its secrets, Kurdistan remains tourist gem - Rudaw
May 11, 2016
Despite economic difficulties, Kurdistan remains a tourist destination

Iraqi Kurdish Official in US to Seek Help Against IS - Voice of America
May 18, 2016
Najmaldin Karim, the Kurdish governor of Kirkuk, is visiting Washington this week, appealing to U.S. officials to help bolster the fight against the group and asking for more assistance for the crippled Kurdish economy.

One on One Special Edition - WCTE
April 26, 2016
Dr Michael Gunter interview with Representative Abdul Rahman

How Rival Gardens of Eden in Iraq Survived ISIS, Dwindling Tourists, And Each Other - Atlas Obscura
May 10, 2016
Against all odds, Iraq's religious tourism infrastructure has endured.

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To: farakrg@gmail.com

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Kurdistan Regional Government Representation in the United States

Washington, D.C.
May 2017 Newsletter

Welcome to our May 2017 newsletter



On behalf of the Kurdistan Regional Government, I send my warmest wishes to Muslims around the world on the occasion of the holy month of Ramadan.

This past weekend was also Memorial Day, when Americans commemorate soldiers that gave their lives in combat. In the fight against ISIS, two Americans have been killed while supporting Peshmerga forces. Their names are Master Sergeant Joshua Wheeler and Special Warfare Operator First Class Charles Keating IV, and in Kurdistan we mourned their loss as our own, alongside nearly 1,800 Peshmerga who have sacrificed their lives protecting Kurdistan.

I had the opportunity to speak to academics, experts, and students the University of Kurdistan - Hawler conference this month. I was impressed not only with the high caliber of speakers and panelists that attended, but with the intelligence and discipline of students in Kurdistan, as well as the professionalism of the young journalists that I met.

The last few years have been difficult for the people of Kurdistan. But having met and visited with such impressive young Kurdistanis last week, I am particularly encouraged that the sacrifices made by American and Kurdistani soldiers and their families are helping to move Iraq past dark times, and bring Kurdistan into a near era of peace, freedom, and prosperity.

Bayan Sami Abdul Rahman
Kurdistan Regional Government
Representative to the United States

KRG delegation led by Masrour Barzani meets top White House and Administration officials



A delegation headed by Kurdistan Region Security Council Chancellor Masrour Barzani was in Washington to meet with top US officials. The delegation also included Chief of Staff to President Masoud Barzani, Dr Fuad Hussein, and KRG Representative to the United States Bayan Sami Abdul Rahman.

During the visit, they met with US National Security Advisor HR McMaster (pictured), Senior Advisor to the US President Jared Kushner, and Assistant to the President for Homeland Security and Counterterrorism Tom Bossert, and other National Security Council staff, pictured here. They also met with Senators John McCain and Jack Reed, Acting Assistant Secretary for Near Eastern Affairs Ambassador Stuart Jones, Special Presidential Envoy for the Global Coalition to Counter ISIS Brett McGurk, Acting Assistant Secretary of Defense for International Security Affairs Ken Handelman, and Major General Rich Clarke, Vice Director of Joint Strategic Plans and Policy.

Chancellor Barzani spoke at an event at the Heritage Foundations about the progress of the war with ISIS and the need to political reconciliation and international cooperation as key elements in post-ISIS Iraq.

Read press releases about the visit here and here.
Watch Chancellor Barzani's remarks at the Heritage Foundation here.

Prime Minister Barzani: Independence unites us towards achieving common goals

Academic, experts, journalists, and others gathered at the University of Kurdistan - Hawler for a conference titled 'Iraqi Kurdistan at a Crossroads'. The event was keynoted by American expert Dr Michael Gunter. Representative Abdul Rahman delivered remarks about Kurdistan's growing and important relationship with the United States.

In his opening remarks, Prime Minister Nechirvan Barzani highlighted the challenges faced by the Kurdistan Region, but commended the people of Kurdistan and in particular the Peshmerga for

resiliency and sacrifice in striving for peace, prosperity, and independence.



He said, 'This innate resilience has been forged by the struggles of the past, but I believe it speaks of our identity and values too. Let us take a moment to reflect on what hasn't happened in Kurdistan.

We haven't resorted to extremism - radical ideologies have failed to establish a foothold here, and we have continued to protect religious and ethnic pluralism.

We haven't turned refugees away - despite the strain on our already fragile finances, healthcare, education and other services sectors.

And we haven't turned against eachother - although we have had political differences, and there are deep and understandable frustrations with the economic situation, there is no appetite for the kind of violent clashes that has been witnessed in the past, and in the wider region.'

Read Prime Minister Barzani's full speech here.
Watch Representative Abdul Rahman's speech here.

KRG to reform its armed forces with the support of International Coalition



As part of the KRG's continuing reforms, the Ministry of Peshmerga Affairs will implement significant reform measures with assistance from a joint team of military experts from the United States, the United Kingdom, and Germany.

Prime Minister Barzani, Deputy Prime Minister Qubad Talabani, acting Minister of Peshmerga Affairs Karim Sinjari, and KRG military officials met with an international coalition joint team to discuss a framework for reform consisting of 35 critical points. Prime Minister Barzani expressed his gratitude for the continuing support of the coalition forces.

Read a full press release here.

Kurdistan Region represented at Iraqi Embassy during annual DC Embassy Day



KRG US Directors Najat Abdullah and Tara Hamawandi represented KRG at the Iraqi Embassy during DC Embassy Day. The annual event is an opportunity for the public to visit embassies throughout Washington and this year more than 40 participated.

Mr Abdullah, who heads the Cultural Directorate, and Ms Hamawandi brought art and cultural items from Kurdistan to display.

Nawshirwan Mustafa passed away

Kurdish leader Nawshirwan Mustafa passed away May 19 in Slemani. A major figure in the Kurdish liberation movement who left his PhD studies in Austria to

fight against Ba'athist forces, Mr Mustafa later founded the Gorran (Change) Movement.

In a statement, Prime Minister Barzani said, 'I extend my sincere condolences to Mr. Nawshirwan Mustafa's family, friends and the Gorran (Change) Movement. I share your pain and grief. May the almighty rest his soul in peace.

It is my hope to see the Gorran Movement and supporters of Mr. Nawshirwan Mustafa continue to serve Kurdistan and our people's common interests.'

Representative Abdul Rahman visited Gorran headquarters in Erbil to pay her respects. Representatives from the KRG-USA office also attended a memorial in Virginia.

Read the Prime Minister's statement here.

Minister Sindi in Washington for meetings with World Bank officials

Minister Dr Ali Sindi was in Washington to attend and speak on a panel at the World Bank's Governance Forum.

He also met with officials from the World Bank, US State Department, and US Treasury Department.

In his meetings, Minister Sindi discussed the progress of the KRG's Reform Roadmap, and updated officials on the humanitarian and financial crises.



USIP Organizes Workshop on Monitoring, Evaluation and Reporting



The KRG Department of Foreign Relations (DFR) in cooperation with Women Empowerment Organization (WEO) through the support of the United States Institute for Peace (USIP) organized a (Monitoring, Evaluation and Reporting) workshop to support the implementation of the Iraqi National Action Plan(INAP) 1325.

Twenty-nine staff members from the relevant KRG ministries and departments participated in the workshop, which focused on providing the participants with an understanding of the guiding principles of monitoring, evaluating and reporting, and practical approaches to implement government master plan in fulfillment of the INAP 1325.

Read a press release here.

Representative Abdul Rahman visits Chaldean-American community in Michigan

Representative Abdul Rahman attended the annual Chaldean-American Chamber of Commerce

gala in Michigan. The Chamber provides support for Chaldean-American businesses in Michigan and throughout the United States.



During the visit, Representative Abdul Rahman also had a chance to meet with Chaldean Bishops Kalabat and Ibrahim, who hosted her for lunch alongside Iraqi Ambassador Fareed Yaseen and officials from the State Department (pictured).

Prime Minister Barzani meets Patriarch of Assyrian Church of the East



Prime Minister Nechrivan Barzani received Mar Gewargis Sliwa, Catholicos-Patriarch of the Assyrian Church of the East, and his accompanying delegation of Assyrian bishops from the United States, Canada, Europe, Syria, Iran, and the Kurdistan Region.

The meeting focused on the general situation of Christians in the Kurdistan Region and Iraq as a whole, with particular attention on the Assyrian Church of the East and its followers. Mar Gewargis Sliwa summarized the situation of Christians and the activities of the Assyrian Church of the East in cities across the Kurdistan Region and Iraq.

Read a full press release here.

Representative Abdul Rahman and advisor to Ministry of the Interior Harry Schute meet with American officials in Washington



Representative Abdul Rahman and Colonel Harry Schute, senior advisor to Minister of the Interior Karim Sinjari, met with members of Congress, as well as US administration and defense officials at the State Department, Pentagon, and White House (pictured with Rep. Mike Gallagher).

Col. Schute and Representative Abdul Rahman updated the American officials on the fight against ISIS, the internal security situation in Kurdistan, and the prospects for peace in the region. During visit, Col. Schute also met with KRG-US staff at the Representation office.

Prime Minister Barzani invites private sector to contribute to tourism development

Kurdistan Region Prime Minister Nechirvan Barzani called on the private sector, both foreign and domestic, to come to Kurdistan and take advantage of the KRG's provisions and programs for tourism-related projects.

He stressed that the Kurdistan Region has all the attributes to become a successful destination for tourists.

Prime Minster Barzani made the statements during a speech at the opening ceremony of the Middle East Tourism Expo, METEX 2017, held in the capital Erbil.

Read a press release here.



Representative Abdul Rahman delivers remarks to Evercore ISI

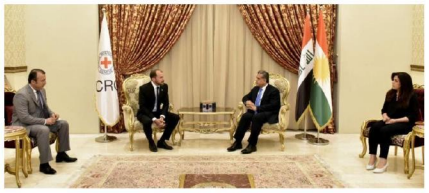
Representative Abdul Rahman delivered remarks to an audience of oil and gas industry experts at the annual Evercore ISI 'Energy Policy & Geopolitics Conference'. Evercore is a global independent investment banking advisory firm.



She gave the audience an overview of the energy sector, geopolitics of the region, and the future of politics in Iraq. She highlighted the upcoming referendum in Iraq, saying, 'The referendum is part of the independence process. We will proceed peacefully, intelligently and with no surprises for our allies.'

Head of DFR receives new ICRC Head

Head of the KRG Department of Foreign Relations Minister Falah Mustafa on Thursday May 18th 2017, received the new head of the ICRC sub-delegation in the Kurdistan Region, Mr. Noah Lilienfien and his accompanying delegation.



In the meeting, Minister Mustafa welcomed Mr. Lilienfien to the Kurdistan Region and congratulated him on assuming his new responsibility in Erbil. Minister Mustafa assured him that the KRG Department of Foreign Relations will extend all the necessary cooperation and coordination to him and his colleagues at the ICRC delegation in the Kurdistan Region and wished him success in his new duty.

Read a press release here.

American high school classes learn about Kurdistan

Alex Ebsary, KRG US Director of Public and Academic Affairs gave presentations about Kurdistan, the history of genocide in the region, and the war against ISIS to more than 200 students at Williamsville East High School near Buffalo, NY.



Mr. Ebsary was invited by the social studies department to speak with classes focused on current affairs, genocide, and human rights.

Kurdistan in the media

Representative Abdul Rahman interview on Voice of America - Dengi Amerika
May 2, 2017
Interview on upcoming referendum (in Kurdish)

Kurdish independence in Iraq likely 'not if but when': US general - Reuters
May 25, 2017
An Iraqi Kurdish push for independence from Baghdad appears likely to be a question of "not if but when," in a significant challenge to Iraq's stability, the head of the U.S. Defense Intelligence Agency said.

Justice After ISIS - Rudaw
April 29 - May 19, 2017
An eight part investigative series on ISIS crimes and the pursuit of justice.

Iraqi Christians taking refuge in Kurdistan - ETWN
May 16, 2017
Interview with Representative Abdul Rahman

Crimes against humanity in Iraqi Kurdistan are rigorously documented - New Arab
May 22, 2017
There is no shortage of evidence of the Islamic State group's crimes

Capturing the Beauty of Springtime in Iraqi Kurdistan -- Time
April 25, 2017
"in a bid to show that Iraq is not just "one giant pit of terrorism and despair," Trieb says, she turned her lens on some of the cultural traditions that set Iraq's Kurdistan apart from the rest of the country."

Hamilton's Kurdish Wheelchair Project sends shipment to Iraq -- Hamilton News
May 25, 2017
"Ninety walkers, 56 canes, 150 wheelchairs and other much-needed medical supplies are making their way to Kurdistan after a "very precious partnership" raised funds for their shipment."

Iraq's Oil Minister: Kurdistan Exports Not Part Of OPEC Cut Extension -- Oilprice.com
May 25, 2017
"The oil exports of Iraq's semi-autonomous region of Kurdistan are not subject to the extension of OPEC's production cuts, Iraq's Oil Minister Jabbar al-Luaibi told Kurdish media network Rudaw during the OPEC meeting in Vienna on Thursday."

In the field with Iraq's archaeologists of the future -- The Guardian
May 1, 2017
"Working in Kurdistan at the site of Qalatga Darband, The British Museum is training Iraqi archaeologists to preserve and study their country's threatened heritage"

One Dud Oil Field Doesn't Set a Trend as Kurds Keep Drilling -- Bloomberg
May 9, 2017
"When one of the biggest crude producers in Iraqi Kurdistan downgraded reserves in March, doubts about the economic potential of the region -- a key player in the fight against Islamic State terrorism -- deepened. But evidence suggests it's too soon to write off the emerging oil province."

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To: farakrg@gmail.com, Dianne Slocum <dianneslocum@gmail.com>

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Kurdistan Regional Government
Representation in the United States

Washington, D.C.
October 2015 Newsletter

Welcome to our October 2015 Newsletter

I met with the former US Consul General of Erbil and newest Director of Iraq Affairs Joseph Pennington (pictured) at the State Department this week to thank the US Government for its most recent pledge to donate $56 million to the humanitarian crisis in Iraq.



This donation could not come at a more critical time. As of October 21, the UN has received only 41 percent of the $498 million needed in the Humanitarian Response Plan, causing cuts to essential programs. Whereas a Syrian refugee family in Kurdistan received $31 a month in food vouchers in August 2014, today that has dropped to $19 per month for the most needy, with half of all refugees receiving nothing at all. Over 80 percent of all humanitarian health programs throughout Iraq have been suspended, and sicknesses like cholera have seen a resurgence. As we head into the harsh winter months, almost 2 million displaced individuals in Kurdistan will need warm clothing, better shelter, and heat to survive.

The effects of this crisis on the economy and society of Kurdistan have been profound. Imagine if the population of your hometown or state had swelled 30 percent in less than a year. Every public sector is impacted, and as the financial strains of the humanitarian crisis and the war continue to drag on the economy, the KRG has struggled to pay the salaries of government employees at every level. Some of these frustrations boiled over this month.

Despite these challenges, Kurdistan remains safe and secure. Supported by the coalition, our Peshmerga continue to bravely defend our borders from ISIS attacks. On Thursday morning we saw how effective US-Kurdish cooperation can be when US Special Forces and Counter-Terrorism Peshmerga rescued 69 hostages held by ISIS in Hawija. Together, we will defeat the terrorists of ISIS.

Bayan Sami Abdul Rahman
Kurdistan Regional Government
Representative to the United States

Operation in Hawija rescues 69 hostages held by ISIS

On October 22, the Directorate General of Counter Terrorism (CTD) conducted a special operation supported by the Global Coalition on a prison compound in Hawija confirmed of holding prisoners and hostages held by the Islamic State in Iraq and al-Sham (ISIS). During the operation, 69 hostages were successfully rescued, 6 ISIS terrorists detained and more than 20 killed.

A US service member, identified as Master Sergeant Joshua Wheeler regrettably lost his life during the operation. Three Kurdish personnel were injured.

The KRG expresses heartfelt condolences to the family and friends of the US service member lost in this operation and is grateful to the counterterrorism professionals for their bravery and to the Global Coalition for providing support to this operation.

Read a press release here.
Read condolences from Representative Abdul Rahman here.

KRG delegation highlights Kurdistani issues at UN General Assembly



A KRG delegation was in New York for the United Nations' 70th General Assembly to highlight the ongoing fight against ISIS and the humanitarian and economic challenges facing Kurdistan.

The delegation was led by Minister Falah Mustafa Bakir, Head of the Department of Foreign Relations (DFR), who spoke at a session on the humanitarian crisis. The KRG's Representative to the United States, Bayan Sami Abdul Rahman, accompanied the minister, along with Assistant Head of the DFR Siham Mamand and Advisor at the DFR Rawand Darwesh.

Read a press release here.

President Barzani Welcomes US Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff



President Masoud Barzani welcomed the newly appointed Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, General Joseph Dunford to Erbil on October 20. The meeting was attended by a number of United States Department of Defense officials as well as military and security officials of the Kurdistan Region including Mr. Masrour Barzani, the Chancellor of the Kurdistan Region Security Council.

President Barzani began the meeting by wishing General Dunford success in his new and challenging endeavour during this very difficult period. President Barzani and General Dunford spoke of a number of crucial topics on the current war against the terrorists of the Islamic State including the upcoming operations against the terrorists.

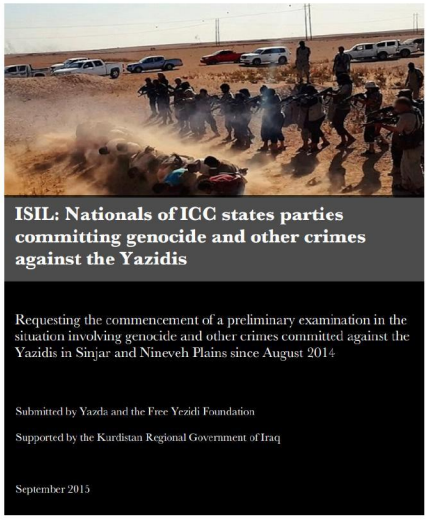
Read a press release here.

KRG Department of Foreign Relations pushes for ICC investigation into ISIS genocide against Yezidis

Head of the KRG Department of Foreign Relations Minister Falah Mustafa, together with two Yezidi NGOs, submitted a comprehensive report to the office of the ICC chief prosecutor in the Hague regarding the ISIS genocide against the Yezidis. This comes as a follow-up to previous efforts, and this detailed report provides further information.

The delegation delivered the detailed report to the chief prosecutor's office for analysis, with the hope that the ICC will open a preliminary investigation into these crimes on the basis of this supplemental report.

Read a press release here.
Read the report here.



President Barzani meets US Congressional delegation in Erbil



President Masoud Barzani received a United States delegation headed by Senate Majority leader Senator Mitch McConnell and a number of other senators and members of the U.S. House of Representatives, and included State and Defense department officials. President Barzani and the U.S. guests spoke on a number of topics, most importantly the current war on the terrorists of the Islamic State.

President Barzani reiterated the appreciation of the Kurdistan Region for the United States air support which, over the past year has, with the assistance of other coalition members heavily weakened the terrorists. Senator McConnell stated that the US Congress appreciates the role of the Peshmerga forces in this global effort against the terrorists of the Islamic State.

Read a press release here.

KRG hosts Dr Dlawer Ala'Aldeen and Middle East Research Institute scholars in Washington



Dr Dlawer Ala'Aldeen, founder of the Middle East Research Institute, and a delegation of MERI scholars visited Washington this month to present their work and provide updates to leading US think tanks and government officials. The Kurdistan-based Institute focuses on providing analysis and constructive recommendations to KRG and international policymakers. Throughout the week Dr Ala'Aldeen was hosted for talks at top Washington think tanks including the Brookings Institution, Washington Institute for Near East Policy, and the US Institute of Peace.

On October 15, the KRG Representation in Washington hosted Dr Ala'Aldeen, for a discussion moderated by KRG Representative Bayan Sami Abdul Rahman. The discussion covered a range of issues concerning current affairs

and the future of the Kurdistan Region. Members of the Washington-area Kurdish community engaged in a lively question and answer session with Dr Ala'Aldeen.

Read MERI's report on ethnic and religious minorities here.
Read MERI's report on Kirkuk here.
See pictures of the community event here.

KRG Representative highlights US-Kurdistan friendship on first visit to Texas



KRG Representative Bayan Sami Abdul Rahman highlighted the longstanding friendship between her homeland and America in a speech at the World Affairs Council Dallas Fort Worth on October 7.

Ms Abdul Rahman addressed Council members and guests at a lunch on October 7 at the Rosewood Crescent Hotel in Dallas, Texas. 'We thank America for standing by us in 1991, in 2003 and in 2014 when ISIS terrorists attacked Kurdistan and Iraq,' Ms Abdul Rahman said.

Read a press release here.

President Barzani Receives US Ambassador to Iraq



President Masoud Barzani received a United States delegation headed by Ambassador Stuart Jones. During the meeting President Barzani and ambassador Jones discussed the latest military developments in the war on the terrorists of the Islamic State in Kurdistan, the rest of Iraq and beyond. Ambassador Jones expressed his appreciation for the well coordinated cooperation between the coalition and the Peshmerga forces.

President Barzani and Ambassador Jones spoke of the importance of focusing on widening and strengthening the coalition.

Read a press release here.

KRG Representative Abdul Rahman speaks to Kurdish leaders at 27th Annual Kurdish National Congress of North America

'Kurdish communities in Canada and the United States should not underestimate their effectiveness in lobbying their governments in support of Kurdistan. Our unity and dedication to Kurdistan is our strength,' KRG Representative to the United States Bayan Sami Abdul Rahman told the audience gathered in Toronto for the 27th annual Kurdish National Congress of North America on October 10, 2015.



The yearly event brings together Kurdish leaders from across North America, experts, academics, and Kurdish community members to discuss pressing issues facing the Kurdish community in diaspora and the state of affairs in various parts of Kurdistan.

Read a press release here.
See pictures from the event here.

Columbia University report urges West not to stand in way of independent Kurdistan



Columbia University Institute for the Study of Human Rights launched a report October 13 that urges the international community not to stand in the way of the people of Kurdistan as they exercise their right of self-determination.

The report focuses on the status of the de facto autonomy of the Kurdistan Region and outlines a roadmap for the future, with recommendations for managing the current crisis and achieving sovereignty. It was launched at the National Press Club in Washington, DC on October 13, 2015 with KRG Representative to the United States Bayan Sami Abdul Rahman in attendance, alongside scholars, members of the media and US Government officials.

Read a press release here.
Read the report here.
Watch a video of the launch here.

Prime Minister Barzani's statement on the current situation in Kurdistan Region



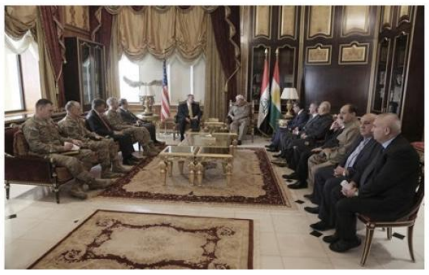
In a televised statement on October 16, Kurdistan Region Prime Minister Nechirvan Barzani, commented the events and political developments which the Region witnessed in the week prior.

Read a press release with the text of the speech here.

President Barzani receives US Special Presidential Envoy for the Global Coalition to Counter ISIL

President Masoud Barzani welcomed a United States military and diplomatic delegation headed by General John Allen, the Special Presidential Envoy for the Global Coalition to Counter ISIL. General Allen was accompanied by a number of officials from both the departments of State and Defense.

General Allen expressed his acknowledgment of the sacrifices of the Peshmerga forces in the current global effort against the terrorists of the Islamic State, adding that that has even further strengthened the relations between the Kurdistan Region and the United States.



Read a press release here.

Retired US Foreign Service Officers head about Kurdistan's role in the fight against ISIS

Rep Abdul Rahman spoke to an audience of retired US Foreign Service Officers and other distinguished guests at the DACOR House on September 30 for a panel titled, 'The Caliphate Reborn or Modern States: Confronting Radical Islam' to discuss Kurdistan's role in countering ISIS and violent extremism in the region.

She discussed the Kurdistan Region's role in confronting the complex of humanitarian, security, and economic challenges caused by the advance of ISIS. She said, 'The Kurdistan Region and our brave Peshmerga are at the forefront of the fight against the Islamic State.'

Read about the event here (scroll down)

Kurdistan Region oil exports increased by more than 30 percent in September

Crude oil export by Kurdistan Regional Government, KRG, has increased by 31.23 per cent in September in comparison to August.



According to the monthly Export Report by KRG Ministry of Natural Resources, KRG has exported 18,614,798 barrels of crude oil in September, an average of 620,478 barrel per day. This is a significant increase compared to August, where it exported only 14,657,798 barrels of crude oil.

The Ministry of Natural Resources also paid international oil companies operating in the Taq Taq oil field $30 million.

Read a press release here.
See the Ministry of Natural Resource's export report here.

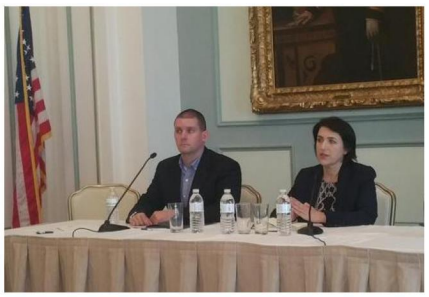
KRG Representative continues outreach to US Administration and Congress

KRG Representative Bayan Sami Abdul Rahman continued her outreach to US Government officials through September and October, delivering updates from the region and thanking America for its continued engagement with Kurdistan and Iraq. Ms Abdul Rahman is pictured to the right with Congresswoman Cathy McMorris Rodgers of Washington state. She also met Congressman Randy Forbes, congressional staff and had meetings with the State Department.

Representative Abdul Rahman continued to highlight the need for a concerted effort to help alleviate the desperate plight of the nearly 2 million Syrian refugees and internally displaced Iraqis sheltering in Kurdistan. She also requested further support to the Peshmerga who continue to stand up to ISIS terrorists.



KRG Representative hosted for Military Reporters Conference



KRG Representative Bayan Sami Abdul Rahman spoke at the Military Reporter and Editors Association Conference on October 9. The annual conference brings together US military reporters for panel discussions on current US national security and military issues.

Representative Abdul Rahman spoke with Politico Defense Editor in a session titled 'The International Fight Against ISIL'. She discussed the needs of the Peshmerga as they battle the Islamic State across a 650-mile border, particularly with recent confirmation that mustard gas artillery shells were used on Peshmerga.

Kurdistan in the media

US adds millions of dollars to Iraq humanitarian fund

Rudaw - October 1, 2015

The United States will provide an additional $56 million in humanitarian fund for Iraqis affected by ongoing violence in the country, State Department Spokesman said in a statement on Wednesday, September 30.

Interview with Bayan Sami Abdul Rahman

Washington Life Magazine - October 1, 2015

KRG Representative to the US sits down with Washington Life Magazine to discuss her role in Washington and issues facing Kurdistan. Scroll to bottom of page, article is on Page 49.

Drilling in the shadow of ISIL: Why oil companies find Kurdistan so hard to resist

Financial Post - October 19, 2015

The Kurdistan Region is hard for companies to resist as it is ranked 'among the best basins in the world for large oil prospects,' according to energy consultancy IHS Inc.

Radio interview with Bayan Sami Abdul Rahman

The Takeaway - October 23, 2015

Representative Abdul Rahman discusses the mission and whether the raid might be a model for the fight against ISIS going forward.

Yezidi women forced into slavery

CNN Freedom Project - October 5, 2015

CNN Freedom project looks at the plight of Yezidi women held captive by ISIS.

The Newly Discovered Tablet V of the Epic of Gilgamesh

Ancient History (blog) - September 24, 2015
Slemani Museum recently unveiled 20 previously unknown lines from the Epic of Gilgamesh in its collection.

KRG Ministry of Religious Affairs appoints official for Jewish Kurds
Haaretz - October 21, 2015
Kurdistan's new Jewish affairs representative wants to rebuild synagogues and reconnect Jews to the semiautonomous region in northern Iraq.

Kurdistan Oil Payment Raises Hopes for Western Energy Companies
Wall Street Journal - October 15, 2015
The Kurdistan Regional Government has made its second payment this year to Gulf Keystone Petroleum Ltd., raising hopes for western energy businesses operating in Iraq's northern region.

Islamic State used mustard gas against Peshmerga
BBC News - October 7, 2015
The Ministry of Peshmerga Affairs said blood samples from about 35 fighters revealed traces of sulphur mustard from ISIS mortar rounds.

For Yezidis traumatized by Islamic State, few mental health resources
Christian Science Monitor - October 7, 2015
Yezidis tell their stories of trauma, and struggle to find post-traumatic mental health care.

More Kurdish oil than expected, Gulf Keystone says
United Press International - October 1, 2015
Gulf Keystone Petroleum said third-party estimates show recoverable oil reserves in the Kurdish north of Iraq are at least twice as much as initially expected.

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J. Michael Slocum <jmichaelslocum@slocumboddie.com> Mon, Nov 2, 2015 at 1:02 PM
Reply-To: jmichaelslocum@slocumboddie.com
To: farakrg@gmail.com

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---------- Forwarded message ----------
From: **Dianne Slocum** <dianneslocum@gmail.com>
Date: Mon, Nov 2, 2015 at 11:12 AM
Subject: Re: KRG-US October 2015 Newsletter
To: "J. Michael Slocum" <jmichaelslocum@slocumboddie.com>

Did you already put this in the file?
[Quoted text hidden]

Gmail **Slocum FARA account <farakrg@gmail.com>**

Fwd: KRG-US September 2016 Newsletter

1 message

J. Michael Slocum <jmichaelslocum@slocumboddie.com> Fri, Sep 30, 2016 at 3:33 PM
Reply-To: jmichaelslocum@slocumboddie.com
To: farakrg@gmail.com

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From: **Kurdistan Regional Government - USA** <us@gov.krd>
Date: Fri, Sep 30, 2016 at 1:05 PM
Subject: KRG-US September 2016 Newsletter
To: jmichaelslocum@slocumboddie.com

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Kurdistan Regional Government Representation in the United States

Washington, D.C.
September 2016 Newsletter

Welcome to our September 2016 Newsletter

The international community gathered this month in New York for the United Nations General Assembly, to discuss global challenges in the coming years. Today, the UN is conducting humanitarian action in 31 countries with an estimated 65 million people displaced from their homes.



The UN is responding to three Level-3 crises, the most severe designation. Two of them, Iraq and Syria, directly impact the Kurdistan Region. A Flash Appeal for the Mosul liberation operations has also been launched, urgently requesting $284 million, bringing the total cost of humanitarian action in Iraq this year to $1.1 billion.

I joined Head of the KRG Department of Foreign Relations Falah Mustafa Bakir at the UN when he spoke at Ministerial-Level Meeting on the Humanitarian Crisis in Iraq, which focused largely on the planning of the humanitarian response around the Mosul operations.

Minister Bakir said, 'A humanitarian disaster is imminent. Our appeal is the last chance to avert disaster.'

As the noose around ISIS in Mosul tightens, we in the Kurdistan Region are urging the Iraqi government and our international partners to work with us, so that military success doesn't result in catastrophic humanitarian failures. This month we hosted renowned expert Dr Dlawer Ala'Aldeen for a discussion on what Mosul will look like post-ISIS, and the challenges that will have to be met to ensure peace for the future.

Bayan Sami Abdul Rahman
Kurdistan Regional Government
Representative to the United States

President Barzani visits Baghdad



President Masoud Barzani led a senior Kurdistan political delegation to Baghdad in the hope of preparing for the Mosul liberation operation and strengthening relations between Erbil and Baghdad. The delegation that accompanied President Barzani consisted of political officials from the Kurdistan Region including Mr. Kosrat Rasul, the Vice President of the Kurdistan Region and a number of senior political officials from the Kurdistan Democratic Party, the Patriotic Union of Kurdistan, the Kurdistan Islamic Union, the Kurdistan Socialist Democratic Party and others.

President Barzani and the accompanying delegation were received by Prime Minister Haider al-Abadi and a number of his cabinet officials. Prime Minister Abadi and President Barzani

spoke of the details of the Mosul operation and the roles of the different players in the operation, in accordance to the recent agreement between the U.S.-led coalition, the Kurdistan Region and the Federal Government.

Read a press release here.

President Barzani Receives a Joint American and Iraqi Military Delegation



President Masoud Barzani received a military and diplomatic delegation which included a number of senior U.S. and Iraqi officials. The meeting was attended by the newly appointed U.S. Ambassador to Iraq, Douglas Silliman and a number of senior U.S. military personnel including Lieutenant General Stephen Townsend. From the Iraqi side, the meeting was attended by General Abdulamir al-Zaidi, Deputy Chief of Staff of the Iraqi Army as well a number of other senior Iraqi military officials.

During the meeting whose main focus was the Mosul operation, the attendees discussed some of the details of the operation and that quickly moving forward with liberating Mosul is of great significance. The Peshmerga forces and the Iraqi forces with the assistance of the U.S.-led coalition shall begin the process of ridding the city of Mosul of ISIS, the attendees agreed.

Read a press release here.

KRG Prime Minister meets with new US Ambassador to Iraq



KRG Prime Minister Nechirvan Barzani met with Douglas Silliman, the new United States Ambassador to Iraq. The war against the ISIS, Mosul liberation, and bilateral ties topped the agenda of the meeting.

Prime Minister Barzani expressed his appreciation to the American people, administration and Congress for their continuous support to the Kurdistan Region in the fight against terror. Mr. Barzani also stressed the need for more planning and coordination among involved parties, including Erbil, Iraqi federal government and the coalition forces, for post-ISIS Mosul.

The KRG Deputy Prime Minister Qubad Talabani, Interior Minister Karim Sinjari, Government Spokesperson Safeen Dizayee and the Head of Department of Foreign Relations Falah Mustafa participated in the meeting.

Read a press release here.

KRG Foreign Minister addresses Ministerial-Level Event on the Humanitarian Crisis in Iraq on the Margins of the 71st Session of UNGA

Head of KRG Department of Foreign Relations Minister Falah Mustafa delivered a speech on the humanitarian situation in the Kurdistan Region and the need to prepare for humanitarian fallout from the Mosul operation at the Ministerial-Level Event on the Humanitarian Crisis in Iraq on the Margins of the 71st Session of UNGA.

He said, 'We know that the liberation of Mosul is approaching and we know that this will create a new humanitarian crisis in the Kurdistan Region. Similarly to its fall, the liberation of Mosul will undoubtedly have huge humanitarian and security implications for the Region. We expect another massive wave of displacement into Kurdistan.'



Read the full text of his speech here.
Read a press release about other meetings during UNGA here and here.

KRG Prime Minister and US Deputy Secretary of State discuss Mosul liberation

KRG Prime Minister Nechirvan Barzani received US Deputy Secretary of State Antony Blinken accompanied by a political and military delegation.



The US delegation included Ambassador Brett McGurk, Special Presidential Envoy for the Global Coalition to Counter ISIL, US ambassador to Baghdad Douglas Silliman, Erbil Consul General Ken Gross and a number of advisers and diplomats.

In the meeting also attended by KRG Deputy Prime Minister Qubad Talabani and a number of KRG senior officials, Mr. Blinken praised the KRG for providing shelter, security, and services to a very large number of internally displaced persons and refugees fleeing the brutality of terrorism.

Read a press release here.

Nadia Murad inaugurated as UN Goodwill Ambassador

KRG Representative Bayan Sami Abdul Rahman traveled to New York to attend the inauguration ceremony of Yezidi woman Nadia Murad Basee as United Nations Goodwill Ambassador for the Dignity of Survivors of Human Trafficking.



Ms. Basee is the first Yezidi and the first Kurd to ever be named a UN Goodwill Ambassador. She joins dozens of social icons and world leaders who spread messages of peace and international cooperation.

'Nadia is a fierce and tireless advocate for the Yazidi people and victims of human trafficking everywhere,' UN Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon said at her induction ceremony.

Read a article from the UN about her appointment.
Read a press release about Minister Bakir and Representative Abdul Rahman meeting Ms Murad during UNGA.
Read a letter to UN Secretary General Ban Ki-Moon from KRG Prime Minister Nechirvan Barzani.

Prime Minister Barzani concludes visit to Baghdad



KRG Prime Minister Nechirvan Barzani concluded a two-day visit to Baghdad after meeting top Iraqi leaders.

During his talks in Baghdad, the Prime Minister reiterated his government's position to solve all outstanding issues between Erbil and Baghdad through dialogue.

Prime Minister Barzani and his accompanying delegation on Monday met Iraqi Prime Minister Haider Al-Abadi. The war against terrorism, especially the expected operation to liberate the city of Mosul, oil issue, bilateral ties, future relations and arrangements were discussed during the meeting.

Read a press release here.

KRG Washington hosts leader of Bet-Nahrain Democratic Party for meeting



Romeo Hakkari, the leader of the Bet-Nahrain Democratic Party, an Assyrian Christian political party, and his accompanying delegation joined KRG Representative Abdul Rahman and staff for a meeting at the KRG Representation in Washington.

Mr. Hakkari updated Representative staff on the plight on Christians in Kurdistan and the rest of Iraq, as well as the Christians' role in the fight against ISIS.

Mr. Hakkari's party leads the Ninewa Plains Force, a Christian unit of the Peshmerga Forces founded by Presidential decree in December 2014. They receive training and equipment from the Peshmerga Forces and work to liberate and protect villages throughout Ninewa.

KRG publishes monthly production and export revenue overview for August 2016

The KRG Ministry of Natural Resources published its monthly production and revenue figures for August 2016.

MNR reported that Kurdistan produced an average of 411,727 barrels per day of crude oil and 306.6 million cubic feet of natural gas per day. Through the month, 12,763,566 barrels of crude were sold to Ceyhan, netting an average of $32.44 per barrel.

Read the full report here.

MERI President Dr Dlawer Ala'Aldeen speaks at KRG on post-ISIS Mosul



The KRG Representation in Washington hosted Dr Dlawer Ala'Aldeen, President of the Middle East Research Institute, a independent think tank based in Erbil, for a discussion on the challenges surrounding the Mosul liberation and subsequent stabilization.

At an event attended by members of the Kurdish-American community, academics, friends of Kurdistan, and members of the media, Dr Ala'Aldeen highlighted the numerous political, economic, and social challenges that will need to be confronted. He emphasized the importance of humanitarian aid planning prior to the liberation, to accommodate the hundreds of thousands of people who will be displaced.

Prime Minister Barzani, US Senator discuss the anticipated liberation of Mosul



Prime Minister Nechirvan Barzani received the US Senator John Cornyn (R-TX) and his accompanying delegation.

Senator Cornyn highlighted the role of Kurdistan Region Peshmerga forces in the fight against terrorism and thanked, on behalf of the American people, the KRG for having accommodated and offered assistance to a large number of displaced persons and refugees who fled ISIS violence.

Prime Minister Barzani thanked Senator John Cornyn for his visit and pointed out that the Kurdistan Region has always been sheltering victims of oppression. However, he said, the Region's resources are limited and the international community, particularly the United States, needs to increase its support to the Region.

Read a press release here.

Assyrian Universal Alliance leaders visit KRG office in Washington



The KRG Representation in the United States welcomed leaders of the Assyrian Universal Alliance, a leadership council comprised of representatives of Assyrian communities and organizations worldwide. KRG Representative Bayan Sami Abdul Rahman and Director of Minority Outreach Dasko Shirwani welcomed Carlo Ganjeh, chairman of Assyrian Universal Alliance Americas Chapter, and Joseph Rasho.

They had a wide-ranging discussion about the role of the Assyrian community in the United States, the work of both the KRG and Assyrian, Chaldean and Syriac church leaders in helping the displaced communities in Iraq and in raising awareness of the genocide.

Kurdistan in the media

Najmaldin Karim: We're watching for ISIS child suicide bombers - CNN
August 23, 2016
Interview with Governor of Kirkuk Najmaldin Karim

From Tribe to Nation: Iraqi Kurdistan on the Cusp of Statehood - Wilson Center
September 14, 2016
Renowned expert Amberin Zaman writes, 'there is growing recognition that after decades of dogged, if at times unorthodox, efforts to build their own state, the

Iraqi Kurds are on the cusp of formally declaring independence. It is no longer a matter of "if" but "when." '

U.S. offers humanitarian aid as Iraq prepares Mosul offensive - Reuters
September 14, 2016
The United States said on Wednesday it would give Iraq $181 million in humanitarian aid, anticipating a wave of displaced people when Iraqi forces launch a drive to recapture the northern city of Mosul from Islamic State.

ISIS 'Will Fight to the Death' for Mosul, Says Top Peshmerga General - Defense One
September 22, 2016
When Kurdish Peshmerga, Iraqi army, and U.S.-led coalition forces move to liberate nearby Mosul, possibly within two weeks, Islamic State fighters will not abandon their prized city and quietly slink away as many in Washington have predicted, according to the Peshmerga's top military officer.

IS buried thousands in 72 mass graves, AP finds - Associated Press
August 30, 2016
In exclusive interviews, photos and research, The Associated Press has documented and mapped 72 of the mass graves, the most comprehensive survey so far, with many more expected to be uncovered as the Islamic State group's territory shrinks.

Life After ISIS: One Girl's Story From Slavery to Freedom - ABC News
September 22, 2016
Julia came to Stockholm to reveal for the first time publicly the torture she endured as a 13-year-old Yazidi girl ripped from her family's Iraqi village and thrown into a violent life of ISIS slavery, becoming one of the last known captives to be held with American Kayla Mueller before Mueller was killed.

Veterans help fill gaps in refugee school projects in Iraq - Associated Press
August 27, 2016
A nonprofit group with New Hampshire roots is putting a new spin on back-to-school shopping by helping equip 10 classrooms for refugee children in Iraq.

UN desperate to find land for new camps in Iraq ahead of Mosul assault -Reuters
August 23, 2016
U.N. refugee officials bracing for an exodus of hundreds of thousands of people from the Iraqi city of Mosul said on Tuesday they were struggling to find land for camps to house them.

What Yazidi Refugees Fleeing ISIS Want Americans to Know - Observer
August 31, 2016
The first thing one notices upon entering the Yazidi refugee camp is the children. They seem to be everywhere-chasing each other between the UN tents, playing games in the dirt, climbing trees clinging to life in the unwatered soil.

Iraq, Kurdistan jointly export Kirkuk oil again: trading sources - Reuters
September 1, 2016
Iraqi state oil firm SOMO and Iraq's semi-autonomous region of Kurdistan have begun jointly exporting crude from the giant Kirkuk oilfield again after cutting a preliminary deal on revenue-sharing, trading sources said on Thursday.

Unemployment rate in Kurdistan is 14% - Rudaw

September 22, 2016
"The unemployment, before in 2013, was 6.5%, which by world standards is reasonable. But in 2014 the rate increased to 14%," Ali Sindi, the KRG's minister of planning, said at the KRG Social Protection Strategic Framework conference in Erbil on Wednesday.

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Fwd: Kurdistan after Mosul - A conversation with Dr Dlawer Ala'Aldeen

3 messages

J. Michael Slocum <jmichaelslocum@slocumboddie.com> Fri, Sep 2, 2016 at 2:53 PM
Reply-To: jmichaelslocum@slocumboddie.com
To: farakrg@gmail.com

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---------- Forwarded message ----------
From: **Kurdistan Regional Government - USA** <us@gov.krd>
Date: Fri, Sep 2, 2016 at 12:14 PM
Subject: Kurdistan after Mosul - A conversation with Dr Dlawer Ala'Aldeen
To: jmichaelslocum@slocumboddie.com

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Kurdistan Regional Government
Representation in the United States

Washington, DC

تکایە بڕۆ خوارەوەی لاپەڕەکە بۆ نوسخە کوردییەکە

The Kurdistan Regional Government
Representation in the United States

invites you to join



Dr. Dlawer Ala'Aldeen
President of the Middle East Research Institute

and



Bayan Sami Abdul Rahman
KRG Representative to the United States

September 9, 2016
Doors open at 6:00 pm
Discussion begins at 6:30 pm

at the

KRG Representation in the United States
1532 16th St NW
Washington, DC

for a discussion on

Kurdistan and the Middle East after the liberation of Mosul

Click here to RSVP

Mosul, the second-largest city in Iraq, has been under control of ISIS since June 2014. After more than two years, Peshmerga and Iraqi Security Forces are gearing up for a massive operation to liberate the city.

Humanitarian organizations anticipate that the fighting will displace as many as one million people, many of whom will seek refuge in the Kurdistan Region.

In a conversation moderated by Representative Abdul Rahman, Dr. Ala'Aldeen will discuss the liberation operation, the humanitarian response, and the future of governance in the region that will reflect the wishes and needs of all communities, especially the Yezidis, Christians and other minorities who are enduring genocide.

نوێنەرایەتی حکومەتی هەرێمی کوردستان

لە ویلایەتە یەکگرتووەکانی ئەمریکا

بانگهێشتت دەکات بۆ



دکتۆر دلاوەر عەلائەدین

سەرۆکی [ئینستیتوتی خۆرهەلاتی نێوین بۆ لێکۆڵینەوە](#)

و



بەیان سامی عبدالرحمن

نوێنەری حکومەتی هەرێمی کوردستان لە ویلایەتە یەکگرتووەکانی ئەمریکا

ڕۆژی ٩ ی ئەیلولی 2016

دەرگا لە کاتژمێر 6:00 پاش نیوەڕۆ دەکرێتەوە و
بابەتەکە لە 6:30 دەست پێدەکات

لە

نوێنەرایەتی حکومەتی هەرێمی کوردستان لە ویلایەتە یەکگرتووەکان
1532 16th St NW
Washington, DC

بۆ تاوتوێی

کوردستان و خۆرهەڵاتی نێوین پاش ئازادکردنی موسڵ

بۆ تۆمارکردنی ناوی خۆت، لێرە کرتە بکە

موسڵ، دووەم گەورەترین شاری عێراق، لە حوزەیرانی ٢٠١٤ هوە لەژێر چنگی داعشە. دوای زیاتر لە دوو ساڵ، پێشمەرگە و هێزەکانی عێراق خۆیان ئامادە دەکەن بۆ ئۆپەراسیۆنێکی گەورە بۆ ئازادکردنی شارەکە.

ڕێکخراوەکانی مرۆیی پێشبینی ئەوە دەکەن کە شەڕەکە ببێتە مایەی ئاوارەبوونی نزیکەی یەک ملیۆن کەس، و زۆربەشیان پەنا بۆ هەرێمی کوردستان دەبەن.

لە تاوتوێیەکدا کە نوێنەری حکومەتی هەرێمی کوردستان، بەیان سامی، ڕێکی دەخات،

دکتۆر دلاوەر عەلائەدین تیشک دەخاتە سەر ئۆپەراسیۆنی ئازادکردنی شارەکە، بەرسڤی مرۆیی، و ئایندەی حوکمکردنی ناوچەکە، بەڕێزیان هەروەها باسی هیوا و پێویستییەکانی ئەو کۆمەڵگانە دەکاتەوە کە ڕووبەڕووی جینۆساید بوونەتەوە، بە تایبەتی ئێزیدی و کریستیان و پێکهاتەکانی تری کۆمەڵگە.

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J. Michael Slocum <jmichaelslocum@slocumboddie.com> Mon, Sep 5, 2016 at 5:57 PM
Reply-To: jmichaelslocum@slocumboddie.com
To: farakrg@gmail.com

J. Michael Slocum
Slocum & Boddie, PC
5400 Shawnee Rd. Suite 300
Alexandria, VA 22312
703-451-9001
703-451-8557 (fax)
jmichaelslocum@slocumboddie.com

---------- Forwarded message ----------
From: **Kurdistan Regional Government - USA** <us@gov.krd>
[Quoted text hidden]

J. Michael Slocum <jmichaelslocum@slocumboddie.com> Wed, Sep 7, 2016 at 6:37 PM
Reply-To: jmichaelslocum@slocumboddie.com
To: farakrg@gmail.com

J. Michael Slocum
Slocum & Boddie, PC
5400 Shawnee Rd. Suite 300
Alexandria, VA 22312
703-451-9001

703-451-8557 (fax)
jmichaelslocum@slocumboddie.com

---------- Forwarded message ----------
From: **Kurdistan Regional Government - USA** <us@gov.krd>
Date: Wed, Sep 7, 2016 at 4:20 PM
Subject: Kurdistan after Mosul - A conversation with Dr Dlawer Ala'Aldeen
To: jmichaelslocum@slocumboddie.com

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Washington, DC

تکایە بڕۆ خوارەوەی لاپەڕەکە بۆ نوسخە کوردییەکە

The Kurdistan Regional Government
Representation in the United States

in association with

United States Kurdistan Business Council (USKBC)

invites you to join



Dr. Dlawer Ala'Aldeen

President of the Middle East Research Institute

and



Bayan Sami Abdul Rahman
KRG Representative to the United States

September 9, 2016
Doors open at 6:00 pm
Discussion begins at 6:30 pm

at the

KRG Representation in the United States
1532 16th St NW
Washington, DC

for a discussion on

Kurdistan and the Middle East after the liberation of Mosul

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Mosul, the second-largest city in Iraq, has been under control of ISIS since June 2014. After more than two years, Peshmerga and Iraqi Security Forces are gearing up for a massive operation to liberate the city.

Humanitarian organizations anticipate that the fighting will displace as many as one million people, many of whom will seek refuge in the Kurdistan Region.

In a conversation moderated by Representative Abdul Rahman, Dr. Ala'Aldeen will discuss the liberation operation, the humanitarian response, and the future of governance in the region that will reflect the wishes and needs of all communities, especially the Yezidis, Christians and other minorities who are enduring genocide.

نوێنەرایەتی حکومەتی هەرێمی کوردستان

لە ویلایەتە یەکگرتووەکانی ئەمریکا

بە هاوکاریی لەگەڵ

ئەنجومەنی بزنسی ویلایەتە یەکگرتووەکانی ئەمریکا و کوردستان (USKBC)

بانگهێشتت دەکات بۆ تاوتوێیەک لەلایەن



دکتۆر دلاوەر عەلائەدین

سەرۆکی ئینستیتوتی خۆرهەڵاتی نێوین بۆ لێکۆڵینەوە

و



بەیان سامی عبدالرحمن

نوێنەری حکومەتی هەرێمی کوردستان لە ویلایەتە یەکگرتووەکانی ئەمریکا

ڕۆژی ٩ ی ئەیلولی 2016

دەرگا لە کاتژمێر 6:00 پاش نیوەڕۆ دەکرێتەوە و
بابەتەکە لە 6:30 دەست پێدەکات

لە

نوێنەرایەتی حکومەتی هەرێمی کوردستان لە ویلایەتە یەکگرتووەکان
1532 16th St NW
Washington, DC

بۆ تاوتوێی

کوردستان و خۆرهەڵاتی نێوین پاش ئازادکردنی موسڵ

بۆ تۆمارکردنی ناوی خۆت، لێرە کرتە بکە

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لە تاوتوێیەکدا کە نوێنەری حکومەتی هەرێمی کوردستان، بەیان سامی، ڕێکی دەخات،

دکتۆر دلاوەر عەلائەدین تیشک دەخاتە سەر ئۆپەراسیۆنی ئازادکردنی شارەکە، بەرسڤی مرۆیی، و ئایندەی حوکمکردنی ناوچەکە، بەڕێزیان هەروەها باسی هیوا و پێویستییەکانی ئەو کۆمەڵگانە دەکاتەوە کە ڕووبەڕووی جینۆساید بوونەتەوە، بە تایبەتی ئێزیدی و کریستیان و پێکهاتەکانی تری کۆمەڵگە.

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Fwd: Kurdistan to Hold Independence Referendum on September 25, 2017

1 message

J. Michael Slocum <jmichaelslocum@slocumboddie.com> Mon, Aug 14, 2017 at 3:48 PM
To: farakrg@gmail.com

---------- Forwarded message ----------
From: **Kurdistan Regional Government - USA** <us@gov.krd>
Date: Wed, Jun 7, 2017 at 6:11 PM
Subject: Kurdistan to Hold Independence Referendum on September 25, 2017
To: jmichaelslocum@slocumboddie.com

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Washington, DC

تکایە بڕۆ خوارەوەی لاپەڕەکە بۆ نوسخە کوردییەکە

Kurdistan to Hold Independence Referendum on September 25, 2017

Today, following a meeting by President Masoud Barzani and representatives of the Kurdistan political parties that are in the government and parliament, it was announced that a referendum on independence will be held on Monday September 25, 2017. The referendum will also include Kurdistani areas outside the Kurdistan Region.

Among the groups that participated in the meeting were

representatives of the Christian and Turkmen communities. Although Gorran and the Kurdistan Islamic Group chose not to participate in the meeting, they will be approached to be part of the process.

President Barzani has asked the Kurdistan Independent High Electoral and Referendum Commission to make the necessary arrangements to hold parliamentary and presidential elections within the legal timeframe.

For more information, see links to English (click here) and Kurdish (click here)

کوردستان لە ڕۆژی 25 ی ئەیلولی 2017 ڕاپرسیی سەربەخۆیی ئەنجام دەدات

ئەمڕۆ، چوارشەممە ٧ی ٦ی ٢٠١٧ لە کۆبوونەوەی نێوان سەرۆکی هەرێمی کوردستان بەڕێز مەسعود بارزانی لەگەڵ نوێنەرە باڵاکانی پارتە سیاسییەکانی ناو پەرلەمان و حکومەتی هەرێمی کوردستان، بڕیاردرا ڕۆژی دووشەممە ٢٥ی ٩ی ٢٠١٧ گشتپرسی (ریفراندۆم) ئەنجام بدرێت و ناوچە کوردستانیەکانی دەرەوەی هەرێمی کوردستان بەشداری لە گشتپرسییەکە دەکەن.

جێگەی باسە، نوێنەرانی باڵای پێکهاتەکانی کریستیان و تورکمان بەشداربوون لە کۆبوونەوەکە. هەرچەندە گۆڕان و کۆمەڵی ئیسلامی بەشداریی کۆبوونەوەکەیان نەکرد، داوایان لێدەکرێت کە بەشداری لە پرۆسەکە بکەن.

هەروەها سەرۆکی هەرێمی کوردستان، "کۆمسیۆنی باڵای سەربەخۆی هەڵبژاردنەکان و ڕاپرسیی هەرێمی کوردستان"ی بۆ دیاریکردنی وادەی هەڵبژاردنەکانی کوردستان ڕاسپارد، و بڕیاردرا هەڵبژاردنەکانی سەرۆکی هەرێمی کوردستان و پەرلەمانی کوردستان لە وادەی یاسایی خۆیدا ئەنجام بدرێن.



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Fwd: May 16 - HE Masrour Barzani at Heritage Foundation

1 message

J. Michael Slocum <jmichaelslocum@slocumboddie.com> Mon, Aug 14, 2017 at 3:47 PM
To: farakrg@gmail.com

---------- Forwarded message ----------
From: **Kurdistan Regional Government - USA** <us@gov.krd>
Date: Wed, May 10, 2017 at 3:54 PM
Subject: May 16 - HE Masrour Barzani at Heritage Foundation
To: jmichaelslocum@slocumboddie.com

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تکایە بڕۆ خوارەوەی لاپەڕەکە بۆ نوسخە کوردییەکە

The Kurdistan Regional Government
Representation in the United States

invites you to join

H.E. Masrour Barzani

Chancellor of the Kurdistan Region Security Council

at

The Heritage Foundation

Tuesday, May 16, 2017

10:45 AM to 12:00 p.m.

The Heritage Foundation's Allison Auditorium
214 Massachusetts Avenue, NE
Washington, DC 20002

for a discussion

"Iraq After ISIS Is Defeated In Mosul:
A View From Kurdistan"

hosted by

Nile Gardiner
Director, Margaret Thatcher Center for Freedom, and Bernard and Barbara Lomas Fellow

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or call (202) 675-1752

As a coalition of Peshmerga, Iraqi Security Forces and American forces continue to roll back ISIS militants in Mosul and beyond, numerous questions remain about the future of social and political contracts in Iraq. Though Mosul represents a turn of a new chapter for Iraq, with significance far beyond a devastating three year war, defeating ISIS does not end a crisis underpinned by distrust. How will displaced families, traumatized by genocide and violence, return to homes flattened by war? What political conditions are needed to prevent a resurgence of ISIS and inter-communal conflict? Can political reckoning allow the Iraqi state to move forward? Kurdish political parties, meanwhile, have agreed to hold a referendum on independence this year - what are the regional implications? Can a managed, amicable divorce from Iraq secure mutual interests?

Masrour Barzani is the Chancellor of the Kurdistan Region Security Council of the Kurdistan Region, and an important figure in the US-led Global Coalition. He will give insights to the anti-ISIL campaign; immediate and long-term political challenges in Iraq and the broader Middle East, and future relations between Kurdistan, Iraq and the United States. Chancellor Barzani will also outline strategies to address Iraq's unending conflict and the roadmap towards independence.

News media inquiries, call (202) 675-1761

Please allow plenty of time to park your vehicle and to be seated.

نوێنەرایەتی حکومەتی هەرێمی کوردستان

لە ویلایەتە یەکگرتووەکانی ئەمریکا

بانگهێشتت دەکات بۆ ئامادەبوون لە دیداری

جەنابی مەسرور بارزانی

ڕاوێژکاری ئەنجومەنی ئاسایشی هەرێمی کوردستان

لە

The Heritage Foundation

دامەزراوەی هێریتیج

سێشەممە، 16 ی ئایاری 2017

پێش نیوەڕۆ تا 12:00 ی نیوەڕۆ 10:45

The Heritage Foundation's Allison Auditorium
214 Massachusetts Avenue, NE
Washington, DC 20002

بۆ تاوتوێی

عێراق پاش بەزاندنی داعش لە موسڵ،

ڕوانگەیەک لە کوردستانەوە

لە لایەن

Nile Gardiner

بەڕێوەبەر، بنکەی مارگریت تاتچەر بۆ ئازادی، و هەڤاڵ لە بیرنارد ئەند بیرنارد لۆماس

بۆ تۆمارکردنی ناوی خۆت، لێرە کرتە بکە

یان تەلەفون بکە بۆ ژمارەی

(202) 675 1752

لە کاتێکدا هاوپەیمانێتی پێشمەرگە و هێزەکانی ئاسایشی عێراق و هێزەکانی ئەمریکا توانیویانە پاشەکشە بە گروپی تیرۆریستی داعش بکەن، چەندین پرسیار بە هەڵواسراوی ماوەنەتەوە سەبارەت بە ئایندەی گرێبەستی کۆمەڵایەتی و سیاسی لە عێراق. ئەگەرچی موسڵ خاڵی وەرچەرخانی نوێیە بۆ عێراق، پاش سێ ساڵ لە جەنگی وێرانکەر، بەڵام بەزاندنی داعش کۆتایی بەو قەیرانە ناهێنێت کە بناغەکەی نەمانی متمانەیە. چۆن ئاوارەکان و ستەمدیدەی جینۆساید و تووندوتیژی بگەڕێنەوە بۆ زێدی خۆیان لە کاتێکدا جەنگ ماڵەکانی وێران کردوون؟ پێویستە چی جۆرە هەلومەرجێکی سیاسی دابین بکرێت بۆ ڕێگری کردن لە سەرهەڵدانەوەی داعش و لە پێکدادانی ناوخۆیی کۆمەڵگەکان؟ ئاخۆ حساباتی سیاسی دەتوانێت بەردەوامی بە دەوڵەتی عێراق بدات؟ هاوکات، حزبە سیاسییەکانی کوردستان ڕێک کەوتوون لەسەر ئەنجامدانی ریفراندۆم ئەمساڵ بۆ سەربەخۆیی – کاردانەوە هەرێمایەتییەکان چی دەبێت؟ ئایا جیابوونەوەیەکی دۆستانە لە عێراق دەتوانێت بەرژەوەندییە هاوبەشەکان بپارێزێت؟

جەنابی کاک مەسرور بارزانی، ڕاوێژکاری ئەنجومەنی ئاسایشی هەرێمی کوردستان و کەسایەتییەکی گرنگ لە هاوپەیمانێتی جیهانی بە ڕابەرایەتیی ئەمریکا، باسی تێروانینی هەرێمی کوردستان دەکات لە بارەی هەڵمەتی دژی داعش و ئەو ئاستەنگە درێژخایەن و سەختانە کە ڕووبەڕووی عێراق و خۆرهەڵاتی نێوین دەبنەوە و ئایندەی پەیوەندییەکانی نێوان کوردستان و عێراق و ئەمریکا دەکات. جەنابی مەسرور بارزانی هەروەها تیشک دەخاتە سەر ستراتیژەکانی ڕووبەڕووبونەوەی ناکۆکیە بەردەوامەکانی ناو عێراق و نەخشەڕێگەی سەربەخۆیی.

میدیا، تکایە پەیوەندی بکە بە 1761-675 (202)

تکایە کات دابنێ بۆ ڕاگرتنی ئۆتۆمبیلەکەت، و دابینکردنی کورسی و دانیشتن

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Fwd: Memorial Day message

1 message

J. Michael Slocum <jmichaelslocum@slocumboddie.com> Mon, May 30, 2016 at 9:23 AM
Reply-To: jmichaelslocum@slocumboddie.com
To: farakrg@gmail.com

J. Michael Slocum
Slocum & Boddie, PC
5400 Shawnee Rd. Suite 300
Alexandria, VA 22312
703-451-9001
703-451-8557 (fax)
jmichaelslocum@slocumboddie.com

---------- Forwarded message ----------
From: **Kurdistan Regional Government - USA** <us@gov.krd>
Date: Mon, May 30, 2016 at 9:01 AM
Subject: Memorial Day message
To: jmichaelslocum@slocumboddie.com

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Kurdistan Regional Government
Representation in the United States

Washington, DC

On the occasion of Memorial Day, I wish to extend the gratitude and condolences of the people of the Kurdistan Region of Iraq to the families, friends, and colleagues of US military personnel who have lost their lives fighting tyranny and injustice, not only in Iraq, but throughout the world. Though there are no words that can comfort those they left behind, may their

loved ones find some solace in knowing that the results of their heroism are known to every man, woman, and child of Kurdistan.

Supported by the bravery and selflessness of American men and women in uniform over the years - who provided humanitarian aid and safety in Operation Provide Comfort in 1991, liberated us from a dictator in 2003, and are today providing training and air support against the terrorists of ISIS - the Kurdistan Region has become a beacon of stability and a safe haven for those fleeing violence.

On behalf of the people of Kurdistan, I thank all American service members, who serve and sacrifice so that others may live free. Our Peshmerga are proud to stand shoulder to shoulder with you against terrorism and injustice.

Bayan Sami Abdul Rahman
Kurdistan Regional Government
Representative to the United States

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Fwd: Middle East Institute - Operation Provide Comfort: Reflections and Lessons for Today - June 6

1 message

J. Michael Slocum <jmichaelslocum@slocumboddie.com> Sun, Jun 5, 2016 at 4:01 PM
Reply-To: jmichaelslocum@slocumboddie.com
To: farakrg@gmail.com

J. Michael Slocum
Slocum & Boddie, PC
5400 Shawnee Rd. Suite 300
Alexandria, VA 22312
703-451-9001
703-451-8557 (fax)
jmichaelslocum@slocumboddie.com

---------- Forwarded message ----------
From: **Kurdistan Regional Government - USA** <us@gov.krd>
Date: Sun, Jun 5, 2016 at 9:38 AM
Subject: Middle East Institute - Operation Provide Comfort: Reflections and Lessons for Today - June 6
To: jmichaelslocum@slocumboddie.com

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Kurdistan Regional Government
Representation in the United States

Washington, DC

KURDISTAN REGIONAL GOVERNMENT-IRAQ
Representation in the United States

invites you to join

Middle East Institute

for

Operation Provide Comfort
Reflections and Lessons for Today

National Press Club, Washington, DC,
Monday, June 6, 2016

RSVP here



9:30AM-10:00AM - Arrival and Registration

10:00AM - Welcoming Remarks
Amb. Wendy Chamberlin (Confirmed)
President, Middle East Institute

Bayan Sami Abdul Rahman (Confirmed)
Kurdistan Regional Government (KRG) Representative to the United States of America

10:10AM- Introduction of Opening Keynote Speaker
General Anthony Zinni, USMC, Retired (Confirmed)
Honorary Chairman, Middle East Institute (MEI)

10:15AM-10:30AM
H.E. Falah Mustafa Bakir (Confirmed)
Head of KRG Department of Foreign Relations

delivering remarks of

H.E. Masoud Barzani
President of the Kurdistan Region

10:30AM-12:00PM - Panel 1: The Enduring Lessons of Operation Provide Comfort

Panelists

LTG (R) Jay M. Garner (Confirmed)
Commanded OPC operations in the field from the U.S. theater headquarters at Incirlik Airbase

Ambassador Robert M. Kimmitt (Confirmed)
Under Secretary of State for Political Affairs during OPC

Andrew Natsios (Confirmed)
Director the USAID Office of Foreign Disaster Assistance during OPC

Khaled Salih (Confirmed)
Former KRG spokesman and former vice chancellor of the University of Kurdistan at Hewler

Karen DeYoung (moderator) (Confirmed)
Associate Editor, The Washington Post

12:15PM -1:45PM- Luncheon and Keynote Remarks
GEN Anthony Zinni, USMC (Ret.) (Confirmed)
Chief of Staff of Combined Task Force Operation Provide Comfort
Honorary Chairman of the Board of Governors of the Middle East Institute.

2:00PM-3:30PM - Panel 2: Applying OPC's Best Practices to Today's Humanitarian Crises

Panelists

Sarhang Hamasaeed
(Confirmed)
Senior Program Officer, Middle East & Africa, US Institute for Peace

Ambassador James F. Jeffrey (Confirmed)
Philip Solondz Distinguished Fellow, Washington Institute for Near East Policy; Former U.S. Ambassador to Turkey and to Iraq

Denise Natali (Confirmed)
Distinguished Research Fellow, Institute for National Strategic Studies, National Defense University

Colonel Richard H.M. Outzen (Confirmed)
Senior Military Fellow, Institute for National Strategic Studies, National Defense University

Paul Salem, Moderator (Confirmed)
Vice President of Policy and Research, Middle East Institute



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Fwd: Oct 29 - Kurdish National Congress Annual Conference in Ypsilante, Michigan

1 message

J. Michael Slocum <jmichaelslocum@slocumboddie.com> Wed, Oct 26, 2016 at 7:15 AM
Reply-To: jmichaelslocum@slocumboddie.com
To: farakrg@gmail.com

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---------- Forwarded message ----------
From: **Kurdistan Regional Government - USA** <us@gov.krd>
Date: Tue, Oct 25, 2016 at 11:06 AM
Subject: Oct 29 - Kurdish National Congress Annual Conference in Ypsilante, Michigan
To: jmichaelslocum@slocumboddie.com

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Representation in the United States

Washington, DC

تکایە بڕۆ خوارەوەی لاپەڕەکە بۆ نوسخە کوردییەکە

The Kurdistan Regional Government
Representation in the United States

invites you to to join the

Kurdish National Congress of North America
Annual Conference



RSVP HERE

Kurdish unity - The Roadmap to Independent Kurdistan

Eastern Michigan University
312 EMU Student Center
Ypsilanti, Michigan 48197

October 29, 2016
8:00 am - 5:00 pm
EMU Student Center Room 310 AB

October 30, 2016
10:30 am - 2:00 pm
EMU Student Center Great Ballrooom B

Conference will include panel discussions on the challenges, threats, and opportunities facing the Kurdish Nation.

Topics to be discussed include:
Economic development
Human rights and women
Media and the press
Political condition
Youth involvement

Since 1988, the Kurdish National Congress of North America has played a leading role in promoting the Kurdish cause in the United States and Canada. Through conferences, cultural events, humanitarian efforts and social campaigns, the KNC brings together Kurdish community members, academics, politicians, and business leaders to support Kurdish advocacy.

نوێنەرایەتیی حکومەتی هەرێمی کوردستان
لە ویلایەتە یەکگرتووەکانی ئەمریکا

بانگهێشتت دەکات بۆ

کۆنفرانسی ساڵانەی

کۆنگرەی نەتەوەیی کورد لە باکووری ئەمریکا



ناوی خۆت لێرە تۆمار بکە

یەکێتی کوردان، نەخشەڕێگەی سەربەخۆیی کوردستان

Eastern Michigan University زانکۆی ئیسترن میشیگن
312 EMU Student Center
Ypsilanti, Michigan 48197

EMU Student Center Great Ballroom B

29 ی 10 ی 2016
8ی پێش نیوەڕۆ تا 5 ی ئێوارە
EMU Student Center Room 310 AB

30 ی 10 ی 2016
10:30 پێش نیوەڕۆ تا 2:00 ی پاش نیوەڕۆ
EMU Student Center Great Ballroom B

لە کۆنفرانسەکەدا پانێڵی تاوتوێ ساز دەکرێت سەبارەت بەو ئاستەنگ و هەڕەشانەی ڕووبەڕووی نەتەوەی کورد دەبێتەوە، هەروەها دەرفەتەکانی پێش نەتەوەی کورد.

بابەتەکان بریتی دەبن لە
گەشەسەندنی ئابووریی
مافەکانی مرۆڤ و ژنان
میدیا و ڕۆژنامەگەری
بارودۆخی سیاسیی
بەشداریی لاوان

لە ساڵی 1988 هوە کۆنگرەی نەتەوەیی کورد لە باکووری ئەمریکا ڕۆڵێکی پێشڕەوی بینیوە لە ناساندن و بەرەوپێشبردنی دۆزی کورد لە وێلایەتە یەکگرتووەکان و کەنەدا. کۆنگرەی نەتەوەیی کورد لە ڕێی کۆنفرانس و ڕێوڕەسمی فەرهەنگی و کاری مرۆیی و هەڵمەتی کۆمەڵایەتییەوە ڕەوەندی کوردی و ئەکادیمی و سیاسەتوان و ڕابەرانی بزنسی کۆکردۆتەوە بۆ پشتگیریی لە دۆزی کورد و داکۆکیکردن لێی.

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Fwd: October 20 - Discussion at CTR-SAIS 'Kurdistan on the cusp of statehood'

1 message

J. Michael Slocum <jmichaelslocum@slocumboddie.com> Fri, Oct 14, 2016 at 10:15 AM
Reply-To: jmichaelslocum@slocumboddie.com
To: farakrg@gmail.com

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From: **Kurdistan Regional Government - USA** <us@gov.krd>
Date: Fri, Oct 14, 2016 at 9:40 AM
Subject: October 20 - Discussion at CTR-SAIS 'Kurdistan on the cusp of statehood'
To: jmichaelslocum@slocumboddie.com

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Representation in the United States

Washington, DC

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The Kurdistan Regional Government Representation in the United States
invites you to to join
The Center for Transatlantic Relations at
Johns Hopkins University School of Advanced International Studies

Thursday, October 20
2 PM



Panel discussion

From Tribe to Nation: Iraqi Kurdistan on the Cusp of Statehood

by Amberin Zaman

Public Policy Fellow, Woodrow Wilson International Center for Scholars

RSVP HERE

BOB 500
The Johns Hopkins University School of Advanced International Studies
1717 Massachusetts Avenue, NW
20036 Washington, DC

Panelists

- **Amberin Zaman**, Public Policy Fellow, Woodrow Wilson International Center for Scholars
- **Bayan Sami Abdul Rahman**, Kurdistan Regional Government (KRG) Representative to the United States of America
- **Hardin Lang**, Senior Fellow, Center for American Progress

Moderator

- **Sasha Toperich**, Senior Fellow, CTR - SAIS

نوێنەرایەتی حکومەتی هەرێمی کوردستان
لە ویلایەتە یەکگرتووەکانی ئەمریکا
بانگهێشتت دەکات بۆ ئامادەبوون لە
ناوەندی پەیوەندییەکانی ترانزئەتلانتیک لە
زانکۆی جان هۆپکنز، پەیمانگەی لێکۆڵینەوەی گەشەسەندووی
نێودەوڵەتی

پێنجشەممە، 20 ی تشرینی یەکەم
2 ی پاش نیوەڕۆ



پانێڵێک بۆ تاوتوێی

لە هۆزەوە بۆ نەتەوە: کوردستانی عێراق لە کەناری بوون بە دەوڵەت

عەمبەرین زەمان

سیاسەتی گشتیی، بنکەی وودرۆ ویلسنی نێودەوڵەتی

بەڕێوەبردنی

لێرە ناوی خۆت تۆمار بکە

BOB 500 ناونیشان

The Johns Hopkins University School of Advanced International Studies
1717 Massachusetts Avenue, NW
20036 Washington, DC

پێشکەشکاران

- عەمبەرین زەمان، سیاسەتی گشتیی، هەڤاڵی ناوەندی وودرۆ ویلسنی نیودەوڵەتی بۆ لیکۆڵەران،
- بەیان سامی عەبدولرەحمان، نوێنەری حکومەتی هەرێمی کوردستان لە ویلایەتە یەکگرتووەکانی ئەمریکا
- هاردین لانگ، گەورە هەڤاڵ لە ناوەندی ئەمریکا بۆ گەشەسەندن.

ڕێکخەر

SAIS ساشا تۆپریچ، گەورە هەڤاڵ لە بنکەی بنکەی پەیوەندییەکانی ترانزێتلانتیک،

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Fwd: October 24 - Energy, Electricity, and Agriculture: Business Opportunities in Iraqi Kurdistan

1 message

J. Michael Slocum <jmichaelslocum@slocumboddie.com> Mon, Oct 17, 2016 at 6:04 PM
Reply-To: jmichaelslocum@slocumboddie.com
To: farakrg@gmail.com

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From: **Kurdistan Regional Government - USA** <us@gov.krd>
Date: Mon, Oct 17, 2016 at 2:49 PM
Subject: October 24 - Energy, Electricity, and Agriculture: Business Opportunities in Iraqi Kurdistan
To: jmichaelslocum@slocumboddie.com

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in partnership with

CENTER FOR TRANSATLANTIC RELATIONS

Johns Hopkins University School of Advanced International Studies

and

US-Kurdistan Business Council

invites you to join us

for a conference on energy, electricity, agriculture, tourism and other economic opportunities & reforms in the Kurdistan Region of Iraq

Corrected Date: Monday, October 24
9:00am - 5pm

Kenney Auditorium
Johns Hopkins University
Paul H. Nitze School of Advanced International Studies
1740 Massachusetts Ave NW

Speakers to include

H.E. Abdulstar Majeed
KRG Minister Agriculture and Water Resources

H.E. Hoger Shali
KRG Deputy Minister of Electricity

and representatives from the World Bank

Details to follow.

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Fwd: Peshmerga launch Operation Free Sinjar with Coalition support

1 message

J. Michael Slocum <jmichaelslocum@slocumboddie.com> Thu, Nov 12, 2015 at 2:46 PM
Reply-To: jmichaelslocum@slocumboddie.com
To: farakrg@gmail.com

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From: **Kurdistan Regional Government - USA** <us@gov.krd>
Date: Thu, Nov 12, 2015 at 2:32 PM
Subject: Peshmerga launch Operation Free Sinjar with Coalition support
To: jmichaelslocum@slocumboddie.com

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Kurdistan Regional Government
Representation in the United States

Washington, DC

Peshmerga launch Operation Free Sinjar with Coalition support

12 November 2015

Yesterday November 11, at approximately 2100hrs local time, international Coalition warplanes struck dozens of ISIL fighting positions ahead of Operation Free Sinjar, a Peshmerga-led ground offensive to retake the town of Sinjar from ISIL terrorists.



Operation Free Sinjar includes up to 7,500 Peshmerga from three fronts to cordon off Sinjar city, take control of ISIL's strategic supply routes, and establish a significant buffer zone to protect the city and its inhabitants from incoming artillery.

According to the Kurdistan Region Security Council, Coalition warplanes are providing close air support to Peshmerga forces throughout the operation.

Local, regional and international press teams have been embedded with Peshmerga units.

As of today, November 12, 1300hrs local time

West Front

Peshmerga forces have reached stretch of Highway 47 between West of Sinjar, cutting of Syria and preventing ISIL reinforcements into Sinjar area. Gabara and Jedala villages are now secured, as has an Iraqi military base.



East Front

Three villages - Gre Tl Shore, Fadheliya, Qen, Sino Sulakh - are now controlled by Peshmerga forces. They have secured a stretch of Highway 47 between Sinjar and Tal Afar at Um Shababit checkpoint. Remains of at least 11 ISIL terrorists have been left abandoned in the area.

After an intense firefight, Gulat village has also been cleared.

Five suicide car bombs have been destroyed - four by International Coalition airstrikes and the other by Peshmerga forces using Milan anti-tank rockets. Suicide car bombs continue to be mobilized against our forces in a desperate attempt to slow down the offensive.

Radio chatter of an ISIL emir can be heard instructing ISIL terrorists to stay and fight in Sinjar, adding that anyone fleeing the battlefield will be killed.

Initial reports indicate that over 100 ISIL terrorists have been killed, including at least one emir.

For updates, follow @KRSCPress using #FreeSinjar.

Information provided by Kurdistan Region Security Council

Media coverage

- Iraqi Kurds capture key road, cutting Islamic State supply line - LA Times
- U.S. backs new fight to take Iraqi town back from ISIS - CBS News
- Kurds Launch Offensive to Retake ISIS-Held Iraqi Town of Sinjar - NBC
- Kurdish Forces Launch Offensive To Take Back Key Iraqi Town Of Sinjar From ISIS - BuzzFeed
- Battle for Sinjar: Kurds 'advance on IS-held Iraqi town' - BBC
- Kurds launch offensive to take Sinjar from ISIS - CNN
- Live blogging from Rudaw

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Fwd: Peshmerga liberate nine villages in first day of Mosul operation

1 message

J. Michael Slocum <jmichaelslocum@slocumboddie.com> Tue, Oct 18, 2016 at 11:49 AM
Reply-To: jmichaelslocum@slocumboddie.com
To: farakrg@gmail.com

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From: **Kurdistan Regional Government - USA** <us@gov.krd>
Date: Tue, Oct 18, 2016 at 11:48 AM
Subject: Peshmerga liberate nine villages in first day of Mosul operation
To: jmichaelslocum@slocumboddie.com

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Kurdistan Regional Government
Representation in the United States

Washington, DC

October 18, 2016

Peshmerga liberate nine villages in first day of Mosul operation

Washington, DC, USA (us.gov.krd) - Yesterday, Peshmerga forces under the leadership of President Masoud Barzani launched an attack in East Mosul, liberating nine villages covering an area of approximately 200 square kilometers

and securing a significant stretch of the Erbil-Mosul road. The liberated villages include Bashkira, Tarjala, Kharbat Sultan, Karibirli, Bazgirtan, Shaquli, Badana Bchuk, Badna Gawra, and Shekh Ami. The operation included 4,000 Peshmerga in three fronts, according to the General Command of Peshmerga Forces of Kurdistan Region.

The Kurdish forces are fighting alongside Iraqi Security Forces in an unprecedented joint operation. In a statement prior to the operation, President Barzani said "The preparations were reached after an agreement between the Peshmerga forces and the Iraqi military forces. The military tasks and responsibilities were distributed in accordance to that agreement." Peshmerga commander Shex Jafar Mustafa said, "Kurdish forces will support the Iraqi army wherever they may need help." Additionally, global coalition warplanes pounded at least 17 ISIS positions in Khazir in support of the battle.

The UN High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) Fillippo Grandi arrived in Erbil Monday to discuss the humanitarian aid preparations for the hundreds of thousands of people expected to be displaced. He said, "There is a military strategy for this battle but that should include protection for the civilians."

In a statement, Kurdistan Region Prime Minister Nechirvan Barzani commended Kurdish forces and said, "The Peshmerga are proud that they have become the protectors of all the people of the region and have also become the fighters protecting the freedom of the whole world."

A statement from President Barzani on the liberation of Mosul:
http://www.presidency.krd/english/articledisplay.aspx?id=q+oIpBh7BG4=

Prime Minister Barzani's Statement on the launch of operation to liberate Mosul:
http://cabinet.gov.krd/a/d.aspx?s=040000&l=12&a=55024

Commander Shex Jaffar's remarks:
https://twitter.com/Rudawkurdish/status/787852205990748160

Fillippo Grandi, UNHCR remarks:
http://rudaw.net/english/middleeast/iraq/171020162

UN Flash Update:
http://reliefweb.int/report/iraq/iraq-mosul-humanitarian-response-flash-update-1-17-october-2016-enarku

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Fwd: POSTPONED - October 24th Kurdistan Region Business Conference

1 message

J. Michael Slocum <jmichaelslocum@slocumboddie.com> Tue, Oct 18, 2016 at 4:24 PM
Reply-To: jmichaelslocum@slocumboddie.com
To: farakrg@gmail.com

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From: **Kurdistan Regional Government - USA** <us@gov.krd>
Date: Tue, Oct 18, 2016 at 3:30 PM
Subject: POSTPONED - October 24th Kurdistan Region Business Conference
To: jmichaelslocum@slocumboddie.com

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Representation in the United States

Washington, DC

KURDISTAN REGIONAL GOVERNMENT
Representation in the United States

POSTPONED - October 24th Kurdistan Region Business Conference

We are sorry to have to inform you that the conference on "Energy, Electricity and Agriculture: Business Opportunities in Iraqi Kurdistan," due to take place on Monday October 24th has had to be postponed for reasons beyond our control. The new scheduled date is November 29th. We hope you can join us then. We apologize for any disappointment or inconvenience caused.

Details to follow

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Fwd: POSTPONED--April 11 at CTR - Discussion with HE Falah Mustafa Bakir

1 message

J. Michael Slocum <jmichaelslocum@slocumboddie.com> Mon, Apr 11, 2016 at 1:12 PM
Reply-To: jmichaelslocum@slocumboddie.com
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From: **Kurdistan Regional Government - USA** <us@gov.krd>
Date: Mon, Apr 11, 2016 at 12:02 PM
Subject: POSTPONED--April 11 at CTR - Discussion with HE Falah Mustafa Bakir
To: jmichaelslocum@slocumboddie.com

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Kurdistan Regional Government
Representation in the United States

Washington, DC

This event is postponed due to a sudden conflict in Minister Falah Mustafa's schedule

==========
==========

The Center for Transatlantic Relations at Johns Hopkins University SAIS
and
Conflict Management Program

cordially invite you to a public discussion on

The Future of Kurdistan in Iraq

with

H.E. Falah Mustafa Bakir

Head of the Department of Foreign Relations
Kurdistan Regional Government

POSTPONED

Monday, April 11th
2:00 p.m. - 3:00 p.m.

BOB 500
Johns Hopkins University
School of Advanced International Studies
1717 Massachusetts Ave., NW
Washington, DC 20036

Opening remarks and introduction:
Sasha Toperich, Senior Fellow and Director of the Mediterranean Basin Initiative at the Center for Transatlantic Relations, SAIS

Keynote Address:
Falah Mustafa Bakir, Head of the Department of Foreign Relations
Kurdistan Regional Government

Commentator:

Daniel Serwer, Professor and Director, Conflict Management Program, and Senior Fellow, Center for Transatlantic Relations, SAIS

Moderator:

Rebeen Pasha, WYLN Senior Fellow, Mediterranean Basin Initiative at the Center for Transatlantic Relations SAIS, and co-founder and President, American Friends of Kurdistan





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Fax: +1.202.821.1870

Kurdistan Regional Government - USA, 1532 16th Street, NW, Washington, DC 20036

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Fwd: Regarding announcement by Secretary of Defense Ashton Carter on support for Peshmerga

1 message

J. Michael Slocum <jmichaelslocum@slocumboddie.com> Wed, Apr 20, 2016 at 11:02 AM
Reply-To: jmichaelslocum@slocumboddie.com
To: farakrg@gmail.com

J. Michael Slocum
Slocum & Boddie, PC
5400 Shawnee Rd. Suite 300
Alexandria, VA 22312
703-451-9001
703-451-8557 (fax)
jmichaelslocum@slocumboddie.com

---------- Forwarded message ----------
From: **Kurdistan Regional Government - USA** <us@gov.krd>
Date: Wed, Apr 20, 2016 at 11:00 AM
Subject: Regarding announcement by Secretary of Defense Ashton Carter on support for Peshmerga
To: jmichaelslocum@slocumboddie.com

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Kurdistan Regional Government
Representation in the United States

Washington, DC

The Kurdistan Regional Government Representation in the United States welcomes US Secretary of Defense Ashton Carter's announcement on Monday that the Department of Defense will

provide $415 million in financial assistance to the Peshmerga forces of the Kurdistan Region.

We thank President Barack Obama, the Department of Defense, Congress, and the American people for their timely support for the Peshmerga, who are entrenched along a 650-mile front with the ISIS terror group and are the tip of spear in the US-led coalition's counter-ISIS campaign.

This new financial support by the US is critical as we battle terror and barbarism together. We appreciate the recognition that the current financial crisis -- brought on by the costly war with ISIS, the influx of 1.8 million displaced persons seeking refuge in Kurdistan and falling oil prices -- is dire and puts our mutual interests at risk.

The KRG has already begun to implement comprehensive austerity measures aimed at cutting operating expenses, and is embarking on reform programs to improve government efficiency and accountability. At the same time, our focus remains on the fight against ISIS and the liberation of Mosul.

This important financial assistance package underscores the close partnership that the US and Kurdistan have maintained in the fight against tyranny for decades. Once again, the US has demonstrated its commitment to supporting those who fight for freedom and democracy and who oppose extremist groups that threaten our security.

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Fwd: RSVP for August 19 commemoration of World Humanitarian Day

1 message

J. Michael Slocum <jmichaelslocum@slocumboddie.com> Tue, Aug 16, 2016 at 1:11 PM
Reply-To: jmichaelslocum@slocumboddie.com
To: farakrg@gmail.com

J. Michael Slocum
Slocum & Boddie, PC
5400 Shawnee Rd. Suite 300
Alexandria, VA 22312
703-451-9001
703-451-8557 (fax)
jmichaelslocum@slocumboddie.com

---------- Forwarded message ----------
From: **Kurdistan Regional Government - USA** <us@gov.krd>
Date: Tue, Aug 16, 2016 at 1:06 PM
Subject: RSVP for August 19 commemoration of World Humanitarian Day
To: jmichaelslocum@slocumboddie.com

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Representation in the United States

Washington, DC

تکایە بڕۆ خوارەوەی لاپەڕەکە بۆ نوسخە کوردییەکە

Friday, August 19, 2016
11:00 am

The Kurdistan Regional Government Representation in the United States

invites you to join us for a discussion

in commemoration of

World Humanitarian Day

1532 16th St NW
Washington, DC

RSVP HERE



Violence in Iraq and Syria has displaced more than 15 million people. In the Kurdistan Region alone, over 1.8 million Syrians and Iraqis have found refuge from terrorism, genocide, and war.

Over the past decades, international organizations have played a crucial role in alleviating the suffering of humanitarian disasters. This year marks the 25th anniversary of Operation Provide Comfort, a military and humanitarian operation that saved thousands of Kurdistani lives. Humanitarian organizations also provided important food, medicine, clothing, and livelihood support throughout the Oil-for-Food program, Operation Iraqi Freedom, and today.

We thank and honor these humanitarian workers who sometimes put themselves in harm's way to serve those who need it most.

هەینی، ١٩ ی ئابی ٢٠١٦
کاتژمێر 11:00 ی بەیانی

نوێنەرایەتیی حکومەتی هەرێمی
کوردستان
لە ویلایەتە یەکگرتووەکانی ئەمریکا

بانگهێشتت دەکات بۆ تاوتوێیەک

بۆ بەرز ڕاگرتنی

ڕۆژی جیهانیی مرۆیی

ناونیشان:
1532 16th St NW
Washington, DC

لێرەوە ناوی خۆت تۆمار بکە



زەبروزەنگ لە عێراق و سوریا بووەتە مایەی ئاوارەبوونی زیاتر لە ١٥ ملیۆن کەس. زیاتر لە ١,٨ ملیۆن ئاوارەی عێراقی و پەنابەری سوری پەنایان بۆ هەرێمی کوردستان هێناوە لە تاو تیرۆریزم، جینۆساید، و جەنگ.

لەو چەند دە ساڵانەی ڕابردوودا، ڕێکخراوە نێودەوڵەتییەکان ڕۆڵێکی پڕبایەخیان بینیوە لە کەمکردنەوەی ئازار و مەینەتییەکانی قوربانیانی کارەساتە مرۆییەکان. ئەمساڵ یادی ٢٥ هەمین ساڵیادی ئۆپەراسیۆنی پرۆڤاید کەمفۆرتە، کە ئۆپەراسیۆنێکی مرۆیی سەربازیی بوو و ژیانی هەزاران کوردستانیانی ڕزگار کرد. ڕێکخراوە مرۆییەکان هەروەها خۆراک و دەرمان و پۆشاک دابین دەکەن لە ڕێی بەرنامەی نەوت بەرامبەر خۆراک، ئۆپەراسیۆنی ئازادیی عێراق، ئێمە ئەمڕۆ

سوپاس و پێزانینی خۆمان دەردەبڕین بۆ کارمەندانی مرۆیی کە هەندێک جار ژیانی خۆیان خستۆتە مەترسییەوە بۆ خزمەتکردنی ئەو کەسانەی پێویستییان پێیەتی.

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Fwd: SAVE THE DATE Nov 29 - Energy, Electricity, and Agriculture: Business Opportunities in Iraqi Kurdistan

1 message

J. Michael Slocum <jmichaelslocum@slocumboddie.com> Thu, Nov 17, 2016 at 6:22 PM
Reply-To: jmichaelslocum@slocumboddie.com
To: farakrg@gmail.com

J. Michael Slocum
Slocum & Boddie, PC
5400 Shawnee Rd. Suite 300
Alexandria, VA 22312
703-451-9001
703-451-8557 (fax)
jmichaelslocum@slocumboddie.com

---------- Forwarded message ----------
From: **Kurdistan Regional Government - USA** <us@gov.krd>
Date: Thu, Nov 17, 2016 at 5:02 PM
Subject: SAVE THE DATE Nov 29 - Energy, Electricity, and Agriculture: Business Opportunities in Iraqi Kurdistan
To: jmichaelslocum@slocumboddie.com

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تکایە بڕۆ خوارەوەی لاپەڕەکە بۆ نوسخە کوردییەکە

The Kurdistan Regional Government
Representation in the United States

invites you to join

CENTER FOR TRANSATLANTIC RELATIONS

for

"Energy, Electricity, and Agriculture: Business Opportunities in Iraqi Kurdistan"

SAVE THE DATE

Tuesday, November 29, 2016

9:00 a.m. - 4:30 p.m.

Confirmed attending
H.E. Ali Sindi, *KRG Minister of Planning*
H.E. Majeed Abdulstar, *Minister of Agriculture & Water Resources*
H.E. Hogar Shalli, *Deputy Minister of Electricity*

Room 500
Bernstein-Offit Building
The Johns Hopkins University School of Advanced International Studies
1717 Massachusetts Avenue, NW
Washington, DC 20036

Event program details to follow.

Mediterranean Basin INITIATIVE

US-Kurdistan Business Council

SAHOURI.

==========

نوێنەرایەتی حکومەتی هەرێمی کوردستان لە ویلایەتە یەکگرتووەکانی ئەمریکا

بانگهێشت دەکات بۆ ئامادەبوون

CENTER FOR TRANSATLANTIC RELATIONS

لە

"وزە، کارەبا، کشتوکاڵ: دەرفەتەکانی بزنس لە کوردستانی عێراق"

ئەم بەرواره لەلای خۆت تەرخان بکە بۆئەم کۆنفرانسە

سێشەممە، 29 ی 11 ی 2016

9:00 ی بەیانی تا 4:30 پاش نیوەڕۆ

بە بەشداریی بەڕێزان

دکتۆر عەلی سندی، وەزیری پلاندانان و وەزیری بازرگانی بە وەکالەت

مەجید عەبدولستار، وەزیری کشتوکاڵ و سەرچاوەکانی ئاو

بەڕێز هۆگر شاڵی، بریکاری وەزارەتی کارەبا

ژووری 500
Bernstein-Offit Building
The Johns Hopkins University School of Advanced International Studies
1717 Massachusetts Avenue, NW
Washington, DC 20036

بەم زووانە وردەکاریی بەرنامەکەتان بۆ دەنێرین

Mediterranean Basin INITIATIVE

US-Kurdistan Business Council

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Fwd: Statement on the US President's Executive Order

1 message

J. Michael Slocum <jmichaelslocum@slocumboddie.com> Sun, Jan 29, 2017 at 7:05 PM
Reply-To: jmichaelslocum@slocumboddie.com
To: farakrg@gmail.com

J. Michael Slocum
Slocum & Boddie, PC
5400 Shawnee Rd. Suite 300
Alexandria, VA 22312
703-451-9001
703-451-8557 (fax)
jmichaelslocum@slocumboddie.com

---------- Forwarded message ----------
From: **Kurdistan Regional Government Representation in the United States** <us@gov.krd>
Date: Sun, Jan 29, 2017 at 7:00 PM
Subject: Statement on the US President's Executive Order
To: jmichaelslocum@slocumboddie.com

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Representation in the United States

Washington, DC

تکایە بڕۆ خوارەوەی لاپەڕەکە بۆ نوسخە کوردییەکە

Statement by the
Kurdistan Regional Government Representation in the United States

We are working to get more information from the United States Government and a better legal understanding of what the US President's Executive Order means for various Kurdistani groups in America including students, dual nationals and people in the United States with a work visa or residency.

The KRG Representation in the United States would like to assure the Kurdistani-American community that we have the well-being of our community at the forefront of our work.

ڕاگەیەندراوێک لە لایەن نوێنەرایەتیی حکومەتی هەرێمی کوردستان لە ویلایەتە یەکگرتووەکان.

ئێمە لە ئێستادا سەرقاڵین بە وەرگرتنی زانیاری زیاتر لە حکومەتی ویلایەتە یەکگرتووەکان و کار دەکەین بۆ تێگەیشتنێکی باشتری یاسایی لە ڕەنگدانەوەی فەرمانە جێبەجێکارییەکەی سەرۆکی ویلایەتە یەکگرتووەکان(http://nyti.ms/2keKy52)

لەسەر گروپی جۆراوجۆری ڕەوەندی کوردستانیی لە ئەمریکا، لەناویاندا قوتابیان، و ئەو کەسانەی کە دوو ڕەگەزنامەیان هەیە، و ئەو کەسانەی کە بە ڤیزای کارکردن یان نیشتەجێبوون لە ویلایەتە یەکگرتووەکانی ئەمریکان.

"نوێنەرایەتی حکومەتی هەرێمی کوردستان لە ویلایەتە یەکگرتووەکان" ڕەوەندی کوردستانیان لە ئەمریکا دڵنیا دەکاتەوە کە کاروبار و نیگەرانییەکانی ڕەوەندەکەمان کاری هەرە لە پێشینەی ئێمەیە.

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Fwd: Today - Discussion at CTR-SAIS 'Kurdistan on the cusp of statehood'

1 message

J. Michael Slocum <jmichaelslocum@slocumboddie.com> Thu, Oct 20, 2016 at 3:32 PM
Reply-To: jmichaelslocum@slocumboddie.com
To: farakrg@gmail.com

J. Michael Slocum
Slocum & Boddie, PC
5400 Shawnee Rd. Suite 300
Alexandria, VA 22312
703-451-9001
703-451-8557 (fax)
jmichaelslocum@slocumboddie.com

---------- Forwarded message ----------
From: **Kurdistan Regional Government - USA** <us@gov.krd>
Date: Thu, Oct 20, 2016 at 8:01 AM
Subject: Today - Discussion at CTR-SAIS 'Kurdistan on the cusp of statehood'
To: jmichaelslocum@slocumboddie.com

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Representation in the United States

Washington, DC

تکایە بڕۆ خوارەوەی لاپەڕەکە بۆ نوسخە کوردییەکە

The Kurdistan Regional Government Representation in the United States
invites you to to join
The Center for Transatlantic Relations at
Johns Hopkins University School of Advanced International Studies

Thursday, October 20
2 PM



Panel discussion

From Tribe to Nation: Iraqi Kurdistan on the Cusp of Statehood

by Amberin Zaman

Public Policy Fellow, Woodrow Wilson International Center for Scholars

RSVP HERE

BOB 500
The Johns Hopkins University School of Advanced International Studies
1717 Massachusetts Avenue, NW
20036 Washington, DC

Panelists

- **Amberin Zaman**, Public Policy Fellow, Woodrow Wilson International Center for Scholars
- **Bayan Sami Abdul Rahman**, Kurdistan Regional Government (KRG) Representative to the United States of America
- **Hardin Lang**, Senior Fellow, Center for American Progress

Moderator

- **Sasha Toperich**, Senior Fellow, CTR - SAIS

نوێنەرایەتی حکومەتی هەرێمی کوردستان
لە ویلایەتە یەکگرتووەکانی ئەمریکا
بانگهێشتت دەکات بۆ ئامادەبوون لە
ناوەندی پەیوەندییەکانی ترانزئەتلانتیک لە
زانکۆی جان هۆپکنز، پەیمانگەی لێکۆڵینەوەی گەشەسەندووی
نێودەوڵەتی

پێنجشەممە، 20 ی تشرینی یەکەم
2 ی پاش نیوەڕۆ



پانێلێک بۆ تاوتوێی

لە هۆزەوە بۆ نەتەوە: کوردستانی عێراق لە کەناری بوون بە دەوڵەت

عەمبەرین زەمان

سیاسەتی گشتیی، بنکەی وودرۆ ویلسنی نێودەوڵەتی

بەڕێوەبردنی

لێرە ناوی خۆت تۆمار بکە

BOB 500 ناونیشان

The Johns Hopkins University School of Advanced International Studies
1717 Massachusetts Avenue, NW
20036 Washington, DC

پێشکەشکاران

- عەمبەرین زەمان، سیاسەتی گشتیی، هەڤاڵی ناوەندی وودرۆ ویلسنی نیودەوڵەتی بۆ لیکۆڵەران،
- بەیان سامی عەبدولرەحمان، نوێنەری حکومەتی هەرێمی کوردستان لە ویلایەتە یەکگرتووەکانی ئەمریکا
- هاردین لانگ، گەورە هەڤاڵ لە ناوەندی ئەمریکا بۆ گەشەسەندن.

ڕێکخەر

SAIS ساشا تۆپریچ، گەورە هەڤاڵ لە بنکەی بنکەی پەیوەندییەکانی ترانزێتلانتیک،

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Fwd: Tonight, 8 PM - Candle vigil at White House

1 message

J. Michael Slocum <jmichaelslocum@slocumboddie.com> Mon, Aug 14, 2017 at 3:48 PM
To: farakrg@gmail.com

---------- Forwarded message ----------
From: **Kurdistan Regional Government - USA** <us@gov.krd>
Date: Thu, Aug 3, 2017 at 9:01 AM
Subject: Tonight, 8 PM - Candle vigil at White House
To: jmichaelslocum@slocumboddie.com

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Kurdistan Regional Government
Representation in the United States

Washington, DC



To honor the memory of those who have been killed and the Yezidi women and girls still held in captivity, the Free Yezidi Foundation and the American Ezidi Center will hold a candlelight vigil in Washington, DC.

Thursday, 3 August, 2017
8:00 pm

Pennsylvania Ave NW
facing White House North Lawn, in front of Lafayette Square

Concerned citizens are invited to join the event and light their candles to show their solidarity with the Yezidi community. Please bring a candle to light.

Speakers

Pari Ibrahim
Founder and Executive Director
Free Yezidi Foundation

Abu Ali
American Ezidi Center

Naomi Kikoler
Deputy Director of the Simon-Skjodt Center for the Prevention of Genocide
United States Holocaust Memorial Museum

Other speakers to be determined

On 3 August 2014, ISIS terrorists overran the town of Sinjar (Shingal), carrying out a pre-meditated plan of mass murder, violence, kidnapping, rape, and other crimes against the Yezidi civilians because of their religion. The attacks have been widely described as genocide, including by the US State Department.

To mark the third anniversary of the genocide perpetrated against the Yezidis, the Free Yezidi Foundation and the American Ezidi Center call upon concerned citizens to join the vigil and express support and solidarity with Yezidis.

Survivors of the Yezidi genocide face immense challenges in trying to rebuild their lives. Sadly, even upon the liberation of Mosul, thousands of Yezidis are still held captive by ISIS terrorists in various towns in Syria. Meanwhile, survivors seek to improve their lives, despite three years of displacement. Most Yezidis now live in IDP camps in the Kurdistan Region of Iraq.

The Free Yezidi Foundation and the American Ezidi Center would also like to express support for other minority communities affected by the ISIS terror attacks, including Iraqi Christians, who have also suffered enormously.

For press inquiries, please contact
Khairi Shammo - khairi.shammo@gmail.com
Pari Ibrahim - pari.ibrahim@freeyezidi.org

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Fwd: Town hall meeting with Mayor of Sinjar Mr. Mahma Khalil - June 25

1 message

J. Michael Slocum <jmichaelslocum@slocumboddie.com> Fri, Jun 24, 2016 at 4:35 PM
Reply-To: jmichaelslocum@slocumboddie.com
To: farakrg@gmail.com

J. Michael Slocum
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5400 Shawnee Rd. Suite 300
Alexandria, VA 22312
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703-451-8557 (fax)
jmichaelslocum@slocumboddie.com

---------- Forwarded message ----------
From: **Kurdistan Regional Government - USA** <us@gov.krd>
Date: Fri, Jun 24, 2016 at 2:37 PM
Subject: Town hall meeting with Mayor of Sinjar Mr. Mahma Khalil - June 25
To: jmichaelslocum@slocumboddie.com

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Kurdistan Regional Government
Representation in the United States

Washington, DC

بەڕێزان ڕەوەندی کوردستانی لە ویلایەتە یەکگرتووەکانی ئەمریکا

نوێنەرایەتی حکومەتی هەرێمی کوردستان بە خۆشحاڵیەوە سمینارێك ڕێکدەخات بۆ قائیمقامی قەزای شەنگاڵ بەڕێز مەحما خەلیل

باس لە دواین پێشهاتەکان و گۆرانکاریەکانی بارودۆخی شەنگاڵ و ناوچەکەو هەروەها باس لە بارودۆخی لێقەوماوەکانی ناوخۆ و ئاوارە یەزیدیەکان و شەری دژی تیرۆرستانی داعش لە لەدەڤەرەکەدا دەکات.

شوێن، ڕۆژ و کات:

Hunter Mill District

1801 Cameron Glen Drive
Reston, VA 20190

ڕۆژی شەممە ، بەرواری ٢٥ ی جوون ٢٠١٦ لە کاژمێر ٤ ی ئێوارە

Saturday, June 25th, 2016 Start at 4pm

The Kurdistan Regional Government Representation in the United States cordially invites our esteemed Kurdish community members to attend a town hall meeting with the Mayor of Shingal, Mr. Mahma Khalil. The discussion will be on recent developments in Shingal. Topics will include the status of Yazidis and religious components of Kurdistan, the current humanitarian crisis, and the fight against ISIS in the region.

Please note that this event will be in Kurdish only.

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J. Michael Slocum <jmichaelslocum@slocumboddie.com>

Tues 8/1 - "Stabilizing Iraq: What Is the Future for Minorities?"

1 message

Kurdistan Regional Government - USA <us@gov.krd> Mon, Jul 31, 2017 at 5:33 PM
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Washington, DC



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Stabilizing Iraq: What Is the Future for Minorities?

After ISIS' Atrocities Can Iraq's Communal Mosaic Be Restored - and How?

a discussion co-hosted by

Kurdistan Regional Government
Representation in the United States

and

The United States Institute of Peace

Tuesday, August 1, 2017

1:30pm - 3:00pm

U.S. Institute of Peace

2301 Constitution Ave. NW
Washington, DC 20037

RSVP HERE

Agenda:

Opening Remarks
Amb. William Taylor
Executive Vice President
U.S. Institute of Peace

Remarks
Ambassador Fareed Yasseen
Ambassador to the United States
Republic of Iraq

Remarks
Representative Bayan Sami Abdul Rahman
Representative to the United States
Kurdistan Regional Government

Panel discussion
Vian Dakhil
Member of the Council of Representatives
Republic of Iraq

Knox Thames
Special Advisor for Religious Minorities in the Near East and South/Central Asia
U.S. Department of State

William Warda
Chairman, Board of Directors
Alliance of Iraqi Minorities

Sarhang Hamasaeed
Director, Middle East Programs
U.S. Institute of Peace

Naomi Kikoler, Moderator
Deputy Director of the Center for the Prevention of Genocide
United States Holocaust Memorial Museum

To stabilize Iraq following ISIS' rule, and to prevent new violence that religious extremists can exploit, the broad inclusion of minority groups will be vital. Nowhere in Iraq is that imperative more essential or complex than around Mosul, with its communities of Christians, Yazidis, Turkoman, Shabak, and other groups. ISIS' atrocities-including genocide and the sexual enslavement of women-destroyed local communities and traumatized victims from all groups. On August 1, join an examination of the work required to protect and include minorities, and the roles that can be played by Iraq's national government, the Kurdistan Regional Government, and the United States.

Three years after ISIS shocked the world with its genocidal assault of the Yazidi community at Mount Sinjar, many minority communities of the Nineveh Plain remain displaced and fearful for their safety. Protecting minorities is not only a democratic value, it is a practical step to stabilizing conflict zones and reducing the dangerous, global burden of uprooted and refugee populations. U.S. policy on Iraq has emphasized "the need for full inclusion of religious minorities and protection of their rights." USIP and the Kurdistan Regional Government will gather a panel from disparate sides of this problem to discuss how to help Iraq's minority groups rebuild their communities and contribute to a more secure Iraq.

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KR-IRAQ HUMANITARIAN RESPONSE PLAN HRP 2015


unocha.org/iraq

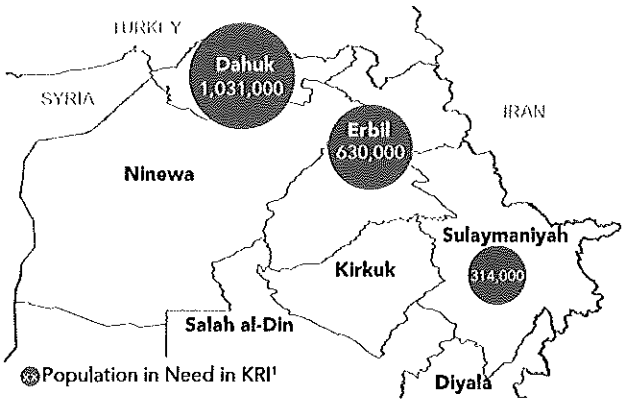

iraq.humanitarianresponse.info


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This document is extracted from the national Iraq-wide Humanitarian Response Plan which was launched on 04 June 2015.

OVERVIEW - KRI



4.4 MILLION

TOTAL POPULATION OF KRI

Source: 2014 estimate Iraq Central Statistical Organization

2.0 MILLION

PEOPLE IN NEED

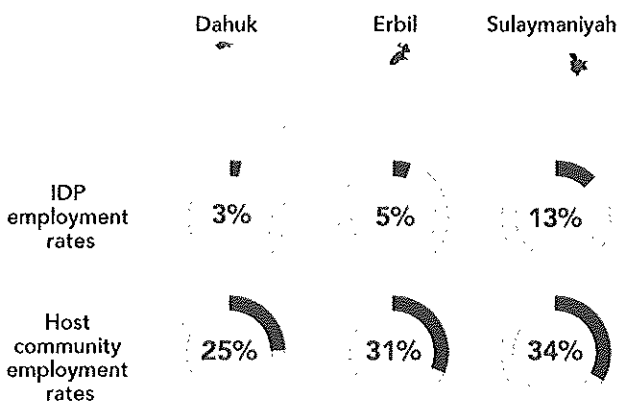
Number includes refugees.

214.4 MILLION

US$ REQUIRED

112

PARTNERS



THE CRISIS

The Kurdistan Regional Government (KRG) has long adopted an inclusive and welcoming policy free of discrimination based on religious, cultural, ethnic or political identity. The KRG recognizes the vital importance of aiding those that are fleeing violence and unrest from other parts of Iraq in order to establish and maintain peace in this conflict-ridden area.

The pace at which the humanitarian crisis in the Kurdistan Region of Iraq (KR-I) has escalated has been nothing short of alarming. Starting in 2011, internal unrest in neighbouring Syria caused refugees to stream into the KR-I. This was further compounded by massive internal displacement that began in 2014 as Iraqis sought to escape protracted armed conflict involving armed opposition groups. As a consequence, new and secondary movements of internally displaced persons (IDPs) across the KR-I occurred, which since 2014, have resulted in the largest displacement in Iraq's history. The KR-I has a high concentration of IDPs accounting for approximately 29 per cent of the total displaced population (1,097,814 individuals)[2]. It is estimated that one in six people today is displaced in the KR-I, while approximately 225,000 Syrian refugees are also hosted in the region.

Since January 2014, approximately 3.1 million people fled their homes in three massive waves of displacement across Iraq, and multiple smaller ones. During the first major wave in early 2014, more than 350,000 civilians fled, particularly from Falluja and Ramadi. Just a few months later, 500,000 people escaped from ISIL-impacted areas, including from Iraq's second largest city, Mosul. Within weeks, another 800,000 were displaced from areas under attack by ISIL, including Sinjar. New displacement continued during 2015. In April, 130,000 people fled Ramadi when ISIL attempted to takeover the city, while in May, tens of thousands more were displaced within hours after the city fell. As of 4 June, 257,142 individuals were reported as having been displaced from the city of Ramadi and its outskirts.

Displaced families have been welcomed by communities in the KR-I who have done their best to protect and provide for them. They have been generously supported by the KRG. While the majority of people who have sought saftey in KR-I have been absorbed within local communities and host families, some have been forced to seek shelter in abandoned, unfinished or public buildings. This has placed an additional strain on communities, access to public services, the local economy and associated infrastructure. The absorption capacity of host communities and host families is currently severely strained and is undermining the resilience of the Kurdish population at large. Overcrowding is a major problem in count-

[1] People in need include IDPs in camps, IDPs out of camps, Affected people in host communities, Syrian refugees and other highly affected people.

[2] According to the International Organization for Migration's Displacement Tracking Matrix, Round XXII, June 2015. The population figures are inclusive of districts of Akre, Al Shikhan, Khanaqin and Kifri.

less communities. In light of funding constraints tensions between host communities and displaced families may increase as resources dwindle and displaced individuals are seen to be benefitting disproportionately. Many of the displaced need urgent shelter support as they are surviving in un-finished and abandoned buildings, makeshift collective centres and spontaneous settlements. The World Bank estimates that adequate shelter needs to be provided to more than 243,000 vulnerable IDPs[3].

The cost of this generosity has been high. While the KRG has provided massive amounts of relief, the current fiscal crisis has severely constrained the KRG's ability to deliver health, education and social protection programmes. As a consequence, the KRG has been forced to cut-back on public services, delay salaries as well as halt development and investment projects. The Ministry of Finance has provided cash transfers to IDPs, and an estimated US$ 1 billion has been spent to provide IDPs with basic support[4]. That said, water and sanitation systems are in urgent need of repair, and there are major gaps in the sewerage system relating to the lack of physical facilities: there are no sewerage collection networks or wastewater treatment plants except in Sulaymaniyah Governorate. Existing yet ailing solid waste systems are faltering. An average of 2.5 to 3.5 kilograms of solid waste is generated by in-camp refugees and IDPs, and 1.2 kilograms by refugees and IDPs living in regular house dwellings daily. The additional population produces more than 1,690 tons of solid waste per day, an increase of 26 per cent on the KR-I's daily capacity of solid waste generated in 2014. Only Dahuk Governorate is able to absorb additional solid waste due to the construction of a new sanitary landfill and its recycling capacity[5].

The risk of a major public health emergency is high. As a result of the crisis, health providers are struggling to deliver basic support in areas with high concentrations of displaced persons. The KRG now needs to meet an additional estimated water demand of 17.1 million square meters per year[6]. The standard of living in the KR-I has deteriorated, and a sizeable portion of the population is vulnerable to poverty[7] . Food security in the KR-I is hampered by the disruption to transportation routes and nutrition vulnerability is on the increase. Many grain silos, some of which serve KR-I populations, have been captured by insurgents. The resulting increase in demand for food caused by the burgeoning population is being met by food imports. While food security was sustained during the Syrian refugee influx, the recent IDP surge has resulted in food insecurity. The Public Distribution System (PDS) for subsidising food staples, although operational, is not functioning optimally. Thus host communities, especially vulnerable groups within them, are being directly impacted[8].

Destitution is widespread, impacting displaced families and host communities alike. Production, supply shortages and localized increases in demand have forced up the cost of basic commodities, including food. At least 765,000 people in the KR-I are now food insecure. Families in the KR-I where the population has increased by 30 per cent, have been unable to cover basic needs and are relying on negative strategies to cope. Child marriages are increasing, used as a strategy by families to protect young girls from sexual violence and deprivation[10].

The crisis is pervasive, impacting virtually all aspects of the KR-I's economy. All investment has been affected by the conflict while investor confidence is at an all-time low. Fuel prices have risen as much as 14 per cent in Sulaymaniyah, 15 per cent in Erbil and 23 per cent in Dahuk[9]. Electricity and transportation costs have risen as a consequence. According to a 2015 World Bank study that assessed the economic and social impact of the Syrian conflict and ISIL, "the crisis has considerably depressed economic activity and significantly slowed the growth of wage incomes, profits, consumption, domestic and foreign investment and local KRG revenues". This is evident in Dahuk, where competition for jobs along with a 6.4 per cent increase in prices over a six month period made a substantial impact on the local population and displaced community. Furthermore, in Rania District, Sulaymaniyah Governorate, 30 per cent of IDP families are without income and particularly at risk. In terms of public finances, the World Bank reports that the crisis has resulted in "sharply lowered local revenues as well as increased borrowing from the private sector resulting in quasi-fiscal deficits of about $3 billion (about 25 per cent of fiscal transfer entitlement from the central Government) to provide wages and salary payments and to provide public services and goods, which includes support for Syrian refugees and IDPs, albeit at much less quality and reduced access. This borrowing supported growth but at the cost of a rapid build-up of debt in a short period, which has implications for fiscal sustainability".

Children have been traumatised by violence and destitution. Of the total number of Syrian refugees and Iraqi IDPs in the KR-I, an estimated 325,000 are school-aged children and adolescents who do not have access to basic education. Most school aged children remain largely outside of the education system in the KR-I. Among school aged children, 70 per cent of IDPs, and 48 per cent of refugees, are not enrolled in school. Children are hardest hit by the conflict, exposed to abuse, suffering from inadequate health care and education and are at risk of poor nutrition. Already community leaders are worried that disaffected youth, with few positive options, will fuel tensions and violence for decades to come.

In July, the KRG confirmed in an official statement that over the past years, the refugee and IDP response plans have remained chronically under-funded. At its conclusion, the Strategic Response Plan had been funded at 26

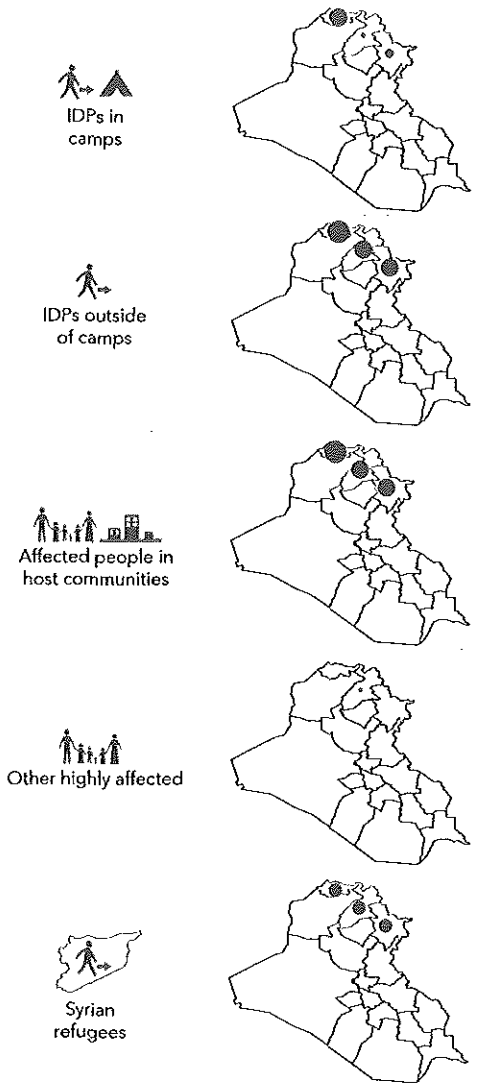
[3-9] World Bank 2015, KRI: Assessing The Economic & Social Impact of The Syrian Crisis and ISIS.

[10] Despite the legal age of marriage of 18 years for both men and women, 21% of young girls aged 15-19 are married and 5.5% under the age of 15 are married (UNDAF 2014).

per cent while the corresponding figure for the Regional Refugee and Resilience Plan stood at an alarming 19 per cent. In the recently launched Humanitarian Response Plan (HRP), the humanitarian community has appealed for $497.9 million. If funded, the HRP will alleviate acute suffering, but fall short of tackling the impact on host communities and society at large. Estimates of the cost of stabilising the region back to the pre-crisis level stand at $1.4 billion.

It is the conclusion of the KRG that without a drastic increase in funding from the international community and other key stakeholders, the region will neither be able to cope with the current crisis, nor respond to anticipated new displacements. As humanitarian partners formulate contingency plans, it is paramount to recognize that the Kurdistan Region has exhausted its response and absorption capacity and is at risk of collapse. The KRG remains committed to its humanitarian responsibilities and will continue to voice the plight of the women, men and children in distress.

The people of the Kurdistan Region have shown tremendous generosity over an extended period of time but they are reaching a breaking point. The KRG is now calling on the international community and all partners to provide the region with the necessary resources and technical support to continue offering a safe haven to those in need[11].



THE NEEDS

DAHUK GOVERNORATE

Dahuk, one of the smallest governorates in Iraq, is supporting one of the largest numbers of IDPs in the country. Almost 580,000 IDPs are now hosted within the four districts of the governorate and supported in the neighbouring districts of Akre, Shikhan and Bardarash, part of Ninewa Governorate, but de-facto administered out of Dahuk. The influx of people dates back to the massive displacement caused by the ISIL advances during June and August 2014, particularly with the take-over of Mosul and Sinjar District, an area predominantly populated by the Yazidi ethnic minority. Sixteen camps, with a total capacity for 195,000 people, have been built since the influx began. Currently these camps host around 187,000 people. Two additional camps are under construction and are due to open in the coming months. In addition to the large IDP caseload, the Dahuk administration is already supporting close to 100,000 Syrian refugees, of whom more than half live in camps.

Dahuk is a significant humanitarian hub with a large number of humanitarian actors supporting the local administration in addressing key needs in and out of camps.The main humanitarian concern is now related to the summerization effort, which aims to help the most vulnerable cope with harsh Iraqi summer. Distributions of key items to families in need are ongoing across the Governorate with the Board of Relief and Humanitarian Affairs, the governorate emergency coordination committee, prioritizing WASH, food and health activities, particularly for the large population residing in camps.

Although concerted efforts are being made by the Dahuk administration to utilize the existing capacity of camps, many people continue to live in hundreds of informal sites, such as abandoned or unfinished buildings. In such locations they remain vulnerable and logistically more difficult to reach than those in the camps. Pressure from site owners wishing to complete their property during the summer is resulting in eviction of IDPs from existing buildings. According to UNHCR, the inability to pay rents as well as to generate sufficient income is pushing many refugee families towards camps. With the severe

[11] Kurdistan Regional Government 2015: Official Statement.

funding limitations experienced by both the KRG and the international humanitarian community, there is a real concern that following June 2015 it will not be possible to maintain the same level of services, particularly in existing camps, let alone improve standards. Although efforts to avoid duplication are yielding encouraging results as humanitarian's transition from blanket to targeted assistance, the gains made will not be sufficient to offset the lack of additional funding for some of the most critical programmes in the governorate.

ERBIL GOVERNORATE

With just over 266,000 IDPs in the governorate, Erbil currently hosts the fifth largest number of displaced in the country. The majority of IDPs in Erbil arrived during two major waves of displacement in 2014. The first wave arrived in June-July and the second wave in August, primarily from Ninewa, Salah al-Din and Anbar governorates. Since the beginning of hostilities in Ramadi District in Anbar Governorate on 8 April 2015 through 15 June 2015, 44,012 IDPs (13,264 families) arrived in Erbil via the Erbil International Airport alone.

IDPs currently reside across four districts within the governorate, with the majority living in the district of Erbil. Just over 70 per cent of IDPs are now residing in rental accommodation, with recent months having seen a decrease in the number residing in hotels and motels as well as an increase in the number residing in rental accommodation. Eight per cent of IDPs are currently living with host families, whilst approximately 10 per cent of IDPs are living in 'critical shelter arrangements' defined as unfinished or abandoned buildings, religious buildings, school buildings, informal/random/irregular settlements or collective shelters. As of mid-June June, two formal IDP camps, Barharka and Harshm, have been established, currently hosting approximately 5,100 individuals. Anikawa 2, a formal collective shelter, currently hosts 3,732 individuals.

Alongside the presence of IDPs in the governorate there are 112,043 refugees (almost 45 per cent of refugees in Iraq) that have fled from neighboring Syria, the majority of whom also reside outside camps.

Funding constraints affecting the humanitarian community and the Government mean that all IDPs needs will not be able to access health, shelter/NFI, food security, WASH and education services. The issue of registration is often raised, though one which the Government is working to address, as with the issue of the replacement of ID cards. Few IDPs report to be currently earning an income. The majority report to be relying on their own savings, an issue which needs to be addressed as the duration of displacement increases. Economic challenges such as unemployment, cost of living and access to affordable shelter, as well as difficulties in accessing health and education services, are also affecting non-camp refugees. This cohort cite these reasons for moving into formal camps, a new trend identified by UNHCR since the beginning of 2015.

SULAYMANIYAH GOVERNORATE

Sulaymaniyah Governorate is currently hosting around 258,000 IDPs and more than 30,000 refugees. The number of refugees has been stable with no major variations over the last few months. The situation for IDPs has continued to evolve with new arrivals mainly from Anbar Governorate. Since the start of 2015, Sulymaniyah has experienced two waves of IDP arrivals, the first from Salah Al-din Governorate and the most recent from Ramadi. The majority of IDPs in the governorate are accommodated in host communities, with only around 3,100 families living in camps. Among those in camps, around 2,700 families are living in Arbat Camp with the remainder residing in Quarato Camp. An additional four camps (Ashti, Barzinja, Zrgwez and Tazade) are under construction and will be ready to receive IDPs in due course.

IDPs in Arbat Camp are currently experiencing a very low standard of services since it was originally planned as a transit camp for around 800 families. From late June onwards, families from Arbat Camp will be progressively transferred to Ashti and Barzinja camps, which will contribute to the improvement of services in these locations.

Many IDPs are living in rented accommodation. There are increasing reports of IDPs running out of money and indicating that they will soon require alternative shelter assistance. Tensions between host communities and IDPs are also reportedly intensifying in some areas of the Governorate due to the extra burden placed on public services such as water, electricity, education and health care as well as the overall physical infrastructure.

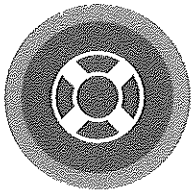
Since mid-May, local authorities in Sulaymaniyah Governorate have enforced a new policy for IDP entry to the governorate. Displaced people seeking entry to the governorate are now required to be accommodated in a designated IDP camp. Partners continue to work closely with local and governorate officials to provide basic humanitarian assistance to individuals in such situations, including drinking water, shade and sanitation facilities.

STRATEGIC OBJECTIVES



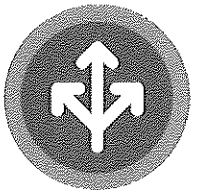
SPECIALISED PROTECTION SUPPORT

Specialised protection support is provided in response to the grave rights violations of women, men and children, including in hard-to-reach areas.



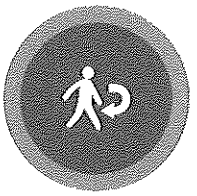
ESSENTIAL LIFE-SAVING ASSISTANCE

Humanitarian operations maintain targeted life-saving support and provide essential service packages to people dependent on humanitarian assistance because of the crisis.



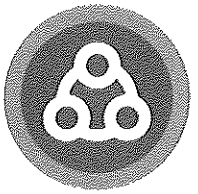
EXPANDED ACCESS

Humanitarian actors do everything possible to access all people in need across Iraq.



SAFE RETURNS

Humanitarian actors advocate for safe and voluntary returns and provide assistance packages to highly vulnerable returning populations.



SOCIAL PROTECTION TRANSITION

The groundwork is laid for the transition to a cash-based social protection floor as part of a strategy for transferring responsibilities to national authorities.

The operation's five strategic objectives reflect the complex realities humanitarian partners face in KR-I and have been adopted in full recognition of the limits of humanitarian action in a context of volatile all-out armed conflict, extreme restrictions on access, deep-running political divisions and the Government's fiscal gap. The humanitarian community is gravely concerned that its ability to meet the enormous needs in KR-I is constrained in every way, from lack of access and capacity to wholly inadequate funding. The role of protection is being prioritized recognizing its moral responsibility to maintain assistance to people dependent on aid to survive, elevating the imperative to reach people, even in areas outside Government control, insisting on the need for principled returns and aiming at a realistic exit strategy.

OVERVIEW OF PEOPLE IN NEED

	People in need in Dahuk Governorate (in millions)	People in need in Erbil Governorate (in millions)	People in need in Sulaymaniyah Governorate (in millions)
IDPs in camps	0.15	*	†
IDPs outside of camps	0.3	0.26	0.16
Affected people in host communities	0.53	0.26	0.14
Syrian refugees	0.1	0.1	0.03
Total [in millions]	1.1	0.6	0.3

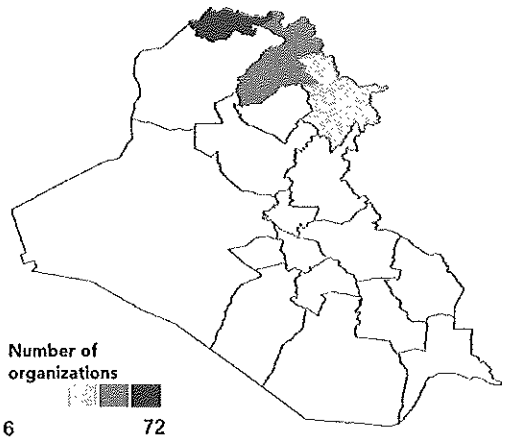
Source: 1 IOM DTM Round XXII, June 2015
2 Iraq Humanitarian Profile, April 2015

* 9,342 individuals
† 15,438 individuals

OPERATIONAL PRESENCE

112

Organizations responding with ongoing programmes



Governorate	Number of IDPs										
Sulaymaniyah	174,528	2	6	11	24	9	8	3		3	6
Erbil	266,328	17	7	13	28	16	9	2	1	1	5
Dahuk	441,348	19	4	17	30	16	7	3	1	9	9

INTERNATIONAL CAPACITY

At present 78 international humanitarian organizations are operating in the KR-I, working in support of the Government-led response. This number includes 66 international non-governmental organizations, and 12 United Nations agencies. Member States and private sector entities are also providing humanitarian assistance. In August 2014, the IASC activated a System-Wide Level Three Emergency (L3) status for Iraq. Following the L3 activation, the number of humanitarian partners operating in the KR-I increased to current levels from 59 in August 2014.

NATIONAL CAPACITY

34 national NGOs are currently engaged in humanitarian operations. Religious organizations are also actively involved in the response. The NGO Coordination Committee in Iraq (NCCI) coordinates efforts of national and international NGOs and is also engaged in building the capacity of local partners. National partners play a crucial role in accessing people in areas beyond the reach of international agencies. Capacity development of local actors, as well as channelling funds directly to national partners through the Iraq Humanitarian Pooled Fund, form a key component of the response.

CLUSTER RESPONSE SUMMARIES

PROTECTION



$24.9 million
FUNDING REQUIRED



34
PARTNERS INCLUDED

SUPPORTS STRATEGIC OBJECTIVES:
SO1, SO2, SO3, SO4 & SO5

RESPONSE
Provide immediate life-saving assistance to newly-displaced or newly-accessible persons, regardless of location; immediately address the urgent protection needs of the most vulnerable (including women, girls, boys, the elderly, disabled, and survivors of torture and sexual violence in conflict); protection monitoring and assessments inform and improve the overall humanitarian response.

RESPONSE
Identify and address protection needs in an on-going manner through expanded protection response networks among national and international actors and support existing service providers or, where necessary, direct service provision, to the affected people.

RESPONSE
Cultivate an environment for the respect of rights by addressing systemic challenges with immediate impact on the humanitarian response and strengthening national protection networks and systems to ensure protection services are increasingly owned and sustained by capable national stakeholders.

FOOD SECURITY



$82.9 million
FUNDING REQUIRED



15
PARTNERS INCLUDED

SUPPORTS STRATEGIC OBJECTIVES:
SO2, SO4 & SO5

RESPONSE
Save lives by ensuring that crisis affected families receive support to emergency access to food.

RESPONSE
Save lives and preserve assets of crisis affected families through regular access to food and balanced nutrition.

RESPONSE
Increase food availability for crisis affected populations by resuming, maintaining and diversifying key agricultural production systems, strategies and assets.

HEALTH



$27 million
FUNDING REQUIRED



28
PARTNERS INCLUDED

SUPPORTS STRATEGIC OBJECTIVES:
SO1, SO2 & SO3

RESPONSE
Provide life-saving health care services to prevent avoidable morbidity, mortality and disability.

RESPONSE
Provide essential health care services.

RESPONSE
Provide comprehensive emergency services and strengthening of national capacities.

WATER, SANITATION AND HYGIENE

$17.7 million
FUNDING REQUIRED

26
PARTNERS INCLUDED

SUPPORTS STRATEGIC OBJECTIVES:
SO1, SO2, SO3 & SO4

RESPONSE
Ensure immediate, life-saving WASH needs are met for the most vulnerable, critically affected girls, boys, men and women.

RESPONSE
Ensure continued, improved, more equitable access to basic, appropriate WASH for vulnerable, critically affected girls, boys, men and women.

RESPONSE
Ensure more resilient, durable, equitable access to appropriate WASH services for most vulnerable, critically affected girls, boys, men and women.

SHELTER AND NON-FOOD ITEMS

$34.1 million
FUNDING REQUIRED

70
PARTNERS INCLUDED

SUPPORTS STRATEGIC OBJECTIVES:
SO1, SO2, SO3, SO4 & SO5

RESPONSE
Address the emergency shelter needs of the newly displaced (target 70%).

RESPONSE
Upgrade shelter for existing IDPs in critical need.

RESPONSE
Maintain shelter for the most vulnerable and supporting rapid return.

CAMP COORDINATION AND CAMP MANAGEMENT

$1.3 million
FUNDING REQUIRED

6
PARTNERS INCLUDED

SUPPORTS STRATEGIC OBJECTIVES:
SO1 & SO2

RESPONSE
Provide people who are fleeing conflict or have become newly accessible with assistance up to minimal standards in formal settlements.

RESPONSE
Provide people who are fleeing conflict or have become newly accessible with assistance up to minimal standards in formal settlements and establish community representation.

EDUCATION

$13.3 million
FUNDING REQUIRED

20
PARTNERS INCLUDED

SUPPORTS STRATEGIC OBJECTIVES:
SO1, SO2, SO3 & SO4

RESPONSE
Provide immediate access to safe learning that promotes the protection and well-being of children and aolescents.

RESPONSE
Increase access to protective, life-sustaining, quality learning for children and adolescents.

RESPONSE
Engage children, adolescents and communities in learning that promotes social cohesion and peacebuilding.

EMERGENCY LIVELIHOODS

$5 million
FUNDING REQUIRED

10
PARTNERS INCLUDED

SUPPORTS STRATEGIC OBJECTIVES:
SO1, SO3, & SO5

RESPONSE
Stabilise social cohesion through immediate access to income for vulnerable families and social awareness, in areas at high risk of tension.

RESPONSE
Maintain social cohesion at the community level through support to community assets, increasing access to regular income and opening channels for dialogue.

MULTI-PURPOSE CASH ASSISTANCE

$1.2 million
FUNDING REQUIRED

8
PARTNERS INCLUDED

SUPPORTS STRATEGIC OBJECTIVES:
SO2, SO3 & SO5

RESPONSE
Enable newly displaced conflict-affected households to meet their critical basic needs through an emergency one-off cash transfer.

RESPONSE
Enable extremely vulnerable conflict-affected households to meet their critical basic needs through targeted multi-month cash transfers.

RAPID RESPONSE MECHANISM

$3.4 million
FUNDING REQUIRED

8
PARTNERS INCLUDED

SUPPORTS STRATEGIC OBJECTIVES:
SO2 & SO3

RESPONSE

Reach those most vulnerable individuals, women and children that are on the move, in hard to reach areas, caught at checkpoints and between frontlines, with immediate lifesaving, time critical and dignity raising humanitarian aid.

LOGISTICS

$1.2 million
FUNDING REQUIRED

1
PARTNER INCLUDED

SUPPORTS STRATEGIC OBJECTIVES:
SO3 & SO4

RESPONSE

Support an effective humanitarian logistics response by providing logistics coordination and information management services to the humanitarian community.

RESPONSE

Ensure uninterrupted delivery of emergency relief items by augmentation of humanitarian partners' logistics capacities through the provision of emergency storage, common transport and storage, and emergency airlift capacity.

EMERGENCY TELECOMMUNICATIONS

$0.4 million
FUNDING REQUIRED

3
PARTNERS INCLUDED

SUPPORTS ALL STRATEGIC OBJECTIVES

RESPONSE

Preposition equipment and provide organizations with radio and data connectivity.

RESPONSE

Conduct assessments and maintenance. Provide training and configuration of radios.

COORDINATION

$2.0 million
FUNDING REQUIRED

2
PARTNERS INCLUDED

SUPPORTS ALL STRATEGIC OBJECTIVES

RESPONSE

Coordinate and inform rapid response operations in real-time.

RESPONSE

Support effective, timely and principled humanitarian assistance to vulnerable people in Iraq through efficient coordination services.

REFUGEES INTERNATIONAL

FIELD REPORT

A POWERFUL VOICE FOR LIFESAVING ACTION

October 29, 2014

Author:
Daryl Grisgraber and
Michel Gabaudan

WAITING FOR WINTER:
DISPLACED IRAQIS IN THE KRI

About 850,000 internally displaced persons (IDPs) have fled the conflict in central Iraq to seek safety further north in the Kurdistan Region of Iraq (KRI). They are scattered across the KRI in a variety of temporary housing situations: though a small number of them are in camps, most live informally in local schools, unfinished buildings, and public parks. Half a million of them are in the city of Dohuk alone. The great majority of these 850,000 internally displaced are members of religious minorities – Christians from the Ninewa Plains and Yazidis from the Sinjar area, in particular. As humanitarian agencies scramble to meet their needs, there must be a plan for longer-term support that reflects the increasingly complex and unpredictable environment in the country as a whole: an environment that is likely to result in more displacement. Iraq's central government, donor governments, and aid agencies should make providing adequate shelter to IDPs the highest priority over the next several weeks.

BACKGROUND

Since 2003, Iraq has seen a tremendous amount of forced displacement both across and within its borders. Historically a haven for refugees from Iran and Turkey, the country also became the site of a massive internal displacement crisis during the American-led occupation. That crisis has still not been resolved.

Additionally, over the course of the past three years, approximately 215,000 Syrian refugees have arrived in the KRI seeking safety from the conflict. They are mostly – but not exclusively – Syrian Kurds. Many of them traveled great distances across Syria in order to seek refuge in a place where the language and customs would be familiar to them. As in Egypt, Jordan, Lebanon, and Turkey, the humanitarian response to the Syrian refugees in the KRI has been a challenging one. The host communities and local and regional government officials have been generous and

POLICY RECOMMENDATIONS

- ❒ The United States government should provide planes to assist in the delivery of humanitarian supplies to Iraq in time for winter.
- ❒ Iraq's central government should immediately provide the Kurdistan region of Iraq (KRI) with its legally-mandated share of the national budget which has been withheld in 2014.
- ❒ Recognizing the Iraq central government's responsibility for internally displaced people (IDPs) in the Kurdistan Region, it should continue its food aid support through its Public Distribution System.
- ❒ The Iraqi government, the Kurdistan Regional Government (KRG), donor governments, and aid agencies should put the highest priority on providing adequate shelter to IDPs in the KRI over the next several weeks, as laid out in the Immediate Response Plan (IRP) developed by the KRG and the United Nations.
- ❒ The UN Refugee Agency (UNHCR) should immediately implement a public education campaign for IDPs on relocation to available camps in order to minimize misinformation and to create a better understanding of available services and shelter options.
- ❒ Iraq's central government and the KRG should collaborate substantively with aid organizations to ensure continued support for meeting IDPs' humanitarian needs.
- ❒ Regional leaders and the European Union should provide financial support to the humanitarian response for Iraqi IDPs.
- ❒ Given the likelihood that this displacement crisis will persist beyond the winter, the humanitarian community should make longer-term plans for support to the IDP population.

welcoming, but it has been hard to keep up with the sheer numbers of people arriving.

Donor funding for the five countries involved in the UN's Syrian refugee response has lagged far behind needs, and Iraq has consistently had one of the largest shortfalls in support. The current UNHCR appeal to fund work in Iraq is only 33 percent covered. The Kurdish Regional Government (KRG) nonetheless welcome a steady stream of Syrians fleeing the conflict, and has lately been permitting Syrian refugees from Kobani to enter via Turkey.

This year also witnessed several waves of displacement of Iraqis into the KRI after incursions by the group known as the Islamic State (or ISIS). Many, though not all, of those fleeing violence in Anbar in January and the takeover of Mosul in June by the Islamic State group have since returned home. However, hundreds of thousands who fled recent attacks close to the border with Syria remain. The Islamic State group's advances in Iraq are now understood to be a systematic campaign to seize control of more territory, and thus more recent displacement from some of the regions closer to the KRI's border is likely to be longer-term.

As it has been with the Syrian refugees who have arrived in recent years, the Kurdish community in the KRI has been generous and supportive of the recently-arrived IDPs. In September, an RI team traveled to the KRI and met with IDPs, almost all of whom acknowledged that they got by – particularly with regard to food, water, and electricity – because of help from their neighbors. Local non-governmental organizations (NGOs) and community groups were distributing some food and water, the IDPs were allowed to run electrical lines to their various shelters from nearby buildings, and the local police were even patrolling and protecting the groups living in open parks in the middle of the city. The national health care system generally accepts the IDPs for basic care, though medications are quite expensive. Most IDPs whom RI spoke to stated that while they did not necessarily want to stay in the KRI for the long term, they felt safe there.

IMMEDIATE NEEDS: WINTER

During its September mission to the KRI, RI staff met a displaced woman named Mina, who was living in an abandoned lot next to an unfinished building in the center of the town of Erbil. When asked what she and her family of twelve would do when winter set in, Mina turned her hands palms up, looked at the sky, and said, "God will know." Mina and her family were living in a shelter made of crumbling cinder blocks so small that some members of the family had



to sleep outside. The children had no shoes to wear. The weather was still warm when RI's team spoke to them, but there was a definite understanding that winter was approaching quickly and the family would not be prepared.

Mina and her relatives are typical of many of the IDPs who have come to the KRI in the past two months. They had left their homes in the bordering governorates to the south when members of the Islamic State group made it impossible for them to stay. Scrambling to flee the violence, they had brought almost nothing with them beyond the clothes on their backs. Unable to afford a hotel or rent an apartment, they had simply taken up residence where they could find space – in this case, an empty lot full of rubble from a halted construction project. In the unfinished building nearby, more IDPs walked back and forth across floors – even several stories up--that were unbounded by walls. So far, everyone appears to be dreading a winter with inadequate shelter, little warm clothing, and no heaters or fuel.

Though some of the first arrivals two months ago found places to stay with relatives, friends, or acquaintances, many more came and had to seek ad hoc living situations. They have pitched tents in public parks and along the sides of roads; they have filled schools that went unused during the summer months; they are living collectively in church compounds, mosques, and local cultural centers, in abandoned lots, and under bridges. The KRG has delayed the start of the academic year twice because hundreds of schools are now serving as collective shelters for IDPs who arrived during the summer, and social tensions related to these educational delays in Dohuk and Erbil are real and increasing.

The onset of winter brings the need for reinforced or alternative shelter. For those living outdoors and in buildings without walls, thin tents – often made of light blankets – are the most common form of shelter and will offer scant protection from the elements when the weather becomes severe and temperatures get close to freezing. Humanitarian needs will consequently increase significantly over the next

few months as the weather becomes cold and wet, and the aid system in place is not yet ready to respond on the scale that will be necessary. Besides a proliferation of flimsy living structures, many of the informal outdoor settlements in the cities do not have proper water supplies and sanitation systems, and the health problems that come with winter will be exacerbated by difficult hygiene conditions. There will also be challenges in medical care for communicable diseases like influenza that are spread when people are crowded into close quarters.

Without exception, aid agencies and government officials cited winter preparations as their most pressing concern for the IDPs. But they are in a rush against time to find all the people who are scattered across the KRI, and they are low on relief items. With the unexpectedly huge numbers of IDPs arriving this year, many aid organizations that had been assisting Syrian refugees used their stocks of basic supplies like mattresses and blankets to quickly help the IDPs. There is now a shortage of materials in the KRI that has been difficult to remedy in a timely manner. As a result, materials have been slow to arrive and both the UN and its partners are lacking relief items, and a speedy way of receiving them. Part of the U.S. focus on the relief effort in Iraq should be providing planes on an as-needed basis to assist in the delivery of humanitarian supplies in time for winter. Partners in the U.S.-led coalition could also be supportive in ensuring that supplies are available to be passed on to aid agencies.

SHORT-TERM RESPONSE: SHELTER

The KRG and the United Nations have cooperated on the Immediate Response Plan (IRP), a plan that delineates the needs of the IDPs over the next sixty days. The IRP estimates that the cost of meeting those needs will be about 300,000,000 USD. There is an appropriate emphasis on shelter in the plan, as so many of the IDPs are living in open spaces or in inadequate situations that will not provide real protection during the winter months.

Inside buildings, IDPs often share one bathroom among 60 or more people, and cooking facilities may be a single gas burner placed in a common hallway. In one school RI visited, corrugated sheet metal placed vertically near a corner of the building served as a bathing area, and residents tried to warm water in used bottles placed in the sun just outside. With thirty to forty people to a room, at night it becomes impossible to walk between the mattresses on the floor, though during the day they are neatly piled against a wall to help keep them clean.

In addition to shoring up unfinished buildings and providing heaters and fuel to those living in collective shelters , the plan relies significantly on constructing camps and relocating IDPs to them, especially those who currently reside in schools and open spaces. While camps are not an ideal response for sheltering and supporting displaced people, in emergency situations like these they can be necessary.

Those IDPs living in schools will be a high priority for relocation to camps: the plan is to get the school year up and running by mid-November. But even after the school buildings are emptied they will need rehabilitation, and this will take time. The other high priority group for moving to camps will be those who are currently living in the open air across the region. Winter in a camp can provide the advantages of weather-resistant shelter – either tents or caravans – functional sanitation systems, and better access to health care and medicine. However, it is important to keep in mind that whether or not camps are a feasible shelter solution for IDPs will depend upon how rapidly they can be built, and upon their being built to proper standards and maintaining freedom of movement for the residents.

Many of the IDPs RI spoke with were not aware of how relocation to a camp might in fact improve their living conditions. The most common concern was that spending the winter in a tent made only of plastic sheeting would not provide adequate protection. There was also a lack of understanding of what other assistance might be available in a camp, such as medical care and educational programs for children. The UN Refugee Agency (UNHCR) should immediately implement a public education campaign for IDPs on the relocation to camps in order to minimize misinformation and to create a better understanding of available services.

ONGOING BASIC NEEDS: WHOSE RESPONSIBILITY?

While many of the IDPs RI met with confirmed having received a food parcel or mattresses and blankets from community groups or local authorities when first arriving in the KRI, most indicated that no further assistance has been forthcoming, in spite of the fact that many NGOs are undertaking needs assessments. Other than occasional support from a humanitarian agency, people are making ends meet by sharing resources, borrowing money, and through the goodwill of their Kurdish host communities.

The United Nations and its partner organizations and local NGOs are struggling to find and assist the IDPs in the Kurdistan region. Because the IDPs are spread out across the

three governorates and are often setting themselves up wherever they find space, it can be difficult to locate the IDPs and determine their needs. Many of the local aid organizations in the KRI are quite small and have a limited area of operation, and the important humanitarian work they are doing may not be highly visible because of its modest scale. The local authorities of the municipalities are often well-informed about the IDPs' locations, but don't necessarily have the capacity to assist them beyond offering some initial food and shelter. They need the aid agencies to respond.

The KRG itself is having financial problems and is unable to assist on the necessary scale. About seventeen percent of Iraq's national budget is constitutionally designated for the KRG, and must be disbursed to the region by the central government. However, Baghdad has not given the KRG its portion of the budget for many months. As a result, the KRG's willingness to help with the humanitarian response in its jurisdiction is offset by its lack of funds. Iraq's central government should immediately provide the KRG with its share of the national budget which has been withheld in 2014.

In response to the needs of the IDPs moving into the northern region, Iraq's Ministry of Displacement and Migration (MoDM) began distributing cash assistance in the amount of one million Iraqi dinars (about 850 USD) to families who registered with it. However, many IDPs whom RI spoke to reported difficulty in registering. Some did not know where to go, some could not afford transportation to a place of registration, and some claimed that Ministry employees refused to register them.

In addition, many people in Iraq rely upon food aid through the Public Distribution System (PDS) to make ends meet. The system provides a package of staple food items, and the ration cards used for the system offers support based on the recipient's place of habitual residence. The system has had difficulty functioning both in the KRI and in areas where armed opposition actors are in control. Nonetheless, the PDS database is large and comprehensive – some estimates indicate that up to 80% of the Iraqi population are registered in the PDS – and could be effectively used to provide timely food assistance to those in need.

Iraq's central government should take up its responsibility for IDPs in the Kurdistan Region, including food aid through its Public Distribution System.

LONG-TERM RESPONSE: THE FUTURE OF THE IDPS

Many of the IDPs RI spoke with expressed doubt about returning to central Iraq, and there were frequent inquiries about emigration to Europe and the United States. With the current high level of sectarian tension, they simply don't feel like their homes can be safe again. Thus, considering the future options of the IDPs is an essential element of the humanitarian response.

After the immediate need for adequate shelter is addressed, the displaced in the KRI will continue to require support. Establishing camps for the IDPs and maintaining them at the proper standards can only happen if there is a well-organized and well-funded plan. The displaced will also need to find ways to support themselves and meet their own basic needs, to continue their education, to find ways to create income, and to keep their displaced communities as cohesive as possible. Iraq's central government and the KRG should collaborate substantively with aid organizations to ensure ongoing support for meeting IDPs' humanitarian needs.

Implementing such a plan will become more challenging once the urgency of the situation has passed. Just as the Syrian refugee crisis has been repeatedly overshadowed by more current events, the displacement crisis of Iraqis could soon become yesterday's news. But the hardships for the displaced will go on. And as in the Syrian refugee response, assistance to the host communities and support for national systems like health and education will play a vital role in ensuring that IDPs are able to find safety in the region for as long as they need to do so.

Another important aspect of the long-term response for Iraqi IDPs will be funding. The IDP movements in Iraq prompted a unique response earlier this year: in a very welcome gesture, the government of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia gave a large donation to the United Nations to address the needs of the displaced. However, this generous contribution will not cover all of the humanitarian need moving forward, and regional leaders as well as the European Union should follow Saudi Arabia's example and provide financial support to the humanitarian response.

Until it is safe for the IDPs to return to their places of origin, the Iraqi government in conjunction with the KRG, and with the support of the international community, must commit to assisting them for as long as necessary.

Daryl Grisgraber and Michel Gabaudan traveled to the Kurdistan Region of Iraq in September 2014 and assessed the humanitarian response to the newly arrived internally displaced population.

TASK FORCE REPORT
STATE-BUILDING IN IRAQI KURDISTAN

Nancy E. Soderberg, Chair
David L. Phillips, Project Director

October 2015

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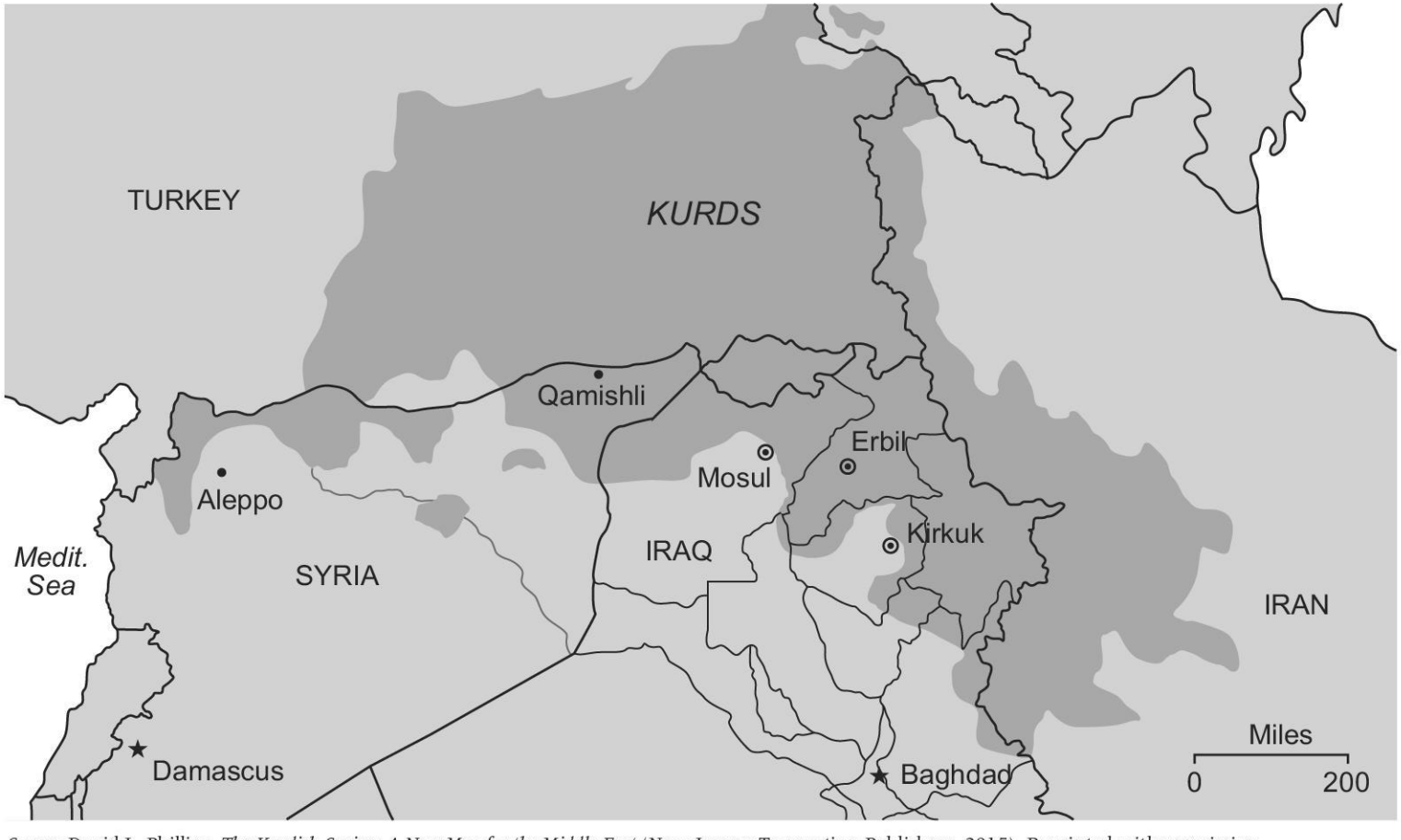
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Kurdish Regions of the Middle East



Source: David L. Phillips, *The Kurdish Spring: A New Map for the Middle East* (New Jersey: Transaction Publishers, 2015). Reprinted with permission.

Foreword

Crises in the Middle East—ISIS, Syria's civil war, the flood of refugees—consume the attention of policymakers. One area that deserves more analysis and attention is the incipient independence of Iraqi Kurdistan.

The collapse of the Iraqi army and the ease with which ISIS seized Sunni areas of Iraq is a wake-up call to observers and policymakers: a unified Iraq is no longer a reality. Policies must be adapted to reflect events on the ground. Yet, the international community clings to the idea of a unified Iraq. This view is most prominent in the United States, which has invested trillions of dollars and more than a decade of training, and suffered the loss of so many soldiers. The state structures envisioned by the secret Sykes-Picot Agreement of 1916 are falling apart. New thinking is required for stability in the region.

Iraqi Kurds have been building a *de facto* independent state since 1991. In the twelve years since the 2003 U.S.-led invasion, the Iraqi Kurds have sought to work with the central government in Baghdad. With Iraq's collapse, they will no longer do so. We do not yet know how and when they will seek *de jure* independence, but it is not in the interests of the international community to block the legitimate aspirations of the Kurds for self-determination. Rather, the international community should work with the Kurdistan Regional Government, Baghdad, and the concerned countries to ensure that the process is consultative, democratic, responsible, and stable.

The Kurds are planning a referendum on independence, writing a new constitution, and building the institutions of an independent state; however, Kurdistan's stalled economy, lack of access to international markets for its oil, cronyism, corruption, and governance challenges need to be addressed. No new state is ever fully ready for independence. This report offers recommendations to Iraqi Kurds so they may meet these challenges, prepare for independence, and earn the support of the international community in that process. It includes recommendations for state-building that would enhance stability through cooperation between Iraqi Kurdistan and the international community in the security, commercial, energy, and other sectors.

Iraqi Kurdistan's march toward independence, even with careful consultation, risks destabilizing neighboring countries with Kurdish populations. The international community, too, will face challenges as Iraqi Kurds consolidate their state. Turkey, our NATO ally, Syria, Iran, Jordan, and Lebanon will all be affected by Iraq's collapse and the emergence of an independent Kurdistan. The United States, the European Union, and Russia have major interests in the region as well. This report recommends that the international community recognize that Iraqi Kurdistan is, in fact, moving toward independence and take steps to ensure a smooth transition. We hope the report will spur further analysis, discussion, negotiations, and policy planning in Iraqi Kurdistan, Baghdad, concerned countries, and among experts.

I am grateful to Columbia University and David L. Phillips, Director of the Program on Peace-building and Human Rights at Columbia University's Institute for the Study of Human Rights, for launching the project and inviting me to chair it. Members of the Task Force, including former U.S. officials, U.S. and European scholars, and activists, have many years of experience in Kurdish issues. The Task Force met regularly since April 2015 to discuss strategies, methodology, findings, and recommendations. I thank all members of the Task Force for their participation, time, and expertise.

The report also draws on meetings by Task Force members with Iraqi Kurds from the Kurdistan Regional Government and Kurdish civil society. We benefited from discussions with U.S. officials, Turkish officials, and others from the region. Members of the Task Force traveled to Iraqi Kurdistan and Ankara in May 2015 for interviews and field research. We are grateful to those who met with us and offered their time and expertise. We look forward to discussing the Task Force recommendations with them.

This report seeks to spur Iraqi Kurds, Baghdad, and the international community to make some difficult decisions. Done correctly, a democratic, prosperous, and stable Iraqi Kurdistan will advance the interests of the Kurds, Iraq, the region, and the broader international community. The way forward is described on these pages.

Nancy E. Soderberg
September 6, 2015

Executive Summary

The international community still supports unity for Iraq. But reality on the ground is dramatically different: Iraq is unified in name only. Its potential fragmentation presents a major policy challenge. This report addresses one aspect of that challenge—the move by Iraqi Kurds toward independence. The international community does not yet support Iraqi Kurdistan's independence, but it should not stand in the way of a sizeable and coherent national community expressing its right to self-determination. This report recommends measures to manage Iraqi Kurdistan's current challenges and potential independence. Recommendations are offered to the Kurdistan Regional Government (KRG), the Government of Iraq (GOI), and other members of the international community. The most urgent recommendations are included in this summary.[1]

Iraqi Kurdistan Today

Iraqi Kurdistan developed its economy and democratic institutions during the period of self-rule beginning in October 1991. Revenues from its oil sector were used to expand Iraqi Kurdistan's infrastructure, support construction projects, and establish a number of universities. Iraqi Kurdistan developed good relations with Turkey and Iran. Baghdad, however, suspended its allocation to the KRG budget in February 2014 in response to disputes over the export of Kurdish oil. Progress was further threatened when the Islamic State in Iraq and Syria (ISIS) attacked in August 2014.

Humanitarian Emergency

The KRG is struggling to provide relief, resettlement, and protection for 1.6 million refugees and internally displaced persons (IDPs) who have sought sanctuary in the Kurdistan Region of Iraq (KRI).[2] Iraqi Kurdistan's population has grown 28 percent, creating social tensions.

Recommendation to the KRG:

- Position the KRG for direct donations from the international community by developing a comprehensive post-conflict recovery plan focusing on stabilization during the transition from relief to development.

Recommendations to the international community:

- Invite a KRG official to present this recovery plan at a special session of the United Nations Security Council (UNSC) convened by a Council member under the "Arria formula," which allows non-state actors to present in a chamber adjoining the UNSC.
- Provide enhanced direct donor support to agencies of the KRG (e.g., the Ministries of Health and Planning), as well as KRI-based NGOs that provide health care and humanitarian services.

Economic Crisis

Iraqi Kurdistan is experiencing a budget crisis resulting from the suspension of oil payments by Baghdad, depressed energy prices, and the collapse of investor confidence due to the invasion of ISIS. Its economic crisis is exacerbated by military and humanitarian expenditures associated with the fight against ISIS.

Recommendations to the KRG:

- Review and strengthen transparency of the Investment Law. Create a predictable environment for doing business through a legal system that governs commerce and property rights, as well as taxes and tariffs that are levied in a consistent and transparent way.
- Improve economic planning by developing a consolidated public sector balance sheet and harmonizing budgetary practices across the three governorates of Iraqi Kurdistan.
- Upgrade the banking sector, reduce cash-based transactions, and promote foreign direct investment (FDI) by creating special economic and industrial zones.

Kurdistan Government

Progress toward finalizing Iraqi Kurdistan's draft constitution stalled in 2006. Debate over whether to have a parliamentary system or a strong executive presidency is ongoing. As underscored by contentious negotiations over the Presidency Law, the KRG must make substantial progress on internal reforms needed for a stable and secure democracy, such as reducing the heavy influence of families on political parties.

Recommendations to the KRG:

- Settle the controversy peacefully over whether to have a presidential system, a parliamentary system, or a combination of the two.
- Ensure that the new constitution meets and exceeds the highest international standards for individual human rights, as well as linguistic, religious, ethnic, and national minority rights, including local autonomy. Focus on implementation.
- Promote women's rights more vigorously by issuing civil codes that grant women equal rights, working to change cultural mores on honor killings, and enforcing the ban on female genital mutilation (FGM).

Transparency

Failure to address the problems of corruption and lack of transparency risks undermining prosperity and political stability in Iraqi Kurdistan.

Recommendations to the KRG:

- Enforce the rule of law. Prosecute and punish corrupt public officials, regardless of their administrative rank. Provide the civil service with clear

anti-corruption guidelines and a code of conduct, especially on government contracting.
- Publish data on oil revenues. Enhance transparency by utilizing the legal, management, and communications expertise of international organizations that are experienced in anti-corruption (e.g., UN Global Compact, Transparency International, the Extractive Industries Transparency Initiative).
- Establish an ombudsman or comparable agency, including a complaints hotline, responsible for investigating instances of alleged corruption.

The Path to Independence

In July 2014, the KRG announced plans for a referendum on independence, which will set the stage for a declaration of independence. The path from the referendum to a declaration of independence is far from clear. There is no timetable or roadmap. The KRG understands that it must not act hurriedly or impulsively, lest it invite conflict with Iraq, Syria, Turkey, or Iran. Although Iraqi Kurdistan is better prepared to become an independent state than other countries that have recently gained independence—East Timor, Kosovo, and South Sudan—progress in certain areas would make a transition more stable.

Recommendation to the GOI:
- In accordance with Article 140 of the Iraqi Constitution, hold a referendum on the status of the Kirkuk governorate and other disputed territories in the Diyala and Nineveh governorates, with monitoring by the international community. Votes should be counted on district and sub-district levels to reflect the local populations more accurately. (Note: If the GOI is unwilling or unable, the KRG should conduct the referendum with international assistance and monitoring.)

Recommendations to the KRG:
- Request monitoring by the international community if there is a referendum on independence. Work to ensure that Iraq, neighboring states, and the international community are kept fully informed of the process.
- Develop special power-sharing arrangements for Kirkuk city and other territories in the Kirkuk, Diyala, and Nineveh governorates if they vote for independence.
- Engage the GOI, Turkey, and Iran in a dialogue on post-independence political issues, such as boundaries and the terms of recognition, as well as economic issues.

Recommendations to the international community:
- Work with the KRG and the GOI, as well their neighbors, to support the development of a transparent roadmap and timetable for the possible decision by Iraqi Kurds to separate from Iraq. Transparency would enhance stable post-independence relations.

- Provide direct assistance to the Kurdistan Independent High Electoral Commission (KIHEC) so that the design and conduct of a referendum on independence meets international standards. Dispatch monitors to verify that the referendum is free and fair.

Security

ISIS is well armed with U.S.-made state-of-the-art military equipment it seized from the Iraqi Security Forces (ISF). U.S. cooperation with Kurdish forces, the peshmerga, is a model for successful security cooperation and should be expanded as the fight against ISIS develops.

Recommendation to the KRG:

- Strengthen the Ministry for Peshmerga Affairs to enhance civilian control of the military. Transform the peshmerga into a professional army by defining salary structures, paying salaries on a regular basis, and offering regular pensions and other retirement benefits. Organize peshmerga from the rival parties, the Kurdistan Democratic Party (KDP) and Patriotic Union of Kurdistan (PUK), into unified brigades established along geographical areas of recruitment. Support Ministry efforts to create non-partisan battalions in which new recruits do not affiliate by political party.

Recommendations to the international community:

- Continue to review the military needs of the peshmerga as the ISIS threat and the role of the Kurds evolve. Provide peshmerga with anti-tank weapons to more effectively defend themselves against Vehicle-Borne Improvised Explosive Devices (VBIEDs). Train and equip peshmerga with more sophisticated weapons as needed for offensive missions (such as retaking Mosul). Enhance local intelligence capacity by providing listening and tracking technology that can help identify terrorist threats.
- Invoke a presidential waiver to deliver weapons directly to the Kurds if needed, ensuring that the peshmerga continue to receive the weaponry they need to combat ISIS.
- Develop plans for a U.S. military base in Iraqi Kurdistan, to become fully operational when Iraqi Kurdistan becomes independent.

Kurdish, Regional, and International Relations

Although Iraqi Kurds have gained support in the United States and Europe, trans-Atlantic policy coordination is *ad hoc* and lacks focus. The international community has an interest in making Iraqi Kurdistan a bulwark of stability and a better ally in the fight against ISIS. Kurds in Iraq, Turkey, and Syria have just recently started coordinating their actions against ISIS.

Recommendation to the KRG:

- Reassure Turkey and Iran that the KRG harbors no plan for a greater Kurdistan incorporating the Kurds of Turkey, Syria, and Iran.

Recommendations to the international community:

- Support a more unified effort in Syria to defeat ISIS through cooperation among Kurdish groups.
- Understand that Iraqi Kurdistan is moving toward independence. Work with the KRG to develop a transparent process with a timetable and a roadmap and to allay international concerns about the possibility of independence.

The United States, which has an interest in working with the Kurds to fight ISIS, is best placed to facilitate cooperation among the Kurds and to serve as a broker of Kurdish issues with governments in the region. It should:

- Ensure that the Kurdish Peoples Protection Unit (YPG)—the Kurdish fighters in Northern Syria—has the necessary weapons to fight ISIS. Meet more frequently on a higher level with the authorities in Hasakah, Jazeera, and Kobani and the Democratic Union Party (PYD) in order to reinforce partnership with the PYD and reinforce the PYD's commitment to Kurdish autonomy in a reconstituted Syria.
- Encourage resumption of a cease-fire and political dialogue between Ankara and the Kurdistan Workers Party (PKK).

To better prepare for this leadership role, the United States should:

- Establish a "Future of Kurdistan Project," involving U.S. officials, private experts, and Iraqi Kurds in order to develop a capacity-building plan for Iraqi Kurdistan's democratic and economic development, as well as security.
- Appoint a Special Envoy for Kurdish Issues, bridging the gap between the Bureaus for Near Eastern Affairs and European Affairs at the State Department. The Special Envoy would serve as an inter-agency focal point within the U.S. government and help to coordinate policy between the United States and the European countries. The Special Envoy could act as the counterpart to a High Commissioner for Kurdish Issues in the United Kingdom, as well as special representatives from other countries.
- Issue a visa to the PYD Co-Chair, Salih Muslim, to attend high-level meetings in Washington.

Economic Opportunities

Hydrocarbons are the pillar of Iraqi Kurdistan's economy. Iraqi Kurdistan may have as much as 45 billion barrels of recoverable oil, as well as vast natural gas reserves. The KRG's principal problem is how to transport and monetize its hydrocarbon resources. Traditional sectors, such as agriculture, are also important to the Kurds who live off of the land. Tourism has potential, if visitors can travel freely and securely. Iraqi Kurdistan should invest in human capital and competitively upgrade its Internet and broadband systems, moving toward the establishment of a modern information-age economy. Iraqi

Kurdistan's economic performance suffers from over-employment by the state and the lack of an autonomous banking system, which limits business financing and capital flows.

Recommendations to the KRG:

Hydrocarbons

- Diversify export options, deepening energy ties with Turkey. International oil companies working in Iraqi Kurdistan are jittery. They need assurance that they will be paid arrears as soon as the KRG's economic crisis is addressed. Their concerns about nationalization of assets should be assuaged.

Banking and Credit

- Establish a central bank for Iraqi Kurdistan. Transition from a cash-based economy to an economy with better banking and financing. Foster a banking culture by building public confidence for citizens to deposit their money in banks. This requires a legal framework for retail and commercial banking. Work with international banking experts to introduce new products and services such as smart cards and online banking. Take steps toward a dual and/or independent currency.

Agriculture and Water

- Conduct a comprehensive study of water resources, which is critical to sustainable agricultural production and food security. Use survey results to modernize irrigation systems, implementing conservation strategies such as recycling water from sanitation facilities for agricultural use. Request the U.S. Geological Service (USGS) Water Resources Assessment Team to assist the survey and the development of water use and food security strategies.

Tourism

- Focus initially on marketing to visitors from Iraq and other Middle Eastern countries. As the security situation improves, expand outreach to tourists from Western and Asian countries, including packages focusing on eco-tourism, cultural, and religious sites.

Education and Human Capital

- Reduce the percentage of Iraqi Kurdistan's working population employed by the state. Strengthen the private sector by expanding employment benefits (e.g., pension benefits, health care financing, and unemployment insurance). Invest in human capital by matching curricula to the development of marketable skills and by expanding post-secondary, technical, and vocational educational opportunities that are directly linked to job generators (e.g., tourism, transportation, farming, food processing, and natural resource conservation). Relax bureaucratic oversight of private universities and diversify models for public universities. Request an AmeriCorps-type program to train college students within civil society organizations.

I. Introduction

Historical Background

The Kurds are the world's largest people without a state of their own. At least 32 million Kurds live in what they call Kurdistan: South Kurdistan in Iraq, North Kurdistan in Turkey, West Kurdistan in Syria, and East Kurdistan in Iran. Approximately five million Kurds reside in the Kurdistan Region of Iraq (KRI).[3] About one third of Kurds live outside Kurdistan. Nearly 85 percent of the Kurdish diaspora comes from Turkey. Iraqi Kurds form a large part of the Kurdish communities in Great Britain, the Netherlands, the United States, and Sweden. Germany is home to the largest Kurdish diaspora community, estimated at 1.5 million.[4]

Kurds have a history of betrayal and abuse. The 1920 Treaty of Sèvres, which emerged from the Paris Peace Conference, envisaged the possibility of an independent Kurdistan in what is now Turkey and parts of Iraq. That treaty was never put into effect. After the Republic of Turkey was founded in 1923, Turkish General and first President Mustafa Kemal Ataturk oversaw a policy of coercive assimilation in Turkey. Kurds were denied language and cultural rights; the Turkish state even denied their existence. A new state of Iraq was established as a British mandate under the League of Nations. Post-colonial Iraq proved hostile to Kurdish aspirations as well.

Mullah Mustafa Barzani was a founding father of contemporary Kurdish nationalism. Barzani commanded the security forces of the Kurdish Republic of Mahabad, which was established in Iran in 1946 but only lasted one year. Mullah Mustafa's son, Masoud Barzani, was born on the same day that the Kurdistan Democratic Party (KDP) was founded—August 16, 1946. "I was born in the shadow of the Kurdish flag of Mahabad," said Barzani. "I am ready to serve and die for the same flag."[5]

Mullah Mustafa negotiated an agreement with Saddam Hussein, then Vice-President of the Baath regime in Iraq, which established an autonomous Kurdistan region. Baghdad, however, reneged on its commitment. The KDP's struggle for autonomy was further undermined by the 1975 Algiers Accord between Iraq and Iran, which gave Iran favorable border adjustments on the Shatt al-Arab waterway. In return, Iran agreed to withdraw assistance for Mullah Mustafa. Deprived of logistical support, the KDP was defeated; Mullah Mustafa died in a Washington hospital in 1978. Jalal Talabani, who had clashed politically with Mullah Mustafa over the previous decades, formed the Patriotic Union of Kurdistan (PUK) with other prominent Kurdish leaders in 1975. The PUK professed a more leftist, less tribal political outlook then the KDP.

Saddam attacked Iran in 1980, hoping to reverse the concessions Iraq had made at Algiers; Iranian resistance proved implacable. Iran supported Kurdish nationalists as a countermove. Saddam concluded that the Kurds had betrayed

Iraq and, late in the Iraq-Iran War, launched the genocidal al-Anfal campaign. The expression comes from the eighth Sura in the Qur'an, which references the "spoils (of war)." Conventional and chemical weapons were used to clear Kurds from many towns and villages. Sarin and mustard gas killed up to 5,000 Kurds in Halabja on March 16, 1988. Approximately 182,000 Kurds were killed between 1987 and 1988.[6] Over 4,000 villages were destroyed.[7]

Saddam Hussein continued his war-mongering, attacking Kuwait in 1990. The United States led an international coalition to liberate Kuwait from Iraqi occupation, which left Saddam in power. President George H.W. Bush urged "the Iraqi military and the Iraqi people to take matters into their own hands and force Saddam Hussein, the dictator, to step aside." Kurds and Shiite Arabs responded, but the Bush administration did not intervene to support them, leaving them helpless before Saddam's counter-offensive. Over one million panic-stricken Kurds fled to Turkey and Iran. The U.S.-led Operation Provide Comfort saved Kurds from perishing in the mountains and established a no-fly zone north of the thirty-sixth parallel, creating conditions of security so that the Kurds could return home. Unrecognized self-rule allowed Iraqi Kurds to develop their political institutions, but the KDP and PUK could not resolve their political and economic rivalries. Armed clashes between the two parties broke out in 1994. In 1996, Masoud Barzani pushed the PUK out of Erbil, the regional capital, with the assistance of Saddam Hussein's forces. Fighting between the KDP and PUK ended with a U.S.-brokered agreement in 1998, but tensions remained.

Dysfunctional Iraq

Iraq's fragile politics became increasingly polarized after the U.S. invasion and occupation in 2003. Regime change deposed the Baathists and empowered Iraq's Shiite majority. Iraqi Kurds supplied the sole significant local forces that allied with the United States when the Iraq War began in 2003. The Kurds cooperated with the United States and the United Kingdom (UK) to establish a federal and democratic republic of Iraq. U.S. officials facilitated negotiations between Iraqis, leading to the Transitional Administrative Law of 2004 and Iraq's Constitution of 2005, which envisioned Iraq with enhanced powers for its regions while preserving essential functions of the central government. The constitution was ratified by 80 percent of Iraqis; the Kurds were almost unanimous in support.

Constitutional provisions on natural resources excluded the federal government from any ownership, confining its functions to shared management over oil fields already in production.[8] Oil revenues from existing fields were to be shared on a per capita basis, with new fields to be developed by the relevant regions and governorates. The Kurdish forces, the peshmerga ("those who face death"), were recognized as the lawful army of Kurdistan. Article 140 deferred a final determination of Kirkuk's political status, placing obligations

on the federal government to complete a referendum by December 31, 2007, on Kirkuk and other disputed territories.

Nouri al-Maliki of the Dawa Islamic Party became prime minister in 2006. He favored Shiites, who constitute about 55 percent of Iraq's population, ignoring the interests of Sunnis (20 percent), Kurds (20 percent), and other minorities (5 percent). Maliki alienated the Kurds by contesting Kurdistan's ownership of natural resources, Kurdistan's right to export new oil and gas, the role of the peshmerga, and the status of disputed territories. He delayed the federal government's obligations regarding Article 140, and excluded peshmerga from U.S. military assistance programs.

Iraqi politics grew increasingly dysfunctional. New electoral arrangements reduced Kurdistan's representation in the parliament. Hundreds of Sunni Arab candidates were accused of ties to the Baath Party and barred from running for parliament in 2010. Many others were threatened and forced to withdraw from the ballot. Sunni Arab extremists launched waves of pre-electoral violence to undermine the ballot.

With Iraqis at loggerheads, unable to form a government for nearly a year after the elections, Masoud Barzani played a pivotal role in mediating between Iraqi political parties, which resulted in the Erbil Agreement of November 11, 2010. This accord established nineteen power-sharing principles and divided leadership positions across a multi-party, multi-sectarian, and multi-national coalition. After nine months of acrimony and gridlock, Maliki was awarded another term as prime minister on December 21, 2010.

Maliki proceeded to abuse his powers in flagrant violation of the Constitution.[9] Rather than pursuing reconciliation, he took steps to consolidate his power by purging Iraq's professional officers from the Iraqi Security Forces (ISF), bringing security forces and militias under his direct control, and giving free reign to Shiite militias ("Popular Mobilization Forces"). Maliki marginalized prominent Sunni politicians. He also prevented both Sunnis and Shiites from exercising their constitutional right to hold referenda on converting their provinces into regions that would have the same powers and status as Kurdistan.

In 2014, Haider al-Abadi replaced Maliki as prime minister. Despite the leadership change and Abadi's efforts at reform, the Kurds have lost faith in Baghdad's ability to protect their interests. The international community still supports unity for Iraq, but Iraq is unraveling. Its collapse presents a major policy challenge to the international community, especially to the United States, which has invested so much blood and treasure to preserve a unified Iraq.[10]

The ISIS Crisis

The insurgencies in Iraq and Syria converged in 2014 as al-Qaeda in Iraq (AQI) morphed into ISIS and subsequently proclaimed an Islamic State. ISIS leader Abu Bakr al-Baghdadi announced a caliphate, with himself as caliph. ISIS includes former Baath Party members, military, and security officials who

joined forces with AQI. It draws upon the resentments of Sunni Arabs in Iraq, a formerly dominant minority, and Sunni Arabs in Syria, a majority long excluded from power.

ISIS fighters crossed the Syrian border, consolidating control of Mosul, Iraq's second largest city, on June 10, 2014. The Mosul garrison of 30,000 federal Iraqi soldiers showed no will to fight.[11] ISIS seized state-of-the-art military equipment abandoned by the ISF, including 2,300 Humvees, as well as tanks, artillery, and howitzers. During the summer of 2014, ISIS grew from fewer than 10,000 fighters to over 30,000. Its ranks were augmented by jihadis freed from local jails, local fighters, and opponents of the Shiite-dominated federal government. Jihadis from around the world volunteered to join ISIS, inspired by its social media campaign and military successes.

ISIS is also well financed. It seized $425 million from the Mosul branch of Iraq's Central Bank. Other revenues come from selling oil, artifacts, ransoming prisoners, racketeering, and extortion. Christians in Mosul were told to convert, pay a tax, or face death.

ISIS assumed an aura of invincibility. It conducted mass executions of Yazidi men and boys, and raped and sold into sexual slavery many Yazidi women and girls. The Yazidis, an ethnic community residing mainly in Nineveh province, believe in Zoroastrianism, which ISIS views as a demonic heresy.

Tikrit, Tal Afar, and the Baiji Power Plant fell to ISIS in rapid succession. In June and July 2014, ISIS advanced down the Tigris River Valley to the outskirts of Samarra and Baquba, just twenty-five kilometers from Baghdad. Sunni tribes welcomed ISIS, preferring the caliphate to the Shiite-led government in Baghdad.

In August, ISIS pivoted to attack Iraqi Kurdistan, seizing Makhmour and threatening Erbil. The United States saved Erbil from being overrun by launching air strikes and delivering weapons to the peshmerga. The Kurds woke up one morning to a 1,050-kilometer border with the Islamic State. Iraqi Kurdistan is no longer contiguous with lands controlled by the government of Iraq (GOI).

II. Iraqi Kurdistan Today

Humanitarian Emergency

Internally Displaced Persons (IDPs) fleeing ISIS arrive in Kurdistan on a daily basis, mostly from Sunni areas. As of June 2015, the UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA) reported that 8.2 million people in Iraq require immediate humanitarian support. This figure includes 3 million IDPs and 254,215 refugees.[12] Of these, 1,610,000 IDPs and refugees reside in the KRI. As of February 2015, the World Bank estimated the cost of stabilizing the refugee and IDP situation in Kurdistan at $1.4 billion.[13]

Refugees and IDPs have come to Iraqi Kurdistan in waves over the past decade. The first wave came in 2006 and 2007. It comprised Christians and Arabs fleeing Iraq's sectarian bloodletting, especially in Baghdad. The second wave fled Syria's civil war between 2011 and 2014. Of the 247,000 Syrian refugees who crossed Iraq's border, 242,000 ended up in Kurdistan.[14] The third wave consisted of Iraqis displaced when ISIS invaded in June 2014. Displaced persons require protection, shelter, sustenance, water, and sanitation. Children need schooling. Families need livelihoods. Public health is a significant challenge. The KRG's capacity is seriously overstretched.

The KRG Ministry of Health (MOH) has struggled to assist the growing number of IDPs. Since January 2015, some 946,000 Iraqi IDPs (157,000 families) have settled in the KRI. The most vulnerable are young children, pregnant women, women, and girls, who are susceptible to sexual and gender-based violence (SGBV), and elderly from single households. Many women and girls were gang-raped, used as sexual slaves, or forced into marriage. In Sinjar in 2014, Yazidi men and boys were executed and women were forced to watch beheadings of their family members. Many IDPs have been traumatized by ISIS atrocities, and require psychosocial counseling.

Winter conditions intensified problems for IDPs, increasing infectious diseases and the risk of death. Winter exacerbated shortages of housing, water, and sanitation, and disrupted routine immunization programs.[15] Health facilities were damaged by bombing and shelling, restricting service delivery. Sanitation has been a particularly worrisome issue, with limited numbers of latrines and showers.

Iraqi Kurdistan is undergoing a demographic transition resulting from the resettlement of IDPs. Arab Sunnis fleeing the Baghdad area find safe haven in the KRI. Those leaving other Sunni areas often go to the KRI because they do not feel safe in Baghdad, where they are subject to insults, threats, harassment, and extortion at checkpoints. Wealthier IDPs began buying properties a few years ago, contributing to a spike in Erbil's real estate prices. Newer arrivals are bringing cash and business. This may change, however, if their stays are prolonged and they run out of money. The KRG has accepted many unaccompanied children whose parents are with ISIS. The Kurdish community of

Shaklawa is referred to as "Shakluja" because there are so many Arabs from Falluja who have resettled there. The formerly Christian-majority town has doubled in size.

About 84,000 IDP families have resettled in Kirkuk. Their care is the sole responsibility of Kirkuk's Governorate. The growing number of Sunni Arabs resettling in Iraqi Kurdistan may exacerbate social tensions, which could worsen if the number increases or if they stay for long. To prevent ISIS infiltration, the KRG conducts border security and limits travel, mainly for Arab populations to and within Iraqi Kurdistan. Long queues are reported at, for example, the Maktab Khalid checkpoint outside of Kirkuk. Some ISIS cells have been dismantled, but they were mostly Kurdish youths.[16]

Funds are running out as the humanitarian emergency worsens. In 2014, Saudi Arabia made a one-time voluntary contribution of $500 million to the OCHA. It earmarked funds for minorities and the people of Anbar province, requiring that the money be spent between September 2014 and March 2015. With many minorities and Anbar IDPs coming to Iraqi Kurdistan, the UN and the KRG established a joint crisis center in Erbil. In June 2015, the World Health Organization (WHO) provided more than $17 million of medicines and medical supplies directly to the KRG's MOH. The WHO also worked with KRI-based health care providers to offer polio vaccinations to displaced persons.[17] The United States and other donor countries channel humanitarian assistance through the UN and other international and non-governmental organizations. The United States has not provided humanitarian assistance directly to the GOI or the KRG; it is, however, the global leader in responding to the humanitarian crises in Iraq and Syria. The United States has provided more than $4 billion in aid since the start of the Syria crisis, more than $183 million of which has assisted the 250,000 Syrian refugees in Iraq, and more than $416 million for Iraqis since the start of fiscal year 2014. The UN humanitarian response has been directed out of Erbil since the fall of Mosul in 2014. UN reports indicate that programs are concentrated in the KRI, where organizations have greater access.[18]

The UN launched a Humanitarian Response Plan in Brussels on June 4, 2015, requesting $197.9 million from donor countries. Pledges were less than expected. The UN is trying to encourage donors by establishing an open-source financial tracking system. The tracking system seeks to enhance transparency, guard against corruption, and ensure that pledges are delivered. Reflecting donor fatigue, donors pressed Iraq to move from an emergency phase to a post-conflict stabilization phase. It is, however, unrealistic to focus on post-conflict activities when large areas of Iraq are occupied and all of Iraq remains under threat from ISIS.

The KRG is developing a National Recovery Plan, emphasizing longer-term planning with focus on service sectors (e.g., education, literacy, health, food security, institution-building). This plan, which is notional at this time, would

be an opportunity for advancing the stabilization phase in Iraqi Kurdistan. It would emphasize the role of women in post-conflict stabilization. The recovery plan represents an opportunity for the Kurds to deepen cooperation with the international community and to develop direct relations with donors.

Recommendation to the KRG:

- Consolidate post-conflict planning through the KRG Recovery Plan. Its scope could be presented by a KRG official at a special session of the UNSC convened by a Council member under the "Arria formula." This mechanism allows non-state actors to attend discussions in an adjoining chamber to address the UNSC.

Recommendation to the GOI:

- Pay state employee salaries and give food allowances to IDPs in the KRG, just as it does to Iraqis under ISIS occupation.

Recommendations to the international community:

- Work with the KRG to arrange a briefing to the UNSC on the KRG's Recovery Plan under the Arria formula. (Other regions in Iraq could present similar appeals.)
- Create a UN humanitarian trust fund under the auspices of the United Nations Development Program (UNDP) and OCHA, earmarking resources for humanitarian action and recovery in the KRI.
- Provide enhanced direct donor support to agencies of the KRG (e.g., MOH and MOP), as well as KRI-based NGOs (e.g., WFP works with the Barzani Foundation on shelter; Sweden supports the Qandil Foundation's camp management via UNHCR). The MOH is well suited to ensure continuity of treatment for chronic conditions and non-communicable diseases, provide integrated vaccine services with a focus on measles and polio, and disseminate public health risk information directly to the public.
- Work directly with Kurdish community-based organizations to conduct local needs assessments and implement emergency health response strategies; distribute medicines and supplies; offer reproductive health care, especially safe obstetric and neo-natal care for victims of SGBV, and provide emergency mental health and psychosocial care.
- Encourage the U.S. Government Accountability Office (GAO) to track and evaluate U.S. AID and other U.S. government humanitarian aid efforts in Iraqi Kurdistan, report on their effectiveness, and make recommendations for improvement.
- Create a web-based, private humanitarian appeal for direct aid to needy and vulnerable people in Iraqi Kurdistan. Sponsored by a consortium of foundations and eligible NGOs, the appeal could build upon the Tent Foundation's innovative social media campaign, which galvanized 800,000 people to make contributions and express solidarity with Kurds during the Kobani crisis, when the Syrian Kurdish city was at risk of falling to ISIS.

Economic Crisis

The decade following 2003 saw dynamic double-digit economic growth in the KRI. According to the Economist Intelligence Unit, Iraqi Kurdistan ranked high on market opportunities, Foreign Direct Investment (FDI) policy, and macroeconomic environment. The friendly tax environment, manifest through low corporate and personal taxes, encouraged international trade and investment. The KRG instituted a 15 percent corporate tax rate and tax exemptions for companies with production-sharing agreements in the hydrocarbons sector. The KRG has a flat 5 percent income tax rate and no Value Added Tax. Its Regional Investment Law No. 4 (2006) was progressive, allowing foreign investors to own land and hold majority positions in joint ventures. As of February 2014, 2,830 foreign companies were registered in the KRI. Of these, 45 percent were Turkish and 80 percent of all goods for sale in the KRG came from Turkey.[19]

The KRG has radically improved infrastructure since 2003. In 2013 alone, $2 billion was spent on infrastructure projects.[20] Plans exist for a new bridge and five new crossings on Iraqi Kurdistan's border with Turkey to ease the transport bottleneck, where trucks are often lined up for miles on both sides. Erbil and Suleimani now have modern international airports. There are daily flights to Europe and Turkey as well as other Middle Eastern cities, such as Beirut, Dubai, and Amman. The KRI has 357 kilometers of highways, about 2,500 kilometers of one-lane roads, 4,000 kilometers of secondary roads, and 3,000 kilometers of rural roads.[21]

Electricity production has increased steadily since 2008, nearly doubling between 2011 and 2012. Two to three hours of electricity per day was standard for businesses five years ago. In the first half of 2014, businesses had nearly uninterrupted power supplies.[22] Most electricity comes from the plentiful supply of natural gas.

The Information Technology (IT) and communications sectors have advanced. There are currently twenty-one companies providing Internet services. Newroz Telecom and KurdTel are dominant digital network companies. There are three mobile operators with Global System for Mobile Communication licenses in Kurdistan: Zain Iraq, a unit of Kuwait's Zain; Qatar Telecom (Qtel), a subsidiary of Asiacell; and France Telecom, which is affiliated with Erbil-based Korek Telecom. Mobile penetration rate is estimated at around 80 percent.[23]

Iraqi Kurdistan's economy went into recession in 2014, triggered by the suspension of oil payments by Baghdad, depressed energy prices, and the collapse of investor confidence due to the invasion of ISIS. The economic crisis was exacerbated by military and humanitarian expenditures in the fight against ISIS. Beginning in 2004, the GOI agreed to pay 17 percent of revenues each month to the KRG, roughly equivalent to $1.2 billion. In February 2014, it suspended payments to the KRG due largely to its own economic crisis and in reprisal for the KRG's export of oil from new fields.

In December 2014, the GOI and the KRG reached the Baghdad Agreement, in which the GOI was to resume payments to the KRG in exchange for the export of 550,000 barrels per day (BPD) of Kurdish oil via Iraq's State Oil Marketing Organization (SOMO). The agreement was never implemented, however; Baghdad did not make its payments and the KRG did not send the full allotment of oil, maintaining that the goal of 550,000 BPD was to be averaged over the year.

The KRG's budget shortfall was compounded by the downturn in world oil prices in November 2014. The KRG's overall budget had been $13 billion in 2013, with a budget deficit of $1 billion. The deficit was $6.5 billion in 2014, and is estimated at $12.5 billion for 2015.[24] Investor confidence has plummeted in the aftermath of ISIS's invasion. Simply put, the KRG is out of money. It is owed billions by Iraq, which is itself on the brink of bankruptcy. The KRG experienced a 70 percent reduction of its revenues in 2014; civil servants, numbering about 1.2 million or 70 percent of the work force, were not paid for months.

Problems exist with economic governance. Responsibilities are diffuse. The Finance Ministry is responsible for general expenses and salaries. The Planning Ministry manages capital investment. The Natural Resources Ministry oversees exploration and production (E&P) of oil and gas. The KRG lacks a consolidated balance sheet. Budgetary excesses include $4 billion for fuel subsidies in 2014. The public payroll includes employees who do not show up for work or who do not exist. The salary structure is bloated by nineteen categories of "allowances" (e.g., family bonus, hardship/danger bonus, and a bonus for employees with doctorates). Public sector entitlements act as a disincentive to joining the private sector.

According to the Economist Intelligence Unit, Iraqi Kurdistan struggles with its human capital, labor market, conditions for financing, and infrastructure. Road networks and road maintenance need improvement. The KRI lacks a comprehensive highway system, which is necessary for commerce and transportation. Iraqi Kurdistan needs more efficient management of electricity generation, transmission, and distribution. Households still experience cutoffs of up to twelve hours per day.[25] Beginning in 1991, construction was a leading contributor to Kurdistan's economic growth. Today the landscapes of Erbil and other cities are dotted with inactive construction cranes and hollow high-rise buildings.

The KRG's legal system is inefficient, marked by the lack of a clear timetable for legal processes. Dispute resolution mechanisms are inadequate. Bureaucracy affects the issuing of licenses to start up businesses, which requires approvals from multiple ministries. The regulatory burden of merging systems in Erbil and Suleimani is also a challenge. Insufficient data makes it difficult for businesses to assess potential opportunities and costs.

Recommendations to the KRG:

- Review and strengthen transparency of the Investment Law, which was adopted in July 2006. Create a predictable environment for doing business through a legal system that governs commerce and property rights, as well as taxes and tariffs that are levied in a more consistent and transparent way.
- Improve economic planning by developing a consolidated public sector balance sheet, including borrowing. Harmonize budgetary practices across the three governorates of Iraqi Kurdistan, and improve communications between relevant ministries.
- Enhance public sector capabilities by establishing a professional civil service responsible for hiring, retention, and promotions, as well as setting compensation rates. The KRG needs a statistical body to compile economic and business data, starting with a population census.
- Increase revenues to the KRG through a tariff structure that accurately reflects the real cost of electricity and water; improve collection rates via automatic monitoring of meters; and reduce costs by phasing out fuel subsidies and other allowances, which deter efficient use of resources.
- Promote FDI by creating special economic and industrial zones, reducing cash-based transactions, simplifying the permitting process for doing business, and strengthening dispute-resolution mechanisms.
- Expand Internet systems with more bandwidth, speed, and reliability for individual and commercial consumers (e.g., asymmetric digital subscriber lines), as a step toward building a digital economy. Expand landline phone access to all cities.

Kurdistan Government

KRG law limits the presidency to two terms of four years each. Masoud Barzani was elected to his first term in 2005 by the parliament, and reelected in 2009 by the people in a direct election. Barzani's second term was extended by two years to August 19, 2015. The Kurds are engaged in a contentious debate about modifying the Presidency Law, which could involve either extending Barzani's term or holding new presidential elections. As of September 2015, negotiations are ongoing. Disputes over the Presidency Law highlight the need to consolidate Iraqi Kurdistan's democratic institutions and reduce the influence of families on political parties.

Under the Iraqi Constitution, regions are entitled to have their own constitutions. Iraqi Kurdistan started drafting a constitution separate from the federal constitution in 2005, but it has yet to be finalized. Negotiations are at an impasse as a result of recent disputes between the PUK, the KDP, which favors a strong executive presidency, and Gorran, a movement for change that became a political party in 2009, which favors a parliamentary system.

The 2005 Iraqi Kurdistan draft constitution defines relations between the GOI and the KRI as a federal region within Iraq. It asserts that Iraqi

Kurdistan voluntarily entered into a federal union and, as an equal party, has the right to secede from Iraq: "The people of Iraqi Kurdistan have the right to self-determination, and under this right they are free to determine their politics and free to achieve their economic, social, and cultural development."[26] The draft constitution establishes a presidency, armed forces, and citizenship guidelines (Article 6). It enshrines democratic government and a robust system of checks and balances. It includes a bill of rights and significant protection and affirmative duties to promote linguistic, religious, and ethnic minority rights. It enshrines cultural symbols such as a flag, anthem, and national and cultural holidays (Article 12). It assigns responsibility for security to the peshmerga, restricting their deployment outside of Kurdistan without authorization by Kurdistan's Parliament (Article 13). It lays claim to full sovereignty of energy resources developed after August 15, 2005 (Article 113). The draft constitution envisions a referendum on the status of the Kirkuk Governorate and other territories deemed historically Kurdish.

While Iraqi Kurdistan has a Kurdish majority, a diverse array of ethnic, linguistic, and religious minorities reside in the region. Arabs, Turkmen, and Armenians are nationally and linguistically distinct; Yazidis, Shabak, and Faylis are religiously distinct from most Kurdish speakers. Assyrians, Chaldeans, and Syriacs are Christians; they speak variations of Aramaic and are often trilingual. The KRG's official policy maintains that "political pluralism and religious tolerance are fundamental to the region's development." The KRG seeks "deliberate tolerance of our people and the tolerance of our government toward opposing beliefs and opinions."

Though minorities in Iraqi Kurdistan enjoy far more rights than minorities in other parts of Iraq, some of these non-Kurdish minorities object to an undeclared assimilation policy that they call "Kurdification." For example, some Turkmen have complained about social engineering in Kirkuk; some Assyrians say their heritage is excluded from school curricula, museums, and other public spaces, and they have had difficulty obtaining licenses for their organizations. The Shabak have complained that schools in Shabak communities were required to teach the Kurdish language.[27] Some Yazidis objected to the presence of Asaish, the KRG's internal security service. Human rights groups have expressed concern about freedom of expression, freedom of movement, and press freedoms across the KRI.[28]

Kurdistan has historically been a patriarchal society. Education is essential to changing attitudes toward women and work. Kurdish women are increasingly benefiting from expanded educational opportunities, which are providing greater literacy for girls. Female literacy among Kurdish women now exceeds the female literacy rate of Arab women in Iraq. Kurdistan is moving toward a more modern attitude to women. This trend is fueled by a gradual increase in economic development for women, affecting their socio-economic

status. The Kurdistan Regional Parliament adopted an electoral law requiring that a minimum of 30 percent of its seats be allocated to women.

Progressive laws banning "honor killings" have been adopted, but women are still targeted for actions deemed to have dishonored their families. The perpetrators of honor killings are still seen as heroes for protecting the honor of their families. The KRG adopted the Family Violence Law in August 2011, banning the practice of female genital mutilation (FGM), but adequate steps have not been taken to implement the law, especially in remote rural areas.[29] Personal status and family laws discriminate against women in marriage, divorce, child custody, and inheritance.

Recommendations to the KRG:

- Settle the controversy peacefully over whether to have a presidential system, a parliamentary system, or a combination of the two.
- Ensure full human rights, including freedom of expression and minority rights, even prior to implementation of the constitution. The constitution should meet and exceed the highest international standards for linguistic, religious, ethnic, and national minority rights, including local autonomy. Focus on implementation. The constitution should also meet and exceed the highest international standards for women's rights.
- Promote women's rights more vigorously by working to change cultural mores on honor killings and enforcing the law prohibiting FGM. Issue a civil code governing marriage, divorce, child custody, and inheritance that grants women and men equal rights under the law.
- Expand participation by women in the Council of Ministers. Demonstrate a commitment to women's rights by adopting a regional plan for implementing UNSC Resolution 1325, which complements the GOI's nascent National Action Plan.

Transparency

Corruption and lack of transparency are especially acute in countries with extractive industries, which rely heavily on oil as a primary source of revenue. Such challenges exist across the Middle East, including Iraqi Kurdistan.

Smuggling and illicit economic activity were normal during the period of double sanctions imposed by the UN on Iraq and by Baghdad on the KRI between 1992 and 2003. Iraqi Kurdistan's cash-based economy, which expanded dramatically after 2003, fostered a culture of entitlement and a freewheeling approach toward capital accumulation. The concentration of power, nepotism, and patronage gave rise to a widespread perception that connections are needed to conduct business, and that corruption is sanctioned by elites.

Kurdistan's leaders are on record as opposing corruption and patrimonialism. They will be judged, however, by what they do, not by what they say. Tackling corruption not only has material benefits for the national economy

and budget, but can also serve political objectives by demonstrating the KRG's commitment to good governance. Steps to address corruption and transparency, including establishing the Office of Governance and Integrity in February 2010, are viewed positively by international agencies, governments, and international corporations. As such, they have a favorable effect on both the KRG's business and diplomatic relations.

A number of high-profile officials in the KRG have been charged with corruption, including the former mayor of Suleimani. Despite this, however, a 2012 poll showed that 88 percent of respondents were critical of government efforts to combat corruption.[30] Highly publicized incidents involving reports of corruption affecting oil companies operating in the KRG have further damaged its reputation.[31] Eliminating corrupt practices and creating a culture of accountability will take time.

Recommendations to the KRG:

- Enforce the rule of law. Prosecute and punish corrupt public officials, regardless of their administrative rank. Provide the civil service with clear anti-corruption guidelines and a code of conduct, especially on government contracting.
- Publish data on oil revenues. Enhance transparency by utilizing the legal, management, and communications expertise of international organizations experienced in combating corruption (e.g., UN Global Compact, Transparency International, the Extractive Industries Transparency Initiative).
- Establish an ombudsman or comparable agency, including a complaints hotline, responsible for investigating instances of alleged corruption.

III. The Path to Independence

During negotiations over the 2005 constitution, the Kurds made a deal to remain in Iraq if Iraq were truly federal, democratic, and decentralized. Reflecting a view widely held by the Kurds, however, Masoud Barzani said: "I cannot say if it will be next year, or when, but certainly independent Kurdistan is coming."[32]

Referendum on Independence

Masoud Barzani announced plans for a referendum on Kurdistan's independence in an address to parliament on July 4, 2014.[33] He reiterated his commitment to the referendum on May 7, 2015, and again in private to members of this Task Force on May 22. Barzani has said the referendum would follow the defeat of ISIS, but otherwise has not set a timetable. He believes that a referendum on independence would establish a legal, popular, and international legitimacy for a declaration of Kurdish independence in the future. The KRG insists that it will conduct a referendum on independence in a deliberative and transparent manner, avoiding precipitous decisions or reckless pronouncements. The KRG will also engage in dialogue with the GOI, Turkey, and Iran on technical issues that will affect their post-independence relations. It will keep the international community informed in the event that there is a declaration of independence.

The Kurds have debated independence before. In July 2003, a group of Kurdish intellectuals in Suleimani launched the Kurdish Referendum Movement. They circulated a petition demanding the right to an official referendum on the Kurds' future status. The petition garnered 1,732,535 signatures, a majority of the voting-age population. It was presented to the UN Office of Electoral Assistance on December 22, 2004. The petition set the stage for an unofficial referendum on January 30, 2005. Voters were given two options: to stay a part of Iraq, or to be independent. A total of 1,998,061 people participated in the referendum, which was held in all Kurdish areas of Northern Iraq, including Kirkuk, Khanaqin, and Kurdish areas in Nineveh province. Kurds living in Baghdad and other Arab municipalities were not included. The pro-independence vote garnered 98.8 percent support: nearly all voted for independence.[34]

The path from the referendum to a declaration of independence is far from clear. There is no timetable or roadmap. What is clear, however, is that the Iraqi Kurds are setting up a *de facto* independent state. The policies of the GOI and the international community should shift to reflect this reality. Doing so will help ease the transition should the Iraqi Kurds move to a *de jure* independent Kurdistan.

Confederation

A confederation is a union of autonomous political units that band together because their individual interests are enhanced through common action, and in which each of the entities retains its sovereignty and its right to seek independence. Confederations are often established by treaty between confederation members who enjoy equal status.

The KRG may consider proposing a confederation with Baghdad, either as a transitional arrangement or because it deems independence to be impractical given regional opposition. As a transitional measure, this would give Iraqis time to adjust to Iraqi Kurdistan's eventual independence. It would create breathing space as Iraqis gradually redefine their relations with one another, aggregating interests to achieve greater self-rule through the formation of states: one Kurdish, one Sunni, and one or more Shiite regions.

Confederation is, however, difficult to achieve. Constitutional changes require a referendum and approval by the majority of voters. Any three governorates can defeat a referendum on a constitutional amendment with a two-thirds vote.

Recommendation to the GOI:

- In accordance with Article 140 of the Iraqi Constitution, hold a referendum on the status of the Kirkuk governorate and other disputed territories in the Diyala and Nineveh governorates, with monitoring by the international community. Votes should be counted on district and sub-district levels to reflect the local populations more accurately. (Note: If the GOI is unwilling or unable, the KRG should conduct the referendum with international assistance and monitoring.)

Recommendations to the KRG:

- Request monitoring by the international community if there is a referendum on independence. Work to ensure that Iraq, neighboring states, and the international community are kept fully informed of the process.
- Develop special power-sharing arrangements for Kirkuk city and other territories in the Kirkuk, Diyala, and Nineveh governorates, if they vote for independence.
- Engage the GOI, Turkey, and Iran in a dialogue on post-independence issues (e.g., water, hydrocarbons, boundaries, debt and asset allocation, and the terms of recognition).
- Underscore that the KRG harbors no plan for a greater Kurdistan incorporating the Kurds of Turkey, Syria, and Iran.

Recommendations to the international community:

- Work with the KRG and the GOI, as well their neighbors, to support the development of a timetable and a roadmap for the possible decision by Iraqi Kurds to separate from Iraq. Transparency would enhance stable post-independence relations.

- Provide direct assistance to the Kurdistan Independent High Electoral Commission (KIHEC) so that the design and conduct of a referendum on independence meets international standards. Dispatch monitors to verify that the referendum is free and fair.

IV. Security

According to Masoud Barzani, "It is the collective responsibility of the whole world to defeat [ISIS]."[35] The Kurds have shown the commitment and capability to accomplish this. While ridding Syria of ISIS is beyond the scope of this report, the issues below require urgent attention.

The Peshmerga

The peshmerga were outgunned when ISIS attacked Sinjar in August 2014. Since 2003, the GOI has refused to cooperate with the peshmerga, denying them salaries, weapons, and training. The peshmerga only had Russian-made weapons seized from the Iraqi Army in the 1990s.[36] They were used to fighting in the mountains, not defending territory. Traditionally, the peshmerga functioned as a guerrilla force; they lack counter-insurgency experience.

Beginning in August 2014, the United States started providing unprecedented levels of security assistance to the KRG. Coalition air power was decisive in preventing the advance of ISIS fighters. The United States set up a U.S.-Kurdish Joint Military Command Center in Erbil. It embarked on an ambitious train-and-equip program with Kurdish forces. The United States facilitated the supply of weapons to peshmerga from coalition countries.[37] As of July 2015, the United States had given the KRG 54 million rounds of ammunition, 4,000 rounds of anti-tank munitions, tens of thousands of rifles, body armor, many vehicles and Humvees, and 25 Mine Protected Ambush Resistant (MRAP) vehicles. The U.S. Department of Defense (DOD) delivered some 70 planeloads of weapons. Of the $1.6 billion in weapons earmarked through the DOD's Iraq Train and Equip Fund, about $400 million is directed toward helping the Kurds,[38] including the establishment of a "Building Partnership Capacity" site in Erbil. As of May 2015, more than 3,000 U.S. military advisers were based in Iraqi Kurdistan.

The peshmerga have taken losses in the fight against ISIS. As of July 2015, 1,280 peshmerga have been killed and at least 7,000 wounded.[39] In addition, military expenditures may represent as much as 10 percent of the KRG's budget, making its relative expenditure on military the highest in the world.[40] The Ministry of Peshmerga Affairs provides the families of fallen peshmerga with a stipend of $7,000. Housing and other benefits are provided to the families of the deceased or wounded. Corporations in Iraqi Kurdistan pitch in to cover costs.

The Obama administration has adopted a "light footprint" strategy, which involves air support and intelligence to aid the Kurds in their fight against ISIS.[41] But the administration has made it clear that it will not put boots on the ground in combat operations. Without U.S. Special Forces as spotters to identify targets, most U.S. sorties return to base with their munitions intact, having been unable to identify and attack high-value targets. Despite these challenges, the multinational coalition had launched 5,600 sorties as of July

28, 2015—60 percent of which targeted ISIS in Iraq.[42] The steady stream of air support and weapons provided by the United States to the Iraqi Kurds has enabled them to defend Erbil, but they still face threats of Vehicle-Borne Improvised Explosive Devices (VBIEDs) on the front-line with ISIS.

Masoud Barzani requested heavy offensive weapons from Obama when they met in the Oval Office on May 6, 2015. He asked for the same military equipment that the United States provides to Iraq: F-16 jet fighters, Apache attack helicopters, M1 Abrams tanks, armored vehicles, and anti-tank missiles. He also requested drones for intelligence, surveillance, and reconnaissance.[43] Barzani maintained that the peshmerga would need these weapons to deter future advances by ISIS and to participate in the fight to retake Mosul. Kurds will join the battle for Mosul in Kurdish-populated areas, but will not fight in Arab-majority neighborhoods.

The United States has a policy for arming the Kurds: "By, with, and through" Baghdad. It insists on coordinating all U.S. military assistance with the GOI.[44] The Obama administration is reluctant to provide weapons directly to the peshmerga, which would allow it to function like a national army, because it does not want its military assistance to be construed as an endorsement of independence. It is also concerned that heavy offensive weapons might ultimately be used in a fight for independence with the ISF. In addition, the United States has concerns about the lack of training of the Kurds to use and maintain some of the more sophisticated weaponry.

The GOI approves military equipment transfers to the KRG, clearing weapons through customs in Baghdad before transferring them to Erbil. Kurdish leaders expressed concern about this process to members of this Task Force; they would prefer to receive the weapons directly. U.S. officials, however, counter that the United States delivers materials quickly via the GOI. Masrour Barzani, Masoud's son and Chancellor of the Kurdistan Regional Council, maintains that an independent Iraqi Kurdistan will be more effective against ISIS: "We would be able to make our own agreements to purchase our own weapons in quantity, quality and on time."[45]

This is an issue that will remain under review as the threat from ISIS evolves. Particularly alarming are reports that surfaced in mid-August 2015 that ISIS had used chemical agents, possibly mustard gas, against Kurdish forces in northern Iraq. More sophisticated weaponry may be required for the defense of the Kurds, or if the Kurds participate more broadly in the fight against ISIS.

Another key issue affecting Washington's support for the Kurds is the lack of unity between the peshmerga affiliated with the KDP and the peshmerga allied with the PUK. While the United States brokered the 1998 Washington Agreement, ending the civil war between these Kurdish factions, the KDP and the PUK peshmerga are still not fully unified. There are questions about where weapons go, who gets them, and whether the distribution is fair to all parties.

Traditionally, the peshmerga were voluntary militias acting as armed wings of political parties. Party loyalty was paramount. Parties still influence decisions over recruitment, appointments, and promotions. Such politicization limits military effectiveness. Both the Kurds and the international community have a stake in rectifying divisions between the KDP and the PUK so that the peshmerga are a more unified and effective fighting force.

The KRG heralds some progress in integrating the KDP and the PUK peshmerga. According to the Minister of Peshmerga Affairs, 14 battalions, consisting of 160,000 active-duty soldiers and reserves, have so far been integrated. Only Brigade 70 (PUK-affiliated) and Brigade 80 (KDP-affiliated), which operate on the frontlines in Kirkuk, remain under party control. The Minister of Peshmerga Affairs is a Gorran representative. Its lack of an independent militia gives it a clear stake in the successful integration of the KDP and the PUK peshmerga into a common army. As part of the KRG's security sector reform, progress has been made to eliminate "ghost soldiers"—people who are on the payroll but do not perform services. Downsizing peshmerga is a delicate task. KRG officials stress that the peshmerga have a revered place in society and need to be retired honorably.

While peshmerga integration is progressing, the intelligence agencies (Asaish) of the KDP and the PUK remain largely separate, especially on the function of information-gathering. Asaish is active in every governorate, relying on human intelligence at the district and sub-district levels. Asaish, however, lacks state of the art technology, such as listening devices that can identify the location of intercepts. As an integral part of security in the KRG, the Asaish need modernized systems to work more effectively.

Some in the U.S. Congress are pushing the Obama administration to arm the Kurds directly. On June 16, a bipartisan majority of the U.S. Senate voted "to provide for a temporary, emergency authorization of defense articles, defense services, and related training directly to the Kurdistan Regional Government." The measure, supported by a 54 to 45 margin, reflects a broad level of popular support in the country for directly arming the KRG. It failed, however, to gain the 60-vote requirement for passage.

On April 27, 2015, the House Armed Services Committee released its annual defense bill, which included $715 million for aid to Iraqi forces to fight ISIS. It designated 25 percent of that amount for the peshmerga, the Sunni tribal militias, and the Sunni National Guard. The bill "would require that the Kurdish peshmerga, the Sunni tribal security forces, and the Iraqi Sunni National Guard be deemed a country" so they could "directly receive assistance from the United States." A bipartisan group of U.S. lawmakers, including House Foreign Affairs Committee Chairman Ed Royce and Ranking Member Eliot Engel, also introduced legislation authorizing direct weapons transfers to the peshmerga.[46]

The Obama administration strongly argues against directly arming the peshmerga, citing the Arms Control Export Act. Secretary of Defense Ashton

Carter wrote Senator John McCain on June 10: "I am writing to express concern about legislation that would authorize the President to directly arm forces of the Kurdistan Regional Government or other groups within Iraq, without the specific consent of the Iraqi government in Baghdad. Although I agree that our security partners in Iraq need to be armed expeditiously in order to counter the Islamic State in Iraq and the Levant (ISIL), this type of legislation risks fracturing the Government of Iraq, may have implications for force protection, and is redundant given that Kurdish forces are already receiving defense equipment in an expedited manner."[47] The United States doggedly maintains its "one Iraq policy." If the current or future U.S. government changes course, a presidential waiver could allow weapons to flow directly.

Recommendations to the KRG:

- Transform the peshmerga into a professional army by defining salary structures, paying salaries on a regular basis, and offering regular pensions and other retirement benefits. (We recognize that the integration and the professionalization of the peshmerga are impeded by the current budget crisis.)
- Embrace local recruitment for local units. Bring all officer cadets into a single Officer Training System. Mingle the KDP peshmerga and the PUK peshmerga through specialized units under headquarters command (e.g., Special Forces and technical units).
- Strengthen the Ministry for Peshmerga Affairs to further establish civilian control of the military. Support Ministry efforts to create non-partisan battalions in which new recruits do not affiliate by political party.
- Take steps to integrate intelligence agencies. Integration of headquarters functions (i.e., intelligence-sharing and analysis) will proceed faster than integration of intelligence collection, which is a locally driven process that relies on KDP and PUK structures at the grass roots.

Recommendations to the international community:

- Continue to review the military needs of the Kurds as the ISIS threat and the role of the Kurds evolve.
- Provide the peshmerga with anti-tank weapons to more effectively defend themselves against ISIS by disabling VBIEDs.
- Train and equip the peshmerga with more sophisticated weapons as needed for any offensive missions (such as retaking Mosul).
- Enhance local intelligence capacity through listening technology that can identify terrorist threats.
- Invoke a presidential waiver to deliver weapons directly, if needed, to ensure that the Kurds continue to receive the weaponry they need in the fight against ISIS.
- Develop plans for a U.S. military base in Iraqi Kurdistan that would become fully operational when Iraqi Kurdistan becomes independent.

V. Kurdish, Regional, and International Relations

The secret Sykes-Picot agreement between British and French diplomats in 1916 laid the foundation for a post-Ottoman map of the Middle East, dividing the Kurds over four countries. "Sykes-Picot was a great injustice," said Masoud Barzani. "Nobody asked us and we paid a huge price."[48]

Kurds in Iraq, Turkey, Syria, and Iran have been divided by the boundaries of nation-states for over a century. While there is interaction between Kurdish leaders, the Kurds are only now beginning to coordinate their actions as a result of the existential struggle against the Islamic State. Iraqi Kurdistan's emergence as an independent state would have significant impact on Kurds in the region, as well as states bordering Iraqi Kurdistan.

The international community can assist in addressing the tensions in the neighboring countries. While Iraqi Kurds have gained support in the United States and the European countries, trans-Atlantic policy coordination is *ad hoc* and lacks focus. There is no coherent coordinated plan for capacity-building in Iraqi Kurdistan. The international community has an interest in making Iraqi Kurdistan a bulwark of stability, and a better ally in the fight against ISIS. The Kurds in Iraq, Turkey, Syria, and Iran are only now beginning to coordinate their actions as they mobilize against the Islamic State. The international community can assist in this effort.

The Kurds in Turkey

The Kurdistan Workers Party (PKK) launched its rebellion in Turkey in 1984. It has since abandoned demands for independence in favor of Kurdish rights and self-rule within a democratic Turkey. In 2009, the Turkish government under then–Prime Minister Recep Tayyip Erdogan declared its "Democracy Initiative," which was supposed to lead to constitutional and legal changes to improve democratic rights for everyone, including Kurds. There was little progress, despite intermittent secret talks between Turkish intelligence and PKK representatives in Oslo between 2009 and 2011. Two years later, in 2013, the PKK's imprisoned leader, Abdullah Ocalan, announced a ceasefire after secret talks with Turkey's head of intelligence, Hakan Fidan, which were held at Imrali prison where Ocalan is detained. The ceasefire was supposed to be followed by a withdrawal of PKK forces from Turkish territory, but the rebel group halted the withdrawal, claiming that Turkish troops were taking over the vacated positions and building new, fortified military camps.

After a decade of electoral dominance, Erdogan's Justice and Development Party (AKP) received 40.9 percent of the vote in national elections on June 7, 2015, not enough to rule without a coalition government. AKP's drop in votes, from 49.8 percent in the previous national elections, reflected growing disenchantment with Erdogan's divisive politics, his efforts to establish a presidency-dominant system, and his harsh treatment of civil society

and critics. The Peoples' Democratic Party (HDP) was the big winner, beating expectations and breaking through Turkey's 10-percent electoral threshold. HDP received 13.1 percent of the vote, enough to secure 80 seats in Turkey's 550-seat parliament; it finished fourth in the popular vote and tied for third in number of seats. According to Turkey's electoral law, parties that receive less than 10 percent of the vote cannot be seated in the parliament, and their votes are re-distributed to the other parties. Had the HDP not crossed the barrier, the AKP would have gained most of its 80 seats, putting it in position to form a government and possibly to change the constitution on its own, giving the president more powers, as Erdogan wanted.

In July 2015, just a month after the AKP's electoral setback, Erdogan gave permission for U.S. warplanes to use Incirlik Air Base for strikes against ISIS. The ostensible goal was to establish an ISIS-free zone and ensure greater stability along Turkey's border with Syria.[49] Erdogan, however, also exploited the Incirlik deal to launch heavy strikes against the PKK in the Qandil mountains of northern Iraq, where the group has bases. Attacks and counter-attacks by the Turkish military and the PKK then followed in rapid succession, apparently ending the near-term chances of a formal peace process.

Kurds in Turkey were outraged by Erdogan's attacks against the PKK. Support for the PKK runs deep among Kurds in Turkey. Despite the HDP's strong showing in the elections, PKK leaders made it clear they would not be bound by the HDP's civilian authority.

Iraqi Kurds have a complex relationship with Turkey. Masoud Barzani is not very popular among Kurds in Turkey who resent him for cooperating with the Erdogan government. HDP supporters were dismayed when Barzani appeared with Erdogan at a campaign rally in Diyarbakir on November 16, 2013. They resented Barzani's statements of support for Turkey's attacks against the PKK in Qandil this summer. Disputes between the PKK and Barzani over agendas and ideologies caused the collapse of plans for a pan-Kurdish unity conference in 2013. The KRG wants the PKK to move its bases out of northern Iraq. According to Masrour Barzani, "They must leave. This is one of the reasons why we are so eager to see the Kurdish peace process inside Turkey succeed."[50]

Masoud and his nephew, Nechirvan Barzani, who is prime minister of the KRG, have established close personal relations with Erdogan. In addition, the KRG is deeply involved with Turkey's state apparatus. Trade between the KRG and Turkey was $12 billion in 2014, making the KRG Turkey's second largest market (after Germany). Major Turkish construction and engineering firms have built the Erbil airport, roads, hotels, and hospitals. The KRG exports mostly oil to and through Turkey.

The KRG believed that economic diplomacy would enhance overall relations with Turkey. It has done so, notwithstanding Turkey's non-responsiveness to the KRG's appeals for weapons to help fight ISIS. Turkish officials rebuffed

the KRG's envoy when ISIS attacked. In August 2014, a senior KRG official met then–Foreign Minister Ahmet Davutoglu in Istanbul to ask for weapons. Davutoglu declined, citing the presidential elections on August 10. The envoy met a representative of Turkey's National Intelligence Agency (MIT) several weeks later. He was told that Turkey could not support the KRG because ISIS was holding hostages from the Turkish consulate in Erbil.

Cooperation with Turkey is vital to the KRG. Nechirvan Barzani, in particular, is deeply invested in the strategic partnership with Turkey. Iraqi Kurdistan needs a corridor to the outside world. Oil exports to Ceyhan are critical for accessing global energy markets. All of this gives Turkey significant influence over the KRG. If Iraqi Kurdistan were to declare independence over Turkish objections, Ankara could close the pipeline or implement an even broader economic embargo.

The Kurds in Syria

The Syrian government largely withdrew from Qamishli, Kobani, and Afrin in 2012 and 2013. The Kurds filled the gap with a civil administration that is strongly secular, promotes gender equality (a woman and a man share all important offices in the administration), and provides services, albeit at a low level. The Democratic Union Party (PYD) announced the formation of a Democratic Self-Rule Administration in Syrian Kurdistan in November 2013. The declaration of inclusive governance was issued by forty sociopolitical organizations, including Arabs, Yazidis, Assyrians, and Christians.

Syrian Kurdistan is called "Rojava." The PYD is the dominant political party in Rojava. Though the PYD denies formal linkage with the PKK, its platform of grass-roots democracy, sustainable development, and women's empowerment echo Ocalan's platform. The PKK is listed as a Foreign Terrorist Organization (FTO) by the United States. The PYD, however, is not considered an FTO.

The United States initially ignored the PYD's appeals as ISIS advanced on Kobani, maintaining that the city had no strategic value.[51] In the fall of 2014, when ISIS occupied 80 percent of Kobani and Turkish tank battalions were parked on the hills watching the slaughter, the United States changed course. It provided air support and dropped weapons to help Kobani's defenders. In June 2015, U.S. war planes also supported the YPG and the Free Syrian Army in liberating Tel Abyad, a strategic village on Syria's border with Turkey that straddles an important supply route for ISIS fighters and materials coming from Turkey to Raqqa in central Syria. U.S. airstrikes had focused on helping the YPG fight ISIS in the far eastern part of Syria, where the YPG had won considerable territory. The deal allowing U.S. warplanes to use Incirlik Air Base risked marginalizing the YPG, which was acting as the main partner fighting ISIS in Syria. As long as Syria is burning, ISIS will have a safe haven and will continue to thrive.

Washington's muddled approach is reflected in its hesitant contact with the PYD. While Co-Chair Salih Muslim has met the U.S. Special Envoy for Syria several times in Paris, discussions have focused on tactical coordination. The United States is staying away from a substantive political dialogue and from stating strategic goals. Salih Muslim has not been issued a visa to visit the United States, although his application was submitted to the U.S. Embassy in Stockholm in 2013. The United States is reluctant to get more involved with the PYD, whom Erdogan calls terrorists. Ankara strongly opposes contact and cooperation between the United States and the PYD. Turkey views the PYD and the PKK as one and the same, and it strongly opposes both. Erdogan was incensed when U.S. warplanes joined the battles for Kobani and Tel Abyad. In Diyarbakir, there are weekly funerals for Turkish Kurds who have died in Syria fighting with the YPG, including the sons and daughters of HDP politicians.

In November 2014, the UK Foreign and Commonwealth Office (FCO) outlined its policies toward Iraqi Kurdistan and the Syrian Kurds in a report criticizing the PYD's cooperation with efforts to overthrow Bashar al-Assad. PYD Co-Chair Salih Muslim responded indignantly. Regarding PYD's alleged cooperation with the Assad regime, Muslim insisted that the PYD has neither "direct nor indirect links to the Baathist regime in Syria." Regarding allegations of PYD intolerance of other Kurdish parties, Muslim insisted that the PYD cooperates with the "moderate Syrian opposition [and] works with moderate factions of the Free Syrian Army." He defended the PYD's declaration creating Rojava: "With no clear immediate resolution in sight...the Kurds cannot be expected to give up Rojava in the expectation that some future transition process will secure the democratic aspirations of the Kurdish people. We would propose the devolved democratic model that has been established in Rojava as a viable model of popular democracy that should be adopted in a future free and democratic Syria."[52]

The KRG and the Rojava administration, led by the PYD, have a strained relationship. The KRG supports the Kurdistan Democratic Party of Syria, which opposes the PYD, and facilitated establishment of the Kurdish National Congress as an alternative to the PYD in Syria. The KRG hosts Syrian Kurdish representatives in Erbil and offers training to Syrian Kurds opposing the PYD. Unlike the KRG, which is openly moving toward independence in Iraq, the PYD insists that its goal is a unified and democratic Syria. Kurds in Syria seek recognition of their identity and assistance to provide for their own security.

Despite their differences, the KRG and the PYD have cooperated on the battlefield at times of maximum peril. The KRG sent peshmerga with heavy weapons to assist in the defense of Kobani. Masoud Barzani welcomed efforts by the PYD and the PKK to open a corridor allowing Yazidis to escape from Mount Sinjar during this attack. The YPG and PKK forces helped drive ISIS from Sinjar. In a region where "the enemy of my enemy is my friend," the

PYD/YPG, the PKK, the PUK, and the KDP share a common adversary—the Islamic State.

The Kurds in Iran

Iran is a key player in Iraq, providing security and influencing political developments. Led by General Qassim Suleimani, the Iranian Revolutionary Guard Corps (IRGC) has played a leading role in the fight against ISIS. Suleimani commanded IRGC fighters and Popular Mobilization Forces in the battle of Tikrit.

Iran plays both sides, working closely with the Shiite-led GOI while also cooperating with the KRG. Nouri al-Maliki became Iraq's prime minister with Iran's blessing. Haider al-Abadi, who also comes from the Dawa Islamic Party, which has close ties to Tehran, was also installed as prime minister with support from Iran.

Kurdish officials have long-standing ties to Iran. When ISIS advanced to Makhmour, within thirty miles of Erbil, Iran was the first country to deliver weapons to the peshmerga. Iran's support for Iraqi Kurdistan has its limits, however. While supporting its fight against ISIS, Tehran opposes independence for Iraqi Kurdistan, fearing that this could inspire unrest among the ten million Iranian Kurds in Iranian Kurdistan.

The Party for a Free Life in Kurdistan (PJAK), a group of leading Kurdish militants in Iran, has been fighting to replace Iran's theocracy with a democratic and federal government. The PJAK is linked to the PKK and the PYD both ideologically and operationally. All of the PJAK's leaders formerly held positions with the PKK; PJAK's general assembly was originally formed by PKK leaders. The Kurdistan Democratic Party of Iran (KDP-I), with ties to the KDP in Iraqi Kurdistan, also supports federalism, as well as cultural, political, and linguistic autonomy in Kurdish areas of Iran. The KDP-I has good relations with most of the Kurdish political parties, but not with the PJAK, the PKK, and the PYD.[53] Clashes between the KDP-I and PJAK occur frequently in Qandil, along the Iran-Iraq border.

Iranian Kurdistan is a tinderbox. The Iranian Kurds suffer systematic repression and politically motivated executions. According to the U.S. State Department's Country Reports on Human Rights Practices for 2014, "The [Iranian] government continued to use security law, media law, and other legislation to arrest and prosecute Kurds for exercising their rights to freedom of expression and association. The government reportedly banned Kurdish-language newspapers, journals, and books and punished publishers, journalists, and writers for opposing and criticizing government policies. Although speaking the Kurdish language was not prohibited, schools were prohibited from teaching it. Authorities suppressed legitimate activities of Kurdish NGOs by denying them registration permits or bringing security charges against persons working with such organizations. Kurds were not allowed to register most Kurdish names for their children in official registries."[54] Riots erupted in May 2015 when a

Kurdish hotel maid died after falling from a hotel balcony in Mahabad. Kurds believe that she was sexually assaulted by a local security official. In the ensuing melee, fifty demonstrators were wounded and more than seventy others were arrested. The Kurdish protesters were reacting not only to this specific incident, but also to the pattern of systematic repression by the Iranian regime.[55]

During a July 2015 visit to Sanandaj, the capital of Iran's Kurdistan province, Iranian President Hassan Rouhani attempted to mollify Kurdish demands by announcing that Kurdish language studies will officially be offered to university students and that a Kurdish Language and Literature program will be established at the University of Kurdistan. The pledge affirms Article 15 of the Iranian Constitution, which allows the teaching of regional and tribal languages in schools.[56]

Iraqi Kurds have worked closely with Iran over decades, and are wary of alienating Iranian authorities. The PUK and Tehran have a history of close cooperation. In addition, the KDP and Tehran have maintained cordial relations, which are strategic for both sides. All primary Iraqi opposition figures had facilities in Iran, where many had villas and offices.

In violation of current sanctions, the KRG reportedly exports 50,000 barrels of oil per day by truck from Suleimani across Iran to oil terminals in Iran's Bandar Abbas in the Persian Gulf. As the sanctions on Iran are lifted, the KRG may expand its economic ties with Iran, exporting more oil to international markets via the Persian Gulf. Numerous border crossings between Iraqi Kurdistan and Iran exist at Haji Omeran, Penjwen, Bashmakh, Garmiyan, and Raperin. These border crossings will be upgraded to handle additional surface transport and commercial activity after the lifting of sanctions. Upgrades will include registries and customs collection for traffic in both directions. Iran is already a significant supplier of foodstuffs to Iraqi Kurdistan, including staples such as potatoes and onions.

Recommendation to the KRG:

- Reassure Turkey and Iran that the KRG harbors no plan for a greater Kurdistan incorporating the Kurds of Turkey, Syria, and Iran.

Recommendation to the international community:

- Support a more unified effort to defeat ISIS in Syria through cooperation among Kurdish groups.
- Understand that Iraqi Kurdistan is moving toward independence.
- Work with the KRG to develop a transparent process with a timetable and a roadmap, allaying concerns about the possibility of independence.

The United States, which has an interest in working with the Kurds to fight ISIS, is best placed to facilitate cooperation among the Kurds and serve as a broker of Kurdish issues with governments in the region. It should:

- Ensure that the Kurdish Peoples Protection Unit (YPG) has the necessary weapons to fight ISIS. Meet more frequently on a higher level

with the Rojava authorities in Hasakah, Jazeera, and Kobani and the Democratic Union Party (PYD) in order to reinforce a partnership with the PYD and reinforce the PYD's commitment to Kurdish autonomy in a reconstituted Syria.
- Encourage resumption of a cease-fire and political dialogue between Turkey and the PKK.

To better prepare for a leadership role, the United States should:
- Establish a "Future of Kurdistan Project," involving U.S. officials, private experts, and Iraqi Kurds to develop a capacity-building plan for Iraqi Kurdistan's democratic and economic development, as well as its security.
- Appoint a Special Envoy for Kurdish Issues, bridging the gap between the Bureaus for Near Eastern Affairs and European Affairs at the U.S. State Department. The Special Envoy would serve as an inter-agency focal point within the U.S. government, raising the profile of Kurdish issues and helping coordinate policy between the United States and the European countries. The Special Envoy could act as the counterpart to a High Commissioner for Kurdish Issues in the United Kingdom as well as special representatives from other countries.
- Issue a visa to PYD Co-Chair Salih Muslim to attend high-level meetings in Washington.

VI. Economic Opportunities

Iraqi Kurdistan needs to develop its economy to support state-building and to advance peace and prosperity for Iraqi Kurds and neighboring countries.

Hydrocarbons

Iraqi Kurdistan possesses considerable energy reserves, substantial levels of actual production, and even greater prospects for future output. In the medium to long-term, Iraqi Kurdistan should enjoy a considerable stream of export-generated revenues, enabling stability and providing the means for state-building. The KRG's principal economic and financial problem is how best to monetize its oil and gas resources. Iraqi Kurdistan is landlocked and has problematic relations with Baghdad. Alternatives to SOMO and new export routes need to be explored.

Though estimates vary, Iraqi Kurdistan may have hydrocarbon resources of up to 45 billion barrels,[57] in which case it would rank tenth among the world's largest oil-holding countries. One giant field, Shaikan, contains at least twelve billion barrels. Other fields—Taq Taq, Tawke, Akri Bijeel, Barda Rash, Garmian, and Kurdamir—contain seven billion barrels of oil-in-place.[58] A KRG-built pipeline exported about 400,000 barrels per day (BPD) to Ceyhan on the eastern Mediterranean in 2014. Reasonable prospects exist for the discovery of additional oil and gas fields, which could increase projected exploration and production.

The KRG works with international partners through production sharing agreements (PSAs). In 2012, the KRG set ambitious targets intended to take oil output to 1.0 million barrels per day (MBD) by 2015 and to 2.0 MBD by 2019.[59] As of June 2015, however, oil production was around 450,000 BPD in areas controlled by the KRG.[60] This oil comes from territories under control of the KRG since 2003, territories seized by the peshmerga during their counter-attack against ISIS forces in 2014, and oil produced by the North Oil Company (NOC), which is exported to the Mediterranean port of Ceyhan via KRG-controlled territory.

Iraqi Kurdistan also has bountiful supplies of natural gas. In November 2013, the KRG signed a gas sales agreement with Ankara, which stated that the KRG would supply Turkey with some 4 billion cubic meters per year (bcm/y) in 2017, 10 bcm/y by 2020, and an option of 20 bcm/y thereafter. Production will come primarily from Genel Enerji's fields at Miran and Bina Bawi, which are not likely to start until at least 2018.

The challenge lies in transporting hydrocarbons to market. Iraqi Kurdistan needs viable and stable routes to transport its oil and gas. The 600-mile long Kirkuk-Ceyhan Oil Pipeline is Iraq's largest crude oil pipeline. It suffers from poor maintenance and sabotage; usable capacity is only about 300,000 BPD. The KRG's Khurmala-Feyshkabour pipeline became operational as of

January 1, 2014. As of June 2015, the KRG was pumping about 450,000 BPD of oil to Ceyhan.

The KRG asserted control of all energy resources developed after 2003 (as permitted by Article 115 of Iraq's 2005 constitution). DNO from Norway, Genel Enerji from Turkey, Chevron, ExxonMobil, and other leading oil companies signed PSAs with the KRG. The KRG signed a fifty-year contact with Ankara to sell its oil, and to deposit the revenue from sales into a Turkish bank. Agreements were entered into over Baghdad's objection. The GOI threatened to boycott the companies doing business with the KRG and brought legal action in U.S. courts to block the sale of Kurdish oil. In February 2014, the GOI responded to the KRG's overtures to customers on the global market by suspending monthly payments to the KRG.

Oil companies are nervous about their position in Iraqi Kurdistan. Oil companies have been functioning for nearly a year and still have not been paid. Unless they are paid, oil companies may seek to force the issue through arbitration or be forced to discontinue their operations. The lack of payment creates an unsustainable situation, especially for smaller companies. Oil companies are also concerned that the KRG might nationalize their assets.

Recommendations to the KRG:

- Deepen energy ties with Turkey through natural gas sales.
- Assure international oil companies that they will be paid all arrears as soon as the economic crisis is addressed, and assuage concerns that the KRG might nationalize their assets.

Recommendation to the international community:

- Stop unwarranted and baseless legal action aimed at preventing the KRG from selling Kurdish oil on international markets.

Banking and Credit

Kurdistan lacks a banking culture and a meaningful financial infrastructure. Banks are an extension of Kurdistan's cash-based economy and therefore have a limited offering of products and services. This is a legacy from the previous regime, when Kurds stockpiled cash to preserve liquidity in times of crisis. Wages are still typically paid in cash and banks focus primarily on executing payments for government employees rather than commercial financing, small business lending, and retail credit.

Despite the high economic growth in the KRG between 2003 and 2014, this progress was not reflected in the development of the banking sector. Iraqi Kurdistan's ability to access capital markets remains rudimentary. Banks are reluctant to lend to businesses. The lack of financing poses a barrier to the growth of local firms and the development of small and medium-sized enterprises. Retail and commercial banking services are limited. Most banks have no electronic banking functions, limiting their integration into the global financial system. Automatic Teller Machines are rare.

Iraq's 2005 constitution did not grant fiscal and financial regulatory independence to the KRI's central bank. Therefore, Baghdad effectively controls the KRG's financial policy. Kurdistan-based banks rely on the National Bank of Iraq, which has branches in Erbil and Suleimani. The recent budget dispute with Baghdad revealed the KRG's financial vulnerability, exposing its lack of authority over the flow of money into the market. The lack of liquidity of banks in Iraqi Kurdistan resulted in the KRG's inability to pay the salaries of its employees.

The KRG is exploring steps to access international capital markets through the issuance of bonds. While raising money through the issuance of debt broadens the potential universe of lenders accessible to the KRG, it also creates a new set of issues to consider. The KRG will require a credit rating from at least one globally recognized rating agency, such as Standard and Poor's or Moody's. These agencies may make statements that do not reflect favorably on the KRG. The KRG's recent efforts to issue bonds floundered.

Typically, bonds would be managed through a central bank, but since Iraqi Kurdistan does not have one, the creation of a central bank is a critical priority both for issuing bonds and for other macroeconomic reasons. For the central bank to be truly effective, it should be totally independent of political interests. Its key values must be reliability, integrity, independence, and impeccable governance. Once local depositors and commercial businesses gain confidence in the new central bank, they will feel increasingly comfortable depositing their assets at banks under its supervision. The central bank would also enable direct access to regional and global credit markets. Additionally, the new central bank would be responsible for managing retail and commercial credit markets and financial institutions within the country, not just through the setting of prevailing interest rates and reserve requirements, but also through regulation of the financial sector.

A central bank also creates conditions for private banking. Private banks are affected by market and macroeconomic factors: pessimism toward emerging markets, the sharp drop in commodity prices, low interest rates, and surplus liquidity. Nonetheless, there are seventy private bank branches operating in Iraqi Kurdistan, including foreign banks from Turkey and Lebanon. A British bank, the Standard Chartered Bank, recently opened in Erbil.[61] Most large enterprises in Iraqi Kurdistan maintain offshore accounts in Dubai or in other Gulf States.

A strong, reliable, and regulated banking system provides a sense of security and confidence that further encourages commerce. Of primary importance is the existence of a reliable and efficient payment system. Businesses need to pay each other, receive payments for services rendered, and pay their employees. Individuals need to be able to receive wages, make payments for basic services, and have a place for savings. These transactions are part of the formal economy. They facilitate financial record-keeping and collection of taxes, while mitigating the risks inherent in an all-cash economy.

The development of a viable payment system is not completely dependent on the existence of traditional "brick and mortar" banks. In several developing countries, local telecoms have partnered with multinational payment systems such as Visa and MasterCard to provide mobile banking services which function independently of banks. Individuals can receive payments (including salaries), make payments to both vendors and individuals, and maintain balances through these accounts. Smart cards and mobile banking services could complement more traditional forms of banking, reducing cost and transaction speed.

Recommendations to the KRG:

- Prioritize the establishment of financial infrastructure. Establish a Central Bank of Iraqi Kurdistan. Transition from a cash-based economy to an economy with better banking and financing. Foster a banking culture by building public confidence for citizens to deposit their money in banks.
- Develop a legal framework for retail and commercial banking, which can offer checking and savings accounts, as well as competitive retail and commercial loans.
- Engage a globally preeminent investment bank to guide the process of issuing bonds.
- Emphasize mobile banking and other measures to modernize banking functions, expanding technology in the banking sector.
- Take steps toward a dual and/or independent currency.

Recommendations to the international community:

- Engage the International Executive Services Corps (IESC), a U.S.-based NGO, to assist Iraqi Kurdistan's nascent banking sector. Seek assistance from IESC and other sources to improve the efficiency of banks in Iraqi Kurdistan for making loans to small and medium enterprises (SMEs), developing market strategies and piloting new approaches related to SME financing. Work with international banking experts on introducing new products and services such as smart cards and online banking.

Agriculture and Water

Iraqi Kurdistan used to be Iraq's breadbasket, producing wheat for national consumption and export; however, Kurdistan's agricultural sector collapsed during Saddam Hussein's Anfal campaign against the Kurds during the Iraq-Iran War. Draconian security measures destroyed villages and irrigation systems. The Anfal also caused demographic changes that affected agricultural production, depopulating the countryside and forcing relocation to the cities.

Food security involves water, agriculture, value-added crops, food safety, and overall health. Kurdistan accesses water from the Tigris, the Great Zab, the Little Zab, the Khabur, the Sirwan, and the Awa Sipi rivers for crop irrigation and hydroelectricity. About 60 percent of Kurdistan's water flow originates

in Kurdistan. Snow, rainfall, and ground water are also sources of supply. Despite its indigenous water resources, a dispute with Turkey could disrupt water flows to Iraqi Kurdistan. Climate change also represents a challenge to water supplies in Iraqi Kurdistan. In 2014, NASA conducted a report that estimated that 144 billion cubic meters of water have disappeared from reserves in Iraqi Kurdistan over the last five years.[62]

The KRG's Ministry of Agriculture (MOA) has 13,500 employees, but only received 1.8 percent of the KRG's total budget in 2014. With the total KRG budget downsized due to the economic crisis, the MOA receives even less support than in the past. According to the Minister of Agriculture, the MOA needs 10 percent of the KRG's total budget to revive the agriculture sector effectively.

Market forces also affect local production. The KRI only produces 5 percent of its agricultural goods locally, leaving it dependent on imports. Goods are reliably and affordably sourced from Turkey and Iran. For example, Turkey provides almost all of the dairy products sold in Iraqi Kurdistan. All food processing occurs outside of Kurdistan, leaving the KRI with only a one-week reserve of food supplies. A supply crisis would result if Kurdistan's borders with Turkey and Iran were closed.

Opportunities for economic development exist in the poultry industry. At present, however, the KRI produces less than 20 percent of its red meat and only 25 percent of its poultry.[63] The poultry industry has been affected by bird flu and the high cost of imported soy meal. With no soy production in Iraqi Kurdistan, poultry farmers import soy from the United States, Brazil, and Argentina at an average cost of $200 per ton above world market prices.

The KRI lacks the technical expertise, veterinary services, and agricultural extension services needed to foster trust with rural farmers. Farmers are generally uninformed about "no-till planting," which conserves the moisture in soil. As a customary practice, farmers deep-plow land used for wheat production, which dries out the soil during summer months. They are also unfamiliar with the benefits of crop rotation. In addition to crop rotation, improved farming techniques, use of more machinery, better quality seeds, appropriate use of insect and disease control measures, and better storage would enhance soil fertility.

KRG-funded subsidies also pose a problem. Wheat growers are paid three times the international market price for wheat, which deters local production and contributes to corruption. The KRG plans to raise taxes on food imports from Turkey and Iran in 2015. While this will raise food prices in the short term, the KRG hopes that the increased market price for agricultural products will encourage farmers to return to their fields and boost production, stabilizing prices within two years.[64]

Recommendations to the KRG:

* Conduct a comprehensive study of water resources, analyzing water inputs, uses, storage, and flows. The analysis should quantify rainfall and

snowfall patterns. It should also assess the quality and quantity of water supplies from rivers, groundwater supplies, and aquifers. The study of water resources would serve as the basis for an integrated water resources management plan.
- Develop a water tariff system to reduce waste and provide for cost recovery, including water-use fees and municipal taxes to pay for sanitation services.
- Modernize the water irrigation system, implementing conservation strategies such as recycling water from sanitation facilities for agricultural use.
- Support public participation in water-use decisions, including advocacy and citizenship-building strategies, user groups, and stakeholder participation in water management and aquifer development.
- Make Kurdistan more reliant on local corn and soybean production by providing improved training and agricultural extension services. Expand agricultural cooperatives to facilitate collective bargaining in marketing agricultural products and in the purchase of animal feed, improved seeds, and agricultural machinery.
- Establish educational institutions specializing in engineering and agriculture, modeled on land-grant universities in the United States.

Recommendations to the international community:
- Support the U.S. Geological Service (USGS) Water Resources Assessment Team to assist with the development of an Iraqi Kurdistan Water Resource and National Groundwater Database.
- Strengthen local capacity on modern stream-gauging techniques and transboundary aquifer management. Enhance management decision-making (i.e., water management indicators, institutional arrangements, legal framework, permits, water uses and tradeoffs, policy directions) and management tools (i.e., technology, monitoring networks, characterization, geo-databases).
- Seek congressional support for bringing the U.S. Department of Agriculture's Market Access Program and Foreign Market Development Program to Iraqi Kurdistan. Include Iraqi Kurdistan as a line-item beneficiary in the USDA's Agricultural Export Commodities Program. Encourage legislation earmarking more affordable export of U.S. soybean products to Iraqi Kurdistan via the USDA's Commodity Credit Corporation and the Export Credit Guarantee Program (GSM-102).

Tourism

Tourism in Iraqi Kurdistan could thrive with reliable transport and infrastructure. Tourists from Iraq are drawn to Iraqi Kurdistan because of its cool climate and iconic cultural attractions, including churches and historic sites. Tourists from other Arab countries are attracted by its climate, ecology, and relaxed cultural practices. Iraqi Kurdistan's rugged beauty makes it a unique

tourist destination for international visitors, especially those interested in eco-tourism. In contrast to Iraq's deserts and lowlands, Iraqi Kurdistan is characterized by mountains, ravines, waterfalls, and natural springs. Gali Ali Bag, Bexal, and Jinokan are beautiful waterfalls, and Dokan Lage is a scenic alpine setting.

Iraqi Kurdistan is also a land of history. The Citadel in Erbil is at least 6,500 years old. Its souk is a special shopping opportunity. The site of the famous battle between Alexander the Great and King Darius is a short drive from Erbil. Mar Matti is a fourth-century Syrian Orthodox monastery. Other destinations include Parastaga Zardasht, an ancient Zoroastrian/Mithradate temple in Duhok; Amedi, a 4,000-year-old town perched on the peak of a mountain that is rumored to have been the home of the Biblical Magi; and Chemi Rezan, a cave complex and early human ceremonial burial site.

There are least twenty-one major business hotels in Iraqi Kurdistan, including five-star facilities in Erbil. For example, the Rotana Hotel is a luxurious Emirati-financed project; the Divan Hotel is an $80 million investment by a Turkish hotel group; the Marriott group and Kempinski group have completed two large towers in Erbil. Despite these facilities, lack of infrastructure and overall insecurity limit tourism opportunities.

Recommendations to the KRG:

- Improve surface transport between major Kurdish cities and between these cities and major tourist destinations.
- Emphasize environmental protection policies, with the goal of fostering eco-tourism.
- Focus initially on marketing tourism packages to visitors from Iraq and other Middle Eastern countries. As the security situation improves, expand outreach to tourists from Western and Asian countries.

Education and Human Capital

About 50 percent of Iraqi Kurdistan's residents are 20 years old or younger.[65] Kurdish youth are an essential component of the labor market; therefore, full development of the labor market must start with early childhood development. The educational system is trying to keep pace with demographic trends and market requirements, including proficiency with information technologies. While access to education has increased, illiteracy remains high: 11 percent of males and 27 percent of females aged 20 to 29 are illiterate, as are 28 percent of the male population and 43 percent of the female population aged 30 or older.[66] The current population of persons more than 21 years old has 7.3 mean years of education.

Traditional education involves the transmission of information from the teacher to students. It emphasizes textbook learning and memorization, rather than critical analysis. Beginning in 2008, steps were taken to upgrade teacher standards and modernize the curricula. Teachers were encouraged to revise

their teaching method to help students develop creative and analytical skills.[67] Teachers are required to have bachelor's degrees,[68] but nonetheless, there is neither monitoring nor effective enforcement of teaching standards. Teaching is not a respected or highly valued profession in Iraqi Kurdistan; most teachers enter the profession because they did not qualify for advancement in other fields.

A new curriculum emphasizes mathematics and sciences. Despite the KRG's commitment to curriculum reform, however, the current curricula do not allow students to pursue a course of study to advance their professional goals. The curriculum is not related to labor market requirements. Students still rely on public sector jobs, and there is no real effort to prepare students for the job market. New priorities for employment generation can be supported by vocational schools and community colleges.

The KRG seeks to establish a "private sector labor market in which employees can find jobs, can move to better jobs when they want, and are rewarded for their work, and in which employers can find qualified employees and freely employ who they want."[69] The prevalence of the public sector is an impediment to this goal, however; about 50 percent of employed people—approximately 560,000—work for the KRG.[70]

The 2014 economic crisis has compromised job growth in the private sector. Many workers prefer jobs in the public sector, which has advantages such as greater job security and benefits, particularly during economic crisis. Many low-wage private sector jobs are filled by foreign workers. Payment by private sector enterprises into the pension system is uneven and too low; most companies do not provide health and unemployment insurance. The implementation of minimum wage provisions and pay scales in the private sector are necessary to match the capacity of human capital.

Kurds are highly motivated, but they lack the professional skills required to succeed in today's job market, such as fluency in multiple languages, numeracy, and IT skills. Secondary-level students are allowed to choose between vocational or preparatory education, with most students choosing the latter.[71] Most Kurds prefer careers as engineers and physicians. Efforts have been made to align technical and vocational education and training with private sector opportunities, including the IT sector.

Recommendations to the KRG:

- Link vocational education topics to job generators (e.g., tourism, hospitality, agriculture, petrochemicals, construction, transportation, warehouse management, and natural resource conservation). Adjust higher education so that the curricula emphasize technical, professional, business, and financial skills.[72]
- Make elementary education a priority, with special emphasis on ending illiteracy. Girls' education must be mandatory and rigorously enforced. The obligation of parents to send their children to school should be binding.

- Build links with the private sector through advisory boards, career centers, and job fairs. Build a web site with all existing information on the labor market in order to connect job seekers and potential employers.
- Expand benefits such as a comprehensive pension system that addresses the level of pension benefits, the length of employment, and the amount of wages earned. Enact legislation requiring companies to provide health care and an unemployment insurance system to protect workers from unexpected job loss.
- Subsidize apprenticeship and traineeship initiatives to ensure that the business community has competent employees.

Recommendations to the international community:

- Initiate an AmeriCorps-type program in the KRG to train and place college students with civil society organizations, leveraging the drive of young people and fostering a new generation of social entrepreneurs.
- Create "innovation labs" for social entrepreneurs to receive training, mentoring, and funding to devise innovative strategies to address social problems.

VII. Conclusion

The Iraqi Kurds have consistently deferred their dream of independence in the service of a unified Iraq. Today, Iraq is a failing state. The KRG is moving toward independence while the international community clings to its vision of a unified Iraq. This report seeks to bring the issue to the attention of the international community, which has invested so much in a unified Iraq, and to urge stakeholders such as the United States to work with, not against, the Kurdish move toward independence.

Iraqi Kurds face many challenges. This report sets forth a number of steps that the KRG can take to stabilize Iraqi Kurdistan, improve conditions for the Kurds and, should the KRG decide to move in this direction, prepare for eventual independence. The international community should work to facilitate the emergence of a stable independent Kurdistan through diplomatic intercession with Baghdad and countries directly affected by Iraqi Kurdistan's independence. The Task Force members hope that this report will spark a broad conversation on how the international community can adjust policies to reflect this new reality.

Prime Minister Nechirvan Barzani has said that "Sunnis are afraid the future; Shia are afraid of the past; Kurds fear the past, present, and future." With the support of the international community, Iraqi Kurdistan can make a peaceful and secure transition to independence. The Kurds will no longer need to fear the future.

Notes

1. The conclusions of this report do not necessarily reflect all the views of the Task Force participants. See Appendix C for clarifying statements.
2. The Kurdistan Region of Iraq (KRI) comprises Dohuk, Erbil, and Suleimani provinces, and parts of the Kirkuk, Nineveh, and Diyala provinces.
3. There are two principal dialectical variations of Kurdish: Kurmanji predominates in North and West Kurdistan, Sorani in South and East Kurdistan. Most Kurds are Sunni Muslims, but many follow Sufi versions of Islam, and there are Shiite Kurds. Most are socially moderate and pro-Western, except for a small group of Islamist Kurds who live in pockets along the Iraq-Iran border.
4. http://www.institutkurde.org/en/kurdorama/ (accessed June 17, 2015).
5. Masoud Barzani, "Masoud Barzani." N.p., n.d., May 1, 2014, http://www.kdp.se/mbhp.html.
6. Human Rights Watch, "Genocide in Iraq—The Anfal Campaign Against the Kurds," 1993, http://www.hrw.org/legacy/english/docs/2006/08/14/iraq13979_txt.htm; and Joost R. Hiltermann, *A Poisonous Affair: America, Iraq and the Gassing of Halabja* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007).
7. David McDowall, *A Modern History of the Kurds* (London: I.B. Tauris, 2004).
8. See Brendan O'Leary, "Federalizing Natural Resources in Iraq's Constitution," in David Malone, Ben Roswell, and Markus E Bouillon, eds., *Iraq: Preventing a New Generation of Conflict* (Boulder, Colo.: Lynne Rienner, 2007), pp. 189–202; and James Crawford, "Opinion: The Authority of the Kurdistan Regional Government over Oil and Gas under the Constitution of Iraq," London: Clifford Chance LLP, 2008, pp.1–14.
9. For a useful account of Maliki's violations of Iraq's Constitution, see David Romano, "Iraq's Descent into Civil War: A Constitutional Explanation," *Middle East Journal*, Vol. 68, No. 4, pp. 547–566.
10. Failure to negotiate a mutually acceptable Status of Forces Agreement led to the withdrawal of U.S. forces on December 18, 2011. The Iraq War and occupation cost $2.21 trillion; 4,491 U.S. troops were killed and 32,046 were wounded. According to the Iraq Body Count, civilian deaths of Iraqis from violence are between 142,185 and 161,228 and total violent deaths including combatants are 219,000 (ttps://www.iraqbodycount.org/).
11. Matt Shiavenza, "Why Iraq's Military Has No Will to Fight," *Atlantic*, www.theatlantic.com/international/archive/2015/05/why-iraqs-military-has-no-will-to-fight/394067/.
12. OCHA, "Iraq: We are faced with a grim funding reality," June 6, 2015, http://www.unocha.org/top-stories/all-stories/iraq-we-are-faced-grim-funding-reality.
13. World Bank, "The Kurdistan Region of Iraq Needs an Estimated US$1.4 billion this Year to Stabilize the Economy," February 12, 2015, http://www.worldbank.org/en/news/press-release/2015/02/12/kurdistan-region-iraq-stabilize-economy.
14. International Organization of Migration, DTM Delta 2015.
15. UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs, UN Country Team in Iraq, "Immediate Response Plan Phase II (IRP2) for the Internally Displaced People in the Kurdistan Region of Iraq: 15 November 2014–31 March 2015," December 2014, http://reliefweb.int/sites/reliefweb.int/files/resources/Immediate Response Plan 2 KR-I Nov-Mar.pdf.
16. Email from a HRW researcher recently returned from the KRG, August 14, 2015.
17. World Health Organization, "Iraq Health Situation Reports," http://www.who.int/hac/crises/irq/sitreps/en/ (accessed June 26, 2015).

18. Email from the Office of Iraq Affairs, Bureau of Near Eastern Affairs, U.S. Department of State, July 29, 2015.
19. The Economist Intelligence Unit, p. 39.
20. The Economist Intelligence Unit, p. 40.
21. Marcopolis, "The Infrastructure in Iraqi Kurdistan: Overview," Kurdistan Region of Iraq Report, http://www.marcopolis.net/infrastructure-in-iraqi-kurdistan-overview.htm (accessed June 2, 2015).
22. The Economist Intelligence Unit, p. 46.
23. Ibid.
24. Ibid., p. 6.
25. Ministry of Planning, "A Vision for the Future," p. 24.
26. David L. Phillips, *The Kurdish Spring: A New Map for the Middle East* (New Jersey: Transaction Publishers, 2015), p. 108.
27. Ali Mamouri, "Iraqi Kurdistan Must Ensure Minority Rights," *Al Monitor*, September 23, 2013, http://www.al-monitor.com/pulse/originals/2013/09/iraq-kurdistan-region-protect-minority-rights.html#ixzz3cawy7duX (accessed June 9, 2015).
28. Human Rights Watch, "Iraqi Kurdistan: Arabs Displaced, Cordoned Off, Detained: Harsh Restrictions in Northern Iraq While Kurds Move Freely," February 25, 2015. Human Rights Watch recently cited an alleged pattern of Sunni Arabs who were displaced by ISIS being denied the right to return home. HRW also reports on abuses by the peshmerga and the asaish, as well as excessive force during public demonstrations and the jailing of journalists.
29. Human Rights Watch, "Iraqi Kurdistan: Law Banning FGM Not Being Enforced," August 29, 2012, https://www.hrw.org/news/2012/08/29/iraqi-kurdistan-law-banning-fgm-not-being-enforced (accessed August 12, 2015).
30. The Economist Intelligence Unit, p. 29.
31. UPI, "Kurdish government questions oil narrative," April 3, 2013, http://www.upi.com/Business_News/Energy-Resources/2013/04/03/Kurdish-government-questions-oil-narrative/52961364990611/.
32. Masoud Barzani, Remarks at the Atlantic Council, Washington, D.C., May 6, 2015.
33. Earlier that month, Barzani had asked parliament to proceed with the independence vote; see rudaw.net/english/kurdistan/030720141.
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Appendix A

Acronyms and Abbreviations

AKP	Justice and Development Party
AQI	Al-Qaeda in Iraq
BPD	Barrels per Day
CHP	Peoples Republican Party
GOI	Government of Iraq
HDP	People's Democratic Party
E&P	Exploration and Production
FGM	Female Genital Mutilation
FDI	Foreign Direct Investment
FTO	Foreign Terrorist Organization
HRW	Human Rights Watch
IDPs	Internally Displaced Persons
ING	Iraqi National Guard
IOM	International Organization of Migration
IRGC	Iranian Revolutionary Guard Corps
ISF	Iraqi Security Forces
ISIS	Islamic State in Iraq and Syria
IT	Information Technology
KDP	Kurdistan Democratic Party
KDP-I	Kurdistan Democratic Party of Iran
KIHEC	Kurdistan Independent High Electoral Commission
KRI	Kurdistan Region of Iraq
KRG	Kurdistan Regional Government
MBD	Million Barrels per Day
MHP	National Movement Party
MIT	National Intelligence Agency
MOA	Ministry of Agriculture
MOE	Ministry of Education
MOH	Ministry of Health
MOP	Ministry of Planning
MRAP	Mine Resistant Ambush Protected
NOC	North Oil Company
OCHA	Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Assistance
OFDA	Office of Foreign Disaster Assistance
PJAK	Party of Free Life Kurdistan
PKK	Kurdistan Workers Party
PSA	Production Sharing Agreement
PUK	Patriotic Union of Kurdistan
PYD	Democratic Union Party
SGBV	Sexual and Gender-Based Violence

SMEs	Small and Medium Enterprises
SOMO	State Oil Marketing Organization
TOW	Tube Launched, Optically Guided, Wire Guided
UNHCR	United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees
UNSC	United Nations Security Council
USAID	U.S. Agency for International Development
USDA	U.S. Department of Agriculture
USGS	U.S. Geological Service
VBIED	Vehicle-Borne Improvised Explosive Devices
WFP	World Food Program
WHO	World Health Organization

Appendix B

Task Force Participants

The Task Force Report on State-Building in Iraqi Kurdistan benefited from the participation of the Task Force members. The report is not a consensus document; the conclusions within do not necessarily reflect the views of all Task Force participants.

Task Force Members

Alon Ben-Meir is a professor and Senior Fellow at New York University's Center for Global Affairs and Senior Fellow at the World Policy Institute. Ben-Meir is an expert on Middle East politics and affairs, specializing in international negotiations and conflict resolution. For the past seventeen years, Ben-Meir has been directly involved in various negotiations between Israel and Turkey.

George Biddle is the former Executive Vice President of the International Rescue Committee (IRC). In this position, he supervised its U.S. and international programs and advocacy departments. Prior to joining the IRC in 2000, Biddle was Vice President of the International Crisis Group, an organization that works through field-based analysis and high-level advocacy to prevent and resolve deadly conflict. He was also President of the Institute for Central American Studies, an organization he founded in 1989 to assist post–Cold War Central America in its transition from violent conflict to peace and democracy. He serves on several non-profit boards and is a member of the Council on Foreign Relations.

Kevin R. Davis served as Chief Executive Officer of MF Global Holdings Ltd. (also known as MF Global Ltd. and Man Financial Ltd.) from July 2007 to October 2008. Davis was CEO of Man Financial at Man Group plc (also known as Man Strategic Holdings plc) since November 1999 and Managing Director since 1997. He also served as President of Man Group plc.

Andrew Frank is founder and President of KARV Communications. He has twenty-five years of experience in public affairs and crisis management, including five years of work with Bill Clinton's administration. He has also served as Managing Director of the United States Information Agency's New York Foreign Press Center and as a Senior Advisor for Communications to the Director of the United States Information Agency.

Peter W. Galbraith has over thirty-five years of experience in foreign policy. He is author of *The End of Iraq* (2006) and has written extensively on Iraqi Kurds and the Iran-Iraq War. Galbraith was a senior advisor on Near East and South Asia and international organizations for the U.S. Senate Foreign Relations Committee from 1979 to 1993. From 1993 to 1998, he served as U.S.

Ambassador to Croatia and from 2000 to 2001, he was Director for Political, Constitutional, and Electoral Affairs at the UN Transitional Administration in East Timor (UNTAET). Galbraith also served as a Cabinet Member for Political Affairs and the Timor Sea in the First Transitional Government of East Timor.

R. Scott Greathead is a member of the board of directors of Human Rights First (formerly the Lawyers Committee for Human Rights), which he helped to found in 1978, and Human Rights in China. He is also a member of the Council on Foreign Relations. Greathead is the Chairman and CEO of World Monitors Inc., which provides multinational corporations with consulting and information services that focus on strategies for risk prevention and brand protection in the global economy.

Michael M. Gunter is Professor of Political Science at Tennessee Technical University and a scholar of Kurdish issues. He has written nine books and published more than seventy-five scholarly articles on these issues. In 1988, he was the recipient of the Kurdish Human Rights Watch's "Service to the Kurds Award." He also serves as the Secretary General of the European Union's Turkey Civic Commission.

Zachary Iscol is the founder and Chief Executive Officer of Recruit Citizens, LLC. He is a combat-decorated U.S. Marines officer who served two tours in Iraq. He also served as the first officer in charge of Recruiting, Screening, Assessment, and Selection (RSAS) for U.S. Marine Corps Forces Special Operations Command.

David Koranyi is the Director of the Eurasian Energy Futures Initiative of the Atlantic Council. Since 2010, he has been a Nonresident Fellow at the Center for Transatlantic Relations at Johns Hopkins University's Paul H. Nitze School of Advanced International Studies. Koranyi speaks and publishes on the geopolitics of energy. He served as Undersecretary of State and Chief Foreign Policy and National Security Advisor to the Prime Minister of the Republic of Hungary, Gordon Bajnai, from 2009 to 2010. From 2004 to 2009, he worked in the European Parliament as Chief Foreign Policy Adviser and Head of Cabinet of a Hungarian MEP. Prior to that he was a Political Adviser at the Hungarian National Assembly and a Junior Researcher at GKI Economic Research Institute in Budapest, Hungary.

Austin Long is Assistant Professor at Columbia University's School of International and Public Affairs. He is also a non-resident Senior Fellow at the Foreign Policy Research Institute. In 2014–2015, he is a Council on Foreign Relations Fellow serving in the Joint Staff J5 (Strategic Plans and Policy). Long was previously Associate Political Scientist at the RAND Corporation. While at RAND, he was an analyst and adviser to U.S. forces in Iraq from 2007 to 2008. In 2011 and 2013, he was an analyst and adviser to special operations forces in Afghanistan. Long received his B.S. from the Sam Nunn School of

International Affairs at the Georgia Institute of Technology and his Ph.D. in political science from the Massachusetts Institute of Technology.

Alan Makovsky is an independent political analyst. From 2001 to 2013, Makovsky covered Turkey and the Middle East as a senior staff member of the House Foreign Affairs Committee of the U.S. Congress. From 1994 to 2001, he worked at The Washington Institute for Near East Policy, where he founded and directed its Turkish Research Program. From 1983 to 1994, Markovsky worked for the U.S. Department of State, primarily as a Turkish and Middle East analyst in the Bureau of Intelligence and Research; in 1992, he served as Political Advisor to Operation Provide Comfort, the U.S.-led military operation to deny Saddam Hussein's air force access to northern Iraq.

Aliza Marcus is an independent political analyst and writer on Kurdish issues, Turkish politics, and the Kurdistan Workers Party (PKK). She is a former foreign correspondent who worked for Reuters in the Middle East and acted as their Istanbul correspondent in the 1990s; she later covered Israel for the *Boston Globe*. Marcus is a long-time analyst of the PKK and has been writing about the group since the late 1980s, when she first traveled to Turkey's southeast to cover the armed conflict for the *Christian Science Monitor*. For her reporting for Reuters, Marcus received a National Press Club Award. She is also a recipient of a Macarthur Foundation Grant and the author of *Blood and Belief: The PKK and the Kurdish Fight for Independence*. She lives in Washington, D.C.

Brendan O'Leary is Lauder Professor of Political Science at the University of Pennsylvania and has researched Iraq's federalization and Kurdish politics extensively. Since 2003, he has been an international constitutional advisor to the Kurdistan Regional Government, advising it during the making of the Transitional Administrative Law (2004), the Constitution of Iraq (2005), and during the drafting of the Kurdistan Constitution. He has been an advisor on power-sharing to governments and political parties in numerous conflict sites. From 2009 to 2010, O'Leary was the Senior Advisor on Power-Sharing to the Standby Team of the Mediation Support Unit of the United Nations. Among his more than twenty books are *How to Get Out of Iraq with Integrity* (2009) and *The Future of Kurdistan in Iraq* (2005). In 2014, O'Leary was awarded the inaugural Juan Linz prize of the International Political Association for his research on federalism, ethnic conflict, and democratization.

David L. Phillips is Director of the Program on Peace-building and Rights at Columbia University's Institute for the Study of Human Rights. Phillips has served as a foreign affairs expert and as Senior Adviser to the U.S. Department of State. He was also Senior Adviser to the UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs. Phillips has worked at academic institutions as Executive Director of Columbia University's International Conflict Resolution Program, Director of American University's Program on Conflict Prevention and

Peace-building, Senior Fellow at Harvard Kennedy School's Future of Diplomacy Project at the Belfer Center for Science and International Affairs, and Fellow at Harvard University's Center for Middle East Studies. Phillips also served as President of the Congressional Human Rights Foundation.

Stanley Salett has more than four decades of experience designing and leading breakthrough national policy initiatives. He was one of the original planners of the National Head Start program and initiated Project Upward Bound, which has enabled more than two million low-income students to enter college. He has served on the staffs of all three Kennedy brothers: President John F. Kennedy's Committee on Youth Employment, Attorney General Robert Kennedy's Committee on Juvenile Delinquency, and Senator Edward Kennedy's presidential campaign. He has also served on Bill Clinton's transition team, screening candidates for cabinet positions. He currently serves as President of The Foundation for the Future of Youth.

Nancy E. Soderberg has over thirty years of experience in foreign policy. Under Bill Clinton, she served as Alternate Representative to the United Nations, with the rank of Ambassador (1997–2001) and as Deputy Assistant to the President for National Security Affairs (1993–1997). She has also worked as the Senior Foreign Policy Adviser to Senator Edward M. Kennedy (1985–1992), as Vice President of the International Crisis Group (2001–2005), and as President of the Connect US Fund (2009–2013). She is currently President and CEO of Soderberg Global Solutions and a Distinguished Visiting Scholar at the University of North Florida.

Gareth Stansfield is Professor of Middle East Politics and the Al-Qasimi Chair of Arab Gulf Studies at the University of Exeter, where he is also Director of the Institute of Arab and Islamic Studies (IAIS) and Director of Research of the Strategy and Security Institute (SSI). He is also Senior Associate Fellow with special reference to the Middle East and Islamic world at the Royal United Services Institute for Defence and Security Studies (RUSI).

Michael Stephens has been a Middle East Research Fellow at the Royal United Services Institute for Defence and Security Studies (RUSI) since 2014. He also heads RUSI Qatar. Previously, he was Deputy Director and Researcher at RUSI. He has published, written extensively, and lectured on ISIS, the Middle East, and Kurdish issues for the BBC, Al Jazeera, the *New York Times*, and other media outlets. He holds a Master's degree in International Relations from King's College at the University of London.

Guy Wyser-Pratte is an American financial investor. Since 1991, he has been the founder and President of Wyser-Pratte and Co., an investing fund focused on undervalued European equities; he is also on the Board of Directors of KUKA AG. He is former President and now Vice Chairman of the U.S. Marine Corps University Foundation, a former trustee (now Trustee Emeritus) of the

Congressional Medal of Honor Foundation, and served in the "Kitchen Cabinet" of the former Commandant of the Marine Corps, General James T. Conway. Wyser-Pratte also serves on the board of Overseers of the International Rescue Committee and is a member of the Council on Foreign Relations.

Other Contributors

Shahla Al Kli is a Ph.D. candidate at the Fletcher School of Law and Diplomacy at Tufts University. Al Kli's research focuses on the role of transnational communities in the Middle East, with particular interest in Iraq, Iran, and Syria. In her research, she investigates the impact of both ethnic (Kurdish) and religious (Sunni and Shiite) trans-border allegiances on state durability in these three countries.

Christina Bache Fidan is a Research Fellow with the Center for International and European Studies (CIES) at Kadir Has University in Istanbul. Christina is also a Ph.D. candidate in the Department of Politics and International Studies at the University of Warwick, UK. Her dissertation focuses on the impact of the Turkish private sector on economic security in the Kurdistan Region of Iraq.

Tatianna Gildersleeve attended Columbia University before embarking on a career in publishing. She has worked as an editor at Time, Inc. and for a range of Condé Nast publications focused on culture and the clothing industries. She has over twenty years of experience in the textile and fashion markets. She is founder and Chief Executive Officer of Tredway White, Inc., a firm developing environmentally sustainable textiles for both woven and non-woven markets.

Lawen Hawezy is a Research Assistant to the Program on Peace-building and Rights at Columbia University's Institute for the Study of Human Rights. He studied international relations at the Fletcher School of Law and Diplomacy at Tufts University and business management at VU Amsterdam. He has nine years of experience as a diplomat in Baghdad and New York.

Ani Poghosyan is an adviser at the Armenian Mission to the United Nations in New York. She is a recent graduate of Columbia University's Master's program in Human Rights Studies. She specializes in human rights education and children's rights, focusing on innovative informal human rights education methods for children and youth in impoverished and conflict-stricken communities.

Appendix C

Clarifying Statements

While I participated in both the fact finding for and drafting of this report with special regard to its energy aspects, I am not in a position to endorse its conclusions and recommendations in their entirety.

David Koranyi

This report is a valuable contribution to discussion of the prospect of Iraqi Kurdish independence and an important reminder to policymakers that this issue will come increasingly to the fore in the months and years ahead. As noted on page 49, however, it is not a consensus document, and I have reservations about some aspects of the report.

I will cite one such reservation, the roadmap for Iraqi Kurdish independence, regarding which I feel the report is not sufficiently explicit about the conditions that must be met to allow the desirable goal of Iraqi Kurdish independence also to be practicable. In addition to improving its governance and economic management along the lines recommended in this report, prerequisites for statehood include the acquiescence of neighbors Turkey and Iran and current host-state Iraq—for the sake of Kurdistan's self-preservation—as well as the unification of the KRG bureaucracy and the peshmerga on a non-partisan basis. Regional capitals would no doubt seek to impose conditions on acquiescence to Kurdish independence, but the prospect of acquiescence itself, however conditioned, is no longer far-fetched in the way it was until recent years. The only alternative to regional acquiescence would be the formal protection of a powerful patron, such as the United States, a development that seems to me unlikely. Assuming regional and domestic obstacles can be removed, the United States and the West should welcome the prospect of Kurdish independence.

Alan Makovsky

I participated in the Task Force in my role as an independent writer and expert on the Kurdish issue. While I can't fully endorse all the report's recommendation and conclusions, I believe the report makes an important contribution to policy planning and discussion.

Aliza Marcus

Appendix D

About Columbia University and the Institute for the Study of Human Rights

Columbia University is one of the top academic and research institutions in the world, conducting path-breaking research in medicine, science, the arts, and the humanities. It includes three undergraduate schools, thirteen graduate and professional schools, and a school of continuing education. Founded in 1754, it is the oldest institution of higher learning in the state of New York and the fifth oldest in the United States.

The Institute for the Study of Human Rights (ISHR) was the first academic center in the world to be founded on an interdisciplinary commitment to the study of human rights. ISHR is also renowned for bridging the study and practice of human rights on both the national and international levels. ISHR seeks to promote dialogue between scholars and practitioners through human rights research, education, lectures, conferences, and capacity-building activities.

The Program on Peace-building and Human Rights is an applied research endeavor taking a comprehensive approach to peace-building through humanitarian assistance, human rights, economic development, and political participation. In addition to Iraqi Kurdistan, the program operates in Sudan, Burma, Indonesia, Turkey, Sri Lanka, the Balkans, and the Caucasus. Activities involve dialogue initiatives, educational exchanges, and curriculum reforms that reduce hostile perceptions, as well as cooperative projects with practical social and economic benefits. The program enhances preventive diplomacy by focusing on strategies to break the cycle of violence.



Institute for the Study of Human Rights
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OFFICIAL STATEMENT
21 September 2015

Without a significant increase in funding from the International Community and financial transactions from GoI, the Kurdistan Region will not be able to contain the humanitarian crisis.

The Kurdistan Regional Government has long adopted an inclusive and welcoming policy free of discrimination based on religious, cultural, ethnic or political identity. We recognize the vital importance of aiding those that are fleeing violence and unrest from other parts of Iraq in order to establish and maintain peace in this conflict-ridden area.

Kurdistan Region as a Safe Haven

From 2003 up until 2013, KRI opened its doors to more than 600,000 internally displaced Iraqis. The Government and the people of the Kurdistan Region understood that sustainable peace and development cannot be accomplished if some members of society are marginalized, and so we championed for inclusiveness by ensuring that these new members of our society were granted the same rights, protections and access to services.

Today, the Syrian civil war has produced one of the largest displacement crisis in the world and a significant number of Syrians fleeing violence have sought safety and shelter in the Kurdistan Region. In a sudden escalation of violence, the brutal invasion of the Islamic State in 2014 resulted in the forced displacement of three million Iraqis. The situation has rapidly developed into a full scale level-three humanitarian crisis. Offering protection and shelter, the Kurdistan Region once again became a safe haven for more than half of the displaced population and we have continued to keep our borders open.

Today, the Kurdistan Region is offering safety, protection and services to 280,000 Syrian refugees and up to 1.5 million IDPs. In 2014, an average of 80,000 IDPs entered the Kurdistan Region every month. These figures exclude the displaced populations served by the KRG in the neighboring provinces. As a result of multiple waves of displacement, the population of the Kurdistan Region has increased by almost 30%, placing immense pressure on existing resources and services. While the nature of the crisis challenges our ability to collect exact displacement figures, the number is significant enough to raise acute emergency alarms.

Containing an Extended Level-Three Crisis

The Government of Iraq has unconstitutionally withheld KRG's 17% share of the annual budget for the past 17 months. This has crippled the KRG's ability to maintain public services for the local population and meet the basic needs of the IDPs. Confronted with the trifecta of crises – loss of 90% of the fiscal transfers, the refugee and IDP crises and the war on ISIS – KRG cannot maintain its level of contribution and open-door policy without putting the safety and welfare of the population and stability of the Region at risk. Whilst the initial consequences are apparent, the full scale of the impacts is still unfolding due to the on-going nature and magnitude of the conflict. Up to date, the KRG has managed to contain the crisis and meet the basic needs of the affected populations with the assistance of UN Agencies and national and international NGOs. Yet the heaviest burden has been borne by the host communities, whose living standards, access to services and opportunities have drastically deteriorated over the past few years. Regrettably, the GoI has remained largely absent in the response to the IDP crisis in the Kurdistan Region despite its constitutional duty to its displaced citizens.

Contingency and Preparedness

In one of the world's most complex humanitarian crisis, the KRG and humanitarian partners on the ground are challenged to meet the deepening needs of a population in protracted displacement, while also responding to new emergencies and influxes. The military operations and subsequent displacements from Anbar have offered an insight into the likely outcomes of the anticipated liberation of Mosul. The worst case scenario is warning of the displacement of one million people. Based on previous displacement trends, geographic proximity, safety and security in the Kurdistan Region and the restricted access policies of other provinces in Iraq, the majority of the new IDPs will more than likely flee to the Kurdistan Region.

Preventing Regional Collapse

Over the past years, the refugee and IDP response plans have remained chronically underfunded. At its conclusion, the Strategic Response Plan had been funded at 26% while the corresponding figure for the Refugee Response stands at an alarming 19%. Adding to this pressured funding situation, the GoI has not only lacked in providing assistance but has also withheld KRGs share of the national budget. In the recently launched Humanitarian Response Plan (HRP), the humanitarian community has appealed for $500 million. If funded, the HRP will alleviate acute suffering but fall short of tackling the impact on host communities and society at large. A recent report published by the World Bank and the Ministry of Planning estimates the cost of stabilising the region back to the pre-crisis level at $1.4 billion under the baseline scenario, in which no new influx of displaced populations enter the Kurdistan Region. In the worst-case scenario, the World Bank and MoP have estimated a staggering need of $2.4 billion for stabilization costs. It is the regrettable conclusion of the KRG that without a drastic increase in funding from the international community and financial transactions from the GoI, the Region will neither be able to cope with the current crisis, nor respond to anticipated new displacements. As humanitarian partners formulate contingency plans, it is paramount to recognize that the Kurdistan Region has exhausted its response and absorption capacity and is at risk of total collapse. KRG remains committed to its humanitarian responsibilities and will continue to voice the plight of the women, men and children in distress. We are calling on the international community and the GoI to provide the region with the necessary resources and technical support to continue offering a safe haven to those in need.

US-KURDISTAN BUSINESS COUNCIL

September 1, 2015

Dear Congressman:

As the CEO of the United States Kurdistan Business Council (USKBC), I would like to introduce you to the organization and invite you to the launch of a book entitled the *Kurdistan Tour Guide,* an event that will take place in Washington, D.C. on the evening of September 16th (a formal invitation has already been sent to you). The USKBC will sponsor this event in cooperation with the Kurdistan Regional Government's Representative to the United States, the Honorable Bayan Sami Abdul Rahman.

The *Kurdistan Tour Guide's* publishers are two Americans with over thirty years of combined experience working in the Kurdistan region of Iraq. Please visit the following site for more information about the publication: http://www.kurdistantourguide.com/.

The USKBC is a member-driven, non-profit American trade association that was established three years ago and is focused on facilitating trade and investment opportunities for American companies in the Kurdistan region. The USKBC works in cooperation with the Kurdistan Regional Government and companies in the Kurdistan region. Growth in the Kurdistan region has contributed to a need for infrastructure and services development across all sectors, presenting a truly unique investment environment for American companies. With one of the most liberal investment laws in the Middle East and the KRG's prioritization of attracting U.S. business, this emerging market presents a plethora of business development opportunities for Americans.

Members of the USKBC receive unique benefits, including opportunities to travel to the region and to meet with companies already established there. The USKBC also responds to member needs and acts on their behalf to provide a voice for trade-friendly U.S. and KRG policies.

For more information about the USKBC, visit us at *www.uskbc.org* or on Twitter, *@USKBizCouncil.* You can also reach us directly at info@uskbc.org or by telephone at 202-683-3205.

Warm regards,

James L. Jones
General,USMC (Ret.)
Chief Executive Officer

UNITED STATES - KURDISTAN BUSINESS COUNCIL
1301 K STREET, NW, SUITE 600, EAST TOWER
WASHINGTON, DC 20005

US-KURDISTAN BUSINESS COUNCIL

September 1, 2015

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Warm regards,

James L. Jones

James L. Jones
General,USMC (Ret.)
Chief Executive Officer

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As the CEO of the United States Kurdistan Business Council (USKBC), I would like to introduce you to the organization and invite you to the launch of a book entitled the *Kurdistan Tour Guide,* an event that will take place in Washington, D.C. on the evening of September 16th (a formal invitation has already been sent to you). The USKBC will sponsor this event in cooperation with the Kurdistan Regional Government's Representative to the United States, the Honorable Bayan Sami Abdul Rahman.

The *Kurdistan Tour Guide's* publishers are two Americans with over thirty years of combined experience working in the Kurdistan region of Iraq. Please visit the following site for more information about the publication: http://www.kurdistantourguide.com/.

The USKBC is a member-driven, non-profit American trade association that was established three years ago and is focused on facilitating trade and investment opportunities for American companies in the Kurdistan region. The USKBC works in cooperation with the Kurdistan Regional Government and companies in the Kurdistan region. Growth in the Kurdistan region has contributed to a need for infrastructure and services development across all sectors, presenting a truly unique investment environment for American companies. With one of the most liberal investment laws in the Middle East and the KRG's prioritization of attracting U.S. business, this emerging market presents a plethora of business development opportunities for Americans.

Members of the USKBC receive unique benefits, including opportunities to travel to the region and to meet with companies already established there. The USKBC also responds to member needs and acts on their behalf to provide a voice for trade-friendly U.S. and KRG policies.

For more information about the USKBC, visit us at *www.uskbc.org* or on Twitter, *@USKBizCouncil.* You can also reach us directly at info@uskbc.org or by telephone at 202-683-3205.

Warm regards,

James L. Jones
General,USMC (Ret.)
Chief Executive Officer

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