Avakirina nasname û netew dewlet

Konfederalizma Demokratik çawa dikare ji bo despotîzma Rojhilata Navîn bibe model?
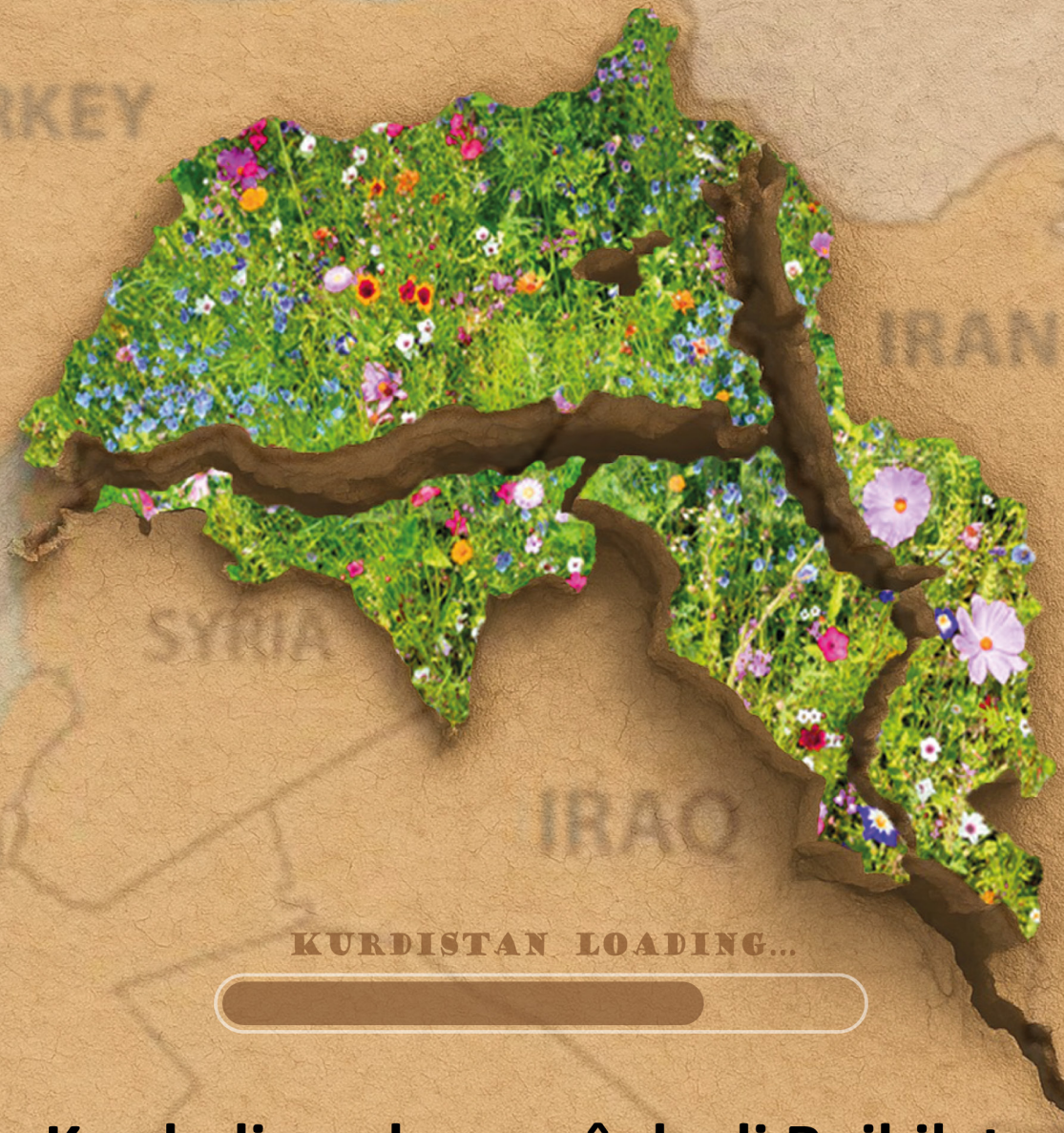

Polîtîkaya Rusyayê li Rojhilata Navîn û Kurdistanê

Gelo Amerîka piştî 100 salî prensîbên Wilson wê bisepîne?

Li gor Qanûnên Navdewletî û Peymana Montevideoyê Şertê Dewletbûnê

KURDISTAN LOADING...

Kurd; di serdema nû de, li Rojhilata Navîn wek aktorên sereke

Salih Muslim:
Êdî dema Netew Dewletan bi dawî bûye. Em netew dewlet naxwazin.

Gelo dîrok dê dîsa xwe dubare bike? Pêvajoya aştîyê ye, an pêvajoya xapandinê ye?

çıktı

SETA PERWERDEYA ZIMANÊ KURDÎ

ZIMANÊ ŞÎRÎN

Seta Perwerdeya Zimanê Kurdî ya ku li ber destê we ye, ji aliyê Sipan Eğitim ve Kültür Derneği ve bi sîstema hînkirina zimanên Ewrûpî hate amadekirin. Di nava vê setê de şeş pirtûkên ku li gorî sê astan (asta pêşîn, asta navîn, asta dawîn) hatine hazirkirin hene.

RÊZIMAN
KURDÎ HEVOK
ALFABE ZIMAN
MIJAR **PEYV**
ARMANC **HEVNASÎN**
CÎNAVK

ASTA PÊŞÎN A1

From the Editor

The academic and research journal 'Rewşenbîr' appears before its readers with its inaugural issue. We are excited to begin this journey. Our first issue focuses on the current status of the Kurds—the Middle East's rising actor—and presents comprehensive analyses of the present and future of a people who have been left in the shadow of injustice over the past century from Lausanne Treaty to today.

A century after the Sykes–Picot Agreement partitioned the Kurds' ancestral lands among four states, the Kurdish people paid the price in massacres, exile, assimilation policies, and denial. Their language was banned; their existence negated. Today, however, the Middle East is being reshaped: governments fall, borders are questioned, and systems change. How will this transformation affect the Kurds? Will they exercise their right to self-determination? Or remain a stateless and colonized people for another century?

This issue presents multi-dimensional analyses of the Kurdish question. Fetullah Kaya sheds historical light on the perennial problem of intra-Kurdish unity through a content analysis of the early Kurdish press; Sevda Brûkî examines identity formation and the nation-state question.

We discussed whether Kurdish conceptions of democracy and Rojava's model of Democratic Confederalism can offer an alternative to Middle Eastern despotism. While discussing democracy, we also examine the continuing role of tribal structures through M. Seid Temel's study: did tribes preserve Kurdish identity or impede national consolidation by filtering issues through a tribal lens?

In this volume, we also spotlight great-power policies toward the Kurds. Christina Khazova analyzes Russia's Middle East and Kurdish policy, while Rabia Abdurrahman evaluates U.S. Middle East policy and the Kurdish dimension of the GMEP, tracing the historical background of America's approach. Will the United States—now the region's principal actor—implement what it once demanded a century ago under the Wilson Principles: the establishment of Kurdistan? Meanwhile, Turkey persists its policy that " the Kurd not see his mother". Dr. Seyfeddin Neslinebi analyzes how the Kurdish issue shapes Turkey's foreign policy. Beyond articles and analyses, we include feature dossiers. M. Emin Demir revisits the 27 September 2017 independence referendum in the Kurdistan Region of Iraq. Fethi Kaya compiles an extensive dossier on the ongoing peace process between the PKK and the Turkish government, bringing together expert perspectives.

With this first issue, 'Rewşenbîr' aims to shed light on Kurdish history and to debate hopes for the future. We invite you to join this intellectual journey. Enjoy reading…

CONTENTS

CONTENTS

REWŞENBÎR

First Period (1898 - 1920) in Kurdish Press,

Ancient Problem: National Unity[*]

Fetullah Kaya
Journalist

Abstract

Changes in world politics from the turn of the nineteenth century onward led the major empires of the era to the eventual collapse. Meanwhile, national movements that emerged within these empires started the process of nationstate formation.

Each one of the peoples of empires went through their peculiar processes of enlightenment. The principal medium of such an endeavour was publishing activities with a marked emphasis on 'national unity'. Even though the seventeenth-century poet Ehmedê Xanî touched upon the topic of a unity in his Mem û Zîn it was not until the nineteenth-century press that Kurdish intellectu- als markedly emphasized the issue of 'national unity' in the modern sense as a central problem.

While trying to develop ideas for a solution to the issue, they often formulated the phrase "adaptation to the necessities of the time". This study deals with this issue and the reflection of this approach upon the Kurds and Kurdish press through the analysis of its formative period.

The article also examines the discourse of 'national unity' in the context of the discussions of the popular ideas of the time, nationalism and nation-state.

Özet

19. yüzyılın başlarından itibaren değişen dünya siyaseti var olan imparatorlukları yıkıma doğru götürürken imparatorlukların içinde filizlenen milliyetçi akımlar ulus devlet kurmaya evrilir.

Bu süreçte imparatorluk unsurlarının her birinin bir iç aydınlanma sürecine girdikleri ve bu çabanın en önemli aracının yayıncılık faaliyeti olduğu gözlemlenmektedir. Bu yayın faaliyetinde önemli vurgulardan birinin "Milli Birlik" olduğu ileri sürülebilir.

Kürt toplumunda 17. yüzyılın sonunda Ehmedê Xanî tarafından kaleme alınan Mem û Zîn adlı mesnevide birlik konusu vurgulansa da modern anlamdaki birlik söylemi için, Kürt aydınlarının 19. yüzyılın sonunda başlayan yayın faaliyetini beklemek gerekecektir. Dönemin Kürt aydınlarının milli birlik konusunu büyük, hatta temel bir sorun olarak gördükleri ve çözümü için çaba sarf ettikleri gözlemlenmektedir. Bu süreçte sıkça duyulan "icab-ı asra intibak" (zamana uyum sağlamak) sözü ve yaklaşımının Kürtlere yansıması nasıl olmuştur? Bu çalışmada bu sorunun Kürt toplumu ve süreli yayıncılığına etkisi ele alınmıştır. Burada ilk dönem Kürt basınının içerik analizinin yapılması suretiyle dönemin popüler ideolojileri olan milliyetçilik ve ulus devlet tartışmaları bağlamında ortaya çıkan "milli birlik" söylemi üzerinde durulmuştur.

Scan the QR code to read the full article in English.

Makaleyi Türkçe okumak için QR kodunu tarayın.

[*] The Turkish version of this article was published in Kebikeç Journal.

REWSENBÎR

I. Introduction

When one examines Kurdish political history, it becomes clear that the issue of "unity" is not a problem exclusive to the present day. This problem first emerges in Mem û Zîn, written by Ehmedê Xanî. Xanî situates the lack of unity at the very core of all difficulties faced by the Kurds. While emphasizing this problem, the poet not only identifies its causes but also highlights the potential outcomes of its resolution:

Ger dê hebûya me ittifaqek
Vêk ra bikira me inqiyadek
Rûm[1] û 'ereb û 'ecem temamî
Hemiyan ji me ra dikir xulamî
Tekmîl dikir me dîn û dewlet
Tehsîl dikir me 'ilm û hikmet
Temyîz dibûn ji hev meqalat
Mumtaz dibûn xwidan kemalat (Xanî, 2016, 42)

"If only unity had existed among us,
If only we had truly embraced it together,
Then the Rûm[1], Arabs, and Persians
all of them would have served us.
Religion and state would
have been perfected,
knowledge and wisdom would
have been acquired. (Xanî, 2016, 42)

The perspective expressed in these verses is not only distant from the Kurdish world of its time, but also from the broader Islamic world. Indeed, Xanî explicitly names Arabs, Persians, and Greeks as "others," juxtaposing them with "us"—the Kurds—thus underscoring the problem of national unity among the Kurds. A similar concern for unity reappears during the age of nation-states, particularly in the early twentieth century, when Kurdish intellectuals once again debated this issue.

At this stage, we observe explicit calls for national alliances among Kurdish intellectuals, who sought to lead their society, and a number of initiatives were undertaken in this regard. Nevertheless, it would be difficult to argue that the discourse of unity was consistently reproduced as a uniform narrative throughout every phase of Kurdish periodical publishing.

Kurdish periodical publishing can be divided into four historical phases, taking into account the political and historical development of the Kurdish press. The first phase encompasses the earliest Kurdish periodicals, which emerged during the late Ottoman Empire and which constitute the main focus of this study. This phase begins with the publication of Kurdistan—the first Kurdish-language newspaper—on 22 April 1898, and extends until the collapse of the Ottoman Empire. The second phase begins with the dissolution of the Ottoman Empire and the establishment of the Turkish Republic. During this period, Kurdish journalism largely survived in exile, with publications emerging in places such as Damascus, Beirut, and Soviet Armenia. Within the borders of Turkey, no Kurdish-language publications appeared during this time. In fact, the only Kurdish sentence published in this period was the headline "Ji bo Xwedê sedeqe" ("An alms for the sake of God") in the 1958 issue of İleri Yurt, edited by Musa Anter. Although the article itself was in Turkish, its Kurdish title led to a lawsuit against Anter, who was subsequently tried in court (Anter, 1999: 141). This phase can be extended until the late 1960s.

The third phase spans the period between 1968 and 1980. During this era, known as the "Generation of 1968," Kurdish society witnessed the rise of political youth organizations. Most of these organizations engaged in publishing activities considered illegal by the state, producing materials imbued with revolutionary and nationalist discourse. Following the 1980 military coup, such publications became impossible, even illegally. The fourth phase, therefore, begins only after a decade-long interruption, with the re-emergence of Kurdish publishing within a legal framework. Indeed, the 1983 Law No. 2932, which prohibited the use of Kurdish in publications, was amended in 1991, partially lifting the restrictions allowing limited space for Kurdish journalism.

Rojnameya Kurdî ya pêşî Kurdistan

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[1] Kurds use the word 'Rum' for Ottomans (Turks) because it was founded on the legacy of the Roman Empire.

REWSENBÎR

II. National Unity among the Kurds

Today, the Kurdish homeland, divided into four parts, presents a fragmented appearance due to the addition of internal political divisions within each section. For many years, these divisions and political structures have been observed to be in conflict with one another, periodically seeking alliances. In the early period of Kurdish periodical publications, the reality of division and national unity was a central concern for intellectuals. The pursuit of unity was even reflected in the names of publications. Notably, in 1913, the Kurdish Students Association (Hêvî Society) in Istanbul published a Kurdish-language magazine entitled Yekbûn (Unity). This title signifies a search for unity and underscores the importance accorded to national unity in early Kurdish press.

Moreover, the association's manifesto includes state-

III. National Unity Under the Umbrella of Kurdish Identity

In the early period of the Kurdish press, there were also writers who discussed Kurdish unity under the umbrella of Islam and Ottomanism. However, due to the length of the article, we will not include those views. It is seen that there were important intellectuals who addressed the alliance of Kurds under the umbrella of Kurdish identity. We will extensively feature the articles penned by these intellectuals in the early Kurdish press (magazines and newspapers).

1. The Discourse of National Unity in Newspapers

As noted above, the early period of Kurdish periodical publishing began with the Kurdistan newspaper. Between the commencement of its publication in 1898 and

ments emphasizing unity and solidarity. The discourse on national unity during this period can be understood through three dimensions, each highlighting the construction or pursuit of identity. In the early Kurdistan newspaper, frequent references to Kurdish-Armenian unity in response to the central government's repressive policies mark the starting point of this pursuit. Over time, the concept of unity evolved into three interrelated dimensions, structured around three primary identities:

1. In the broader community, a religious identity under the umbrella of Islam, known as Ummah-based unity,
2. In the inner circle, a superior and political identity as Ottoman subjects,
3. And as a national identity, Kurdishness.

1913, four Kurdish-language newspapers were published: Kurdistan, KTTCG, Şark ve Kurdistan, and another newspaper also named Kurdistan. All four of these newspapers were published before the First World War, coinciding with the period when nationalist movements were beginning to emerge. Correspondingly, the emphasis on nationalism and national unity in these publications increased progressively. For instance, although the first Kurdish newspaper Kurdistan did not explicitly employ a discourse of national unity, various articles included references to Kurdish solidarity (Kaya, 2010: 69). In the issue dated 13 March 1901, Abdurrahman Bedirxan's Turkish-language article in the Kurdish section of the newspaper contains statements in this vein.
In his article, Bedirxan generally refers to Armenians, advising that Kurds should not participate in the oppression of Armenians. He cites Sheikh Ubeydullah's stance

²Rojnameya Ümmîd û Serbestî her çiqas ji hêla Kurdan ve were weşandin jî, ji seba ku ne bi Kurdî ye, em nagrin nav rojnameyên Kurdî.

as an example, referencing the statement that killing Armenians constitutes a massacre and that a sultan issuing such an order would be tyrannical and in opposition to God's commands, warranting deposition. Bedirxan then turns to the question of Kurdish solidarity, stating:

"The Turks exploit this discord among us. There are young and just leaders among the Kurds. Let them take the initiative and lead. How long shall we remain under Turkish rule?" (Kan, 2018: 93-94)

The first figure to address the notion of Kurdish national unity in a serious manner was Said-i Kurdi. In the 5 December 1908 issue of KTTCG, in his article titled "Our Kurdish Language", Kurdi discusses, in general terms, the unity of the ummah and, more specifically, Kurdish solidarity. Addressing Kurds in Kurdish, he writes:

> "O Kurdish People!
> Strength lies in unity, life lies in solidarity, happiness lies in brotherhood, and security lies in governance. Hold the bond of unity and the cord of affection firmly, so that it may protect you from calamities. Listen carefully, for I will tell you something:
> know that we have three fundamental values which demand our protection.
> **First:** Islam, for which the blood of thousands of martyrs has been shed.
> **Second:** Humanity, which we must demonstrate to the world through our knowledge, intellectual efforts, virtue, and morality.
> **Third:** Our national identity, which is our honor. Through our efforts and the preservation of our national identity and culture, we must honor the spirits of our ancestors resting in their graves." (Kurdi, 1908: 54)

Kurdi further identifies three enemies of the Kurds, emphasizing that the greatest threat comes from internal discord. In this respect, his writings constitute a significant contribution to the discourse of Kurdish national unity. In his Turkish-language article "What Do the Kurds Need?" published in the 12 December 1908 issue of KTTCG, Kurdi reiterates this perspective:

"Among the needs I have considered for fifteen years, I focused on two points. I have not seen any other tools capable of securing Kurdistan's future. First is national unity, and second is the dissemination of civilization techniques alongside religious sciences. In short, the unity that constitutes the solid bond and lifeline of every nation, particularly the Kurds, will serve as a robust foundation and enduring structure, capable of overcoming tribal divisions and other challenges." (Kurdi, 1908: 92)

Seyfullah -i Suleymanî also addresses Kurdish leaders in the same issue of KTTCG in his article "To All My Kurdish Brothers!", with a pronounced emphasis on social reconciliation. He asserts:

> "Reconciliation and unity bring happiness and prosperity to a people, whereas division and discord lead to decline and disaster. The examples have been numerous and much has been said; thus, there is no need to elaborate. The aim is to communicate to all Kurdish compatriots, especially Kurdish leaders, that today, more than ever, they require unity" (Seyfullah, 1908: 117).

Arguably the author most consistently emphasizing Kurdish unity is Seyyah Ahmed Şewqî. In the third issue of KTTCG, his Kurdish-language article "Gelî Welatiyan" ("O Citizens") cautions Kurds regarding the necessity of alliance, warning that failure to unite would result in serving others:

> "O Kurds,
> Cling tightly to the cord of unity, so tightly that nothing and no one can break your alliance. Only then will your homeland be free from all worries.
> If this division continues, withdraw your hand from Kurdistan. Consider Bosnia-Herzegovina: there was no alliance, and Austria prevailed.
> O Kurds,
> All positive developments in the world are directed toward Kurdistan, awaiting from you two things: the preservation of Sharia and the alliance among Kurds. Safeguard these two values" (Şewqî, 1908: 157-158).

> " Through our efforts and the preservation of our national identity and culture, we must honor the spirits of our ancestors resting in their graves. "

REWSENBÎR

In early Kurdish press, appeals to Kurdish intellectuals and leaders to play a role in securing national unity are frequent. One such appeal is made by Halil Hayalî (Xelîl Xeyalî). In the 8th issue of KTTCG, published on 23 January 1909, he addresses Kurdish notables in "Vatan û Îtîfaqa Kurmanca" ("Homeland and Kurdish Alliance"), providing a paragraph-by-paragraph Turkish translation:

"O prominent Ottomans, powerful sheikhs, influential Kurdish leaders, know that the life of our people and the security of our homeland depend on your alliance, diligence, and dedication. Abandon outdated traditions that must be rejected. Reconcile Kurdish individuals, and guide them in distinguishing good from evil. For you are knowledgeable, while they are not. Let your leadership serve the benefit of the homeland and the advancement of the nation, not your personal gain." (Hayalî, 1909: 391, 395)

Another writer addressing unity is Süleymaniyeli A. Hilmi. In the 9th issue of KTTCG, dated 30 January 1909, his article "A Few Words to My Kurdish Citizens" elevates the call for unity:

"O dear citizens, you know that the tools for a people's development are twofold: unity and cooperation, and knowledge and education. The former enables the people to form a cohesive mass, capable of withstanding the flood of enemy attacks and protecting the beloved homeland from all invasive ambitions." (Süleymaniyeli, 1909: 452)

Therefore, it can be argued that the emphasis on unity was frequently foregrounded in the newspapers published by Kurdish intellectuals.

2. The Discourse of National Unity in Magazines

Fifteen years after the publication of the first Kurdish newspaper, Kurdistan, the first Kurdish magazine, Rojî Kurd, began its publication in June 1913 (Kaya, 2010: 98). This period, coinciding with the immediate prelude to World War I, reveals the presence of widespread nationalist discourse in the magazine as well. For instance, in the third issue dated 14 August 1913, a piece titled "From Our Sorrows: Our Discord" signed "M. X…" draws attention. Believed to be authored by Halil Hayali, the article emphasizes that discord among Kurds has persisted from time immemorial:

"For example, discord seems to be an eternal affliction of Kurdism. This ailment has gnawed at the existence of Kurdism for centuries, undermining its spirituality to such a degree that it has prevented its progress and rise. […]

Amid this thousand year darkness and despair, I find hope and joy only in the torch held by Kurdish youth. It is necessary that this youth become a model for the future through the unity and brotherhood they demonstrate to escape the path of ignorance they have spiritually trodden." (X.M…, 1913: 83)

In the same issue, another article titled "Misfortune and the Deprivation of Kurds" signed again by "M. X." discusses the unity and cohesion of other nations. After mentioning the services rendered to their own languages by Arab, Persian, and Turkish intellectuals, the article draws attention to the situation of Kurdish intellectuals, advising them to cease serving others and to return to their "home":

"Today, all the states and nations on earth strive day and night for the benefit of their states and peoples in unity and with a single language. They publish newspapers and raise awareness among their people. Today, 30–40 thousand Kurdish sheikhs, scholars, and students work in the name of religion and state. They have provided none of the service they gave to Arabs, Persians, and Romans [Turks] for the Kurds. If even one percent of their service for other nations had been provided to Kurds, today their names would appear in Kurdish books, and Kurdish children would learn of them with gratitude." (X… M., 1913: 94)

Another Kurdish magazine launched in 1913 was Hetawî Kurd (Kurdish Sun). In the article "To the Kurdish Ulema" by Kerküklü Necmeddin, the importance of national consciousness through unity and solidarity is em-

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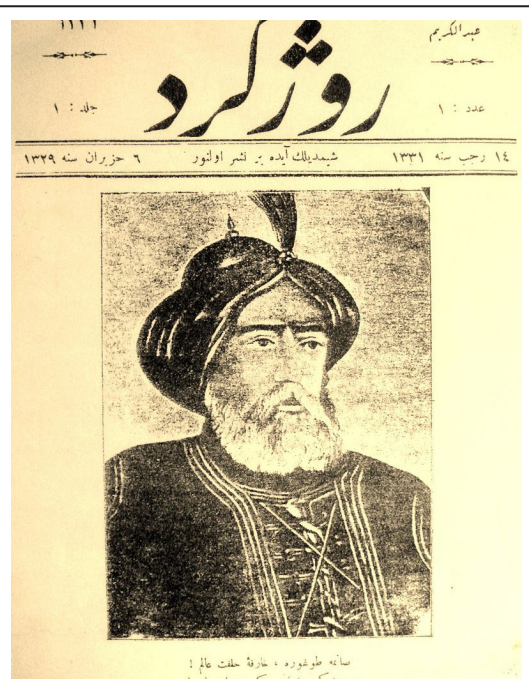
phasized. The responsibility of maintaining this unity is attributed to Kurdish elites and religious scholars. The article rejects societal division, asserting that youth will prevent discord:

"Just as the Sharia forbids ideas that create division, so do we reject them. Kurdish youth will prevent anyone from following such ideas." (Akt. Alan, 2015: 80)

In the first issue of the magazine, an article signed "M… X." addresses Kurdish elites directly:

> "O Kurdish sheikhs, imams, and aghas! If our enemies were only the English and the Muscovites, we might still endure. But we have other enemies that gnaw at us like worms in a tree, leading us day by day to death. One of these enemies is ignorance and discord among Kurds, the other is the injustice done to Fileh" (X, M…, 1913: 127)[3]

In Jîn magazine, the second issue dated 14 November 1918 features Hizanîzade Kemal Fevzi's article "The Nation Belongs to Eternity", which discusses Rousseau's principles of national sovereignty and the roots of socialism. This article reflects a notion of social evolution, linking the concept to the development and freedom of nations:

> "The continuation and expansion of individual life depends on the orderly and harmonious arrangement of necessary conditions and the constant manifestation of unity everywhere; similarly, the development of national life depends on the constant unity and harmony of its social conditions. […] We observe that nations sharing the same language, religion, and character survive numerous invasions without the slightest disruption to their national foundations." (Hizanîzade, 1918: 235)

A similar emphasis is found in the third issue of Jîn in the article "Unity" signed by "E. Rehmî," identified as Abdurrahim Rahmi (Zapsu), asserting that a nation's success depends on alliance:

> "States grow through unity and alliance. All nations, first and foremost, secured unity among themselves. Then they achieved success in their endeavors. I say, let us, who are lagging behind, learn from threads, strings, and ropes, and unite. From me comes the call for alliance, from the elders comes encouragement, from the young comes effort, from the Prophet comes guidance, and from God comes success." (Rehmî, 1918: 254)

Another call for unity in the fourth issue of Jîn comes from Qazîzade M. Şewqî. In his article "The Condition of Us Kurds in the Present Century", he warns that time is limited and directly addresses Kurdish elites:

"Despite your honor and fame, it is shameful that you remain so impoverished and negligent, relinquishing your precious homeland. You, who possess honor, must heed my words:

> Let us unite at once, for the sake of our fathers and ancestors, and not sacrifice our beautiful homeland to ignoble ambitions and leadership. Time is short, and the enemy exploits our negligence. Rush to salvation and prosperity; otherwise, regret will follow, but it will be of no use." (Şewqî, 1918: 339)

Jîn was the most significant magazine of the period, holding a prominent place in Kurdish publishing both in representation and content. Among the writers who most prominently promoted national unity in its pages was Siverekli Hilmi. In the 8th issue dated 9 January 1919, his article "To the Kurdish Youth" addresses young readers with a tone of guidance:

> "Youth! The hope of the homeland now rests on you. The duties before you today are of utmost importance. Do not sleep! If we wish to remain untainted in the eyes of the world and in the pages of history, we must abandon disputes, malicious suspicions, and arrogance. Strive to be united like a single hand and voice! Work only for your nation! Do not forget that we also have a vast neglected language and a rich history. Here is a formula for salvation: action and initiative!" (Sivêrekî, 1919: 418)

In the 16th issue, Hilmi Sivêrekî continues this discourse on

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3 'Fileh,' in its original meaning, refers to an Ishmaelite, meaning Christian. However, Kurds use the word 'Fileh' for Armenians.

REWSENBÎR

unity, lamenting its absence in the article titled "Gazin-dek" (A Complaint). He calls Kurds to unity:

> "O Kurds, I shout and cry out, saying: Ahead of the path we have walked lies a deep and dark pit. We have all seen it with our own eyes. Turn back from that crooked, dead-end path. We need unity. Brothers, take heed." (Sivêrekî, 1919: 724)

This complaint tone can be interpreted as the magazine's own voice. Indeed, in its 21st issue, Jîn institutionalizes this stance by publishing the manifesto of the Kurdish Students' Society-Hêvî, emphasizing that Kurds can achieve salvation through unity and solidarity:

> "Ah, there is one thing we lack, which is great and a disaster for us: our unity and solidarity. Remember, brothers, if we do not wish to perish, unite; abandon meaningless and baseless quarrels. Neighboring peoples benefit from our discord and division. We must remain vigilant. Our salvation lies in unity and solidarity. One of the aims of the 'Hêvî' society is to ensure this unity and solidarity. Our elders said: 'I am with you, you are with me, and both of us are with God.'" (Jîn Magazine, 1919: 906)

The quest and discourse of "National Unity" in early Kurdish press were not confined to prose and manifestos. The same discourse is also traceable in poetry published in periodicals of the time. E. Rehmî's poem "Destê Tenê Deng Jê Nayêt" (No Sound Comes from a Single Hand), published in Jîn, serves as a typical example, representing the final literary appeal of early Kurdish periodicals:

> Ey milletê sahib nîfaq
> Lazim ji bo te îttîfaq
> Te'sis nekin em yek wîfaq
> Mehwîyyet e bîl-îttîfaq
> Aqilê xwe berhev kin hemî
> Wext, zeman pir nazik e
> Bêîttîfaq tehlûke
> Xelqan hemî digel me rik e
> Mehwîyyeta me bêşik e
> Aqilê xwe berhev kin hemî
> Şexsiyetê bavêne der
> Yek şexsî şol nayête ser
> Yek bin, nemînit bê eser
> Şola umîda me li ser
> Aqilê xwe berhev kin hemî
>   (Rehmî, 1918: 308)

IV. Conclusion

The press and media constitute a mirror of society. The social, political, and economic conditions of a community are reflected in its media. Throughout the ongoing process surrounding the issue of unity from the beginnings of Kurdish journalism to the present it is evident that this issue has always occupied a central position.

Today, the Kurdish media is largely not independent and is often affiliated with political parties as a publishing institution. When we examine the sources and foundations of discord and conflict among Kurds, ideological and political causes come to the fore. Since Kurdish media is also intertwined with political parties, these conflicts are initiated and disseminated through the media among the public.

In early Kurdish journalism, the term "National Unity" appeared in written articles as one of the greatest obstacles, highlighted as essential for progress and development. To ensure that Kurdish society advan

ces in every sphere, solidarity was proposed as a solution, and this notion, within the context of the writings, emerged as a guiding principle for the Kurds.

This study demonstrates that the concept of "National Unity", which continues to be relevant among Kurds today, was actively discussed even in that historical period. When we consider the current political and social situation of Kurdish society, it becomes clear that the ideas put forth by Kurdish intellectuals over a century ago have not fully realized their objectives and have largely remained unfulfilled.

Finally, it should be noted that the problem of internal conflict and divisions reflected in the writings, proverbs, songs, poetry, and literature of the Kurds has persisted until today. The words of Cigerxwîn, "O Kurds! Unite! If you do not unite, you will fall one by one," serve as a timeless reminder: unity must first overcome the divisions sown by political parties and then resonate in the consciousness of all Kurds.

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REWŞENBÎR

The Impact of the Kurdish Issue on Turkey's International Relations

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Abstract

This article analyzes the impact of the Kurdish issue on Turkey's international relations by examining its reflections at bilateral, regional, and multilateral levels. Based on a mixed-methods approach that includes discourse analysis, policy review, and selected quantitative indicators, the study traces how Turkey's foreign policy has intersected over time with the ongoing domestic Kurdish conflict.

The analysis focuses on Turkey's relations with the United States, the European Union, Iraq (particularly the Kurdistan Regional Government), and Syria. It also evaluates NATO dynamics and broader regional implications. The findings reveal that the Kurdish issue has become both a constraint and a tool in Turkish foreign policy: while it serves as a source of international tension with Western allies, it is also used as a justification for cross-border operations and strategic alignments.

By comprehensively assessing the foreign policy implications of an ethno-political conflict, the article highlights the interaction between domestic security priorities and external diplomatic behavior. It concludes that unless the Kurdish issue is addressed through inclusive governance and a lasting conflict resolution process, its negative effects on Turkey's international relations will persist.

Scan the QR code to read the full article in English.

Özet

Bu makale, Kürt meselesinin Türkiye'nin uluslararası ilişkileri üzerindeki etkisini, ikili, bölgesel ve çok taraflı düzeylerdeki yansımalarını inceleyerek analiz etmektedir. Söylem analizi, politika incelemesi ve belirli nicel göstergeleri içeren karma yöntemli bir yaklaşım temelinde hazırlanan çalışma, Türkiye'nin dış politikasının içte devam eden Kürt çatışmasıyla nasıl kesiştiğini zaman içinde izlemektedir.

Analizin odak noktası, Türkiye'nin Amerika Birleşik Devletleri, Avrupa Birliği, Irak (özellikle Kürdistan Bölgesel Yönetimi) ve Suriye ile ilişkileridir. Ayrıca NATO dinamikleri ve daha geniş bölgesel etkiler de değerlendirilmektedir. Bulgular, Kürt meselesinin Türk dış politikasında hem bir kısıtlama hem de bir araç haline geldiğini ortaya koymaktadır: Batılı müttefiklerle ilişkilerde uluslararası gerilim kaynağı olurken, sınır ötesi operasyonlar ve stratejik hizalanmalar için bir gerekçe olarak kullanılmaktadır.

Makale, etno-politik bir çatışmanın dış politika üzerindeki yansımalarını kapsamlı bir şekilde değerlendirerek, iç güvenlik öncelikleri ile dış diplomatik davranış arasındaki etkileşimi gözler önüne sermektedir. Sonuç olarak, Kürt meselesi kapsayıcı yönetişim ve kalıcı bir çatışma çözüm süreciyle ele alınmadığı sürece, Türkiye'nin uluslararası ilişkileri üzerindeki olumsuz etkilerinin devam edeceği savunulmaktadır.

Makaleyi Türkçe okumak için QR kodunu tarayın.

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Introduction

The Kurdish issue remains one of the most persistent and complex challenges in the modern history of the Republic of Turkey. Rooted in historical grievances, identity politics, and contested territorial claims, the conflict has evolved into a multidimensional problem influencing not only domestic governance but also regional and global diplomacy. Since the emergence of the Kurdistan Workers' Party (PKK) insurgency in 1984, successive Turkish governments have struggled to contain the political, cultural, and security demands of the Kurdish population, often through militarized and securitized strategies (Gunter, 2011; Özpek & Mutluer, 2020). However, the implications of the Kurdish issue are not confined within Turkey's borders. Rather, the internal conflict has increasingly shaped—and been shaped by— Turkey's foreign policy choices, particularly in its relations with the United States, the European Union, Iraq, Syria, and other regional actors.

This article seeks to investigate how the Kurdish issue has affected Turkey's international relations by examining the ways in which the conflict informs strategic alignments, diplomatic tensions, military operations, and regional cooperation. It asks: How has the Kurdish question influenced the formulation and conduct of Turkish foreign policy? And what are the implications for Turkey's bilateral and multilateral engagements?

Addressing these questions is vital for both theoretical and practical reasons. From a theoretical standpoint, it allows us to better understand how domestic ethno-political conflicts influence state behavior in the international arena—an area often understudied in foreign policy analysis. Practically, it sheds light on how Turkey navigates a complex diplomatic environment where its internal conflict intersects with international norms, alliances, and security architectures.

The article is structured as follows. The next section reviews relevant literature and outlines the theoretical framework guiding the analysis. Section 3 details the methodology employed in the study. Section 4 provides a historical overview of the Kurdish issue in Turkey. Section 5 covers Current Situation of Kurdish Issue and ongoing Peace Process Efforts which is related to both historical background of Kurdish İssue and current relations of Turkey with thirds countries. Sections 6 and 7 present an empirical analysis of how the Kurdish conflict has impacted Turkey's bilateral and multilateral relations. Section 8 conducts on the Kurdish Issue and Turkey's Strategic Alliances and Foreign Policy Orientation. And finally section 9 reflects on the broader implications of the findings and Discussion for regional security and foreign policy formulation.

REWSENBÎR

REWSENBÎR

1. Historical Background of the Kurdish Issue in Turkey

The roots of the Kurdish issue in Turkey can be traced back to the early 20th century, particularly following the collapse of the Ottoman Empire and the foundation of the Turkish Republic in 1923. While the Kurds had enjoyed a degree of autonomy under the Ottoman millet system, the nationalist project of the new republic sought to construct a homogenous Turkish identity, marginalizing ethnic and linguistic minorities, including the Kurds (Yavuz, 2001). The 1924 Constitution omitted recognition of non-Turkish ethnic identities, initiating a long history of repression and assimilation policies toward the Kurdish population.

A series of Kurdish uprisings during the early republican period—such as the Sheikh Said Rebellion (1925), the Ararat Rebellion (1930), and the Dersim Rebellion (1937–1938)—were brutally suppressed by the state (McDowall, 2004). These events entrenched a securitized approach to Kurdish dissent, framing it as a threat to the territorial integrity and unity of the Turkish state. The official denial of Kurdish identity, language, and culture persisted throughout much of the 20th century, leading to deep-seated grievances.

The most significant transformation of the Kurdish issue came with the emergence of the Kurdistan Workers' Party (PKK) in 1978, which launched an armed insurgency in 1984 aimed at establishing an independent Kurdish state. The ensuing conflict, primarily centered in southeastern Turkey, has resulted in over 40,000 deaths, massive displacement, and a heavily militarized region (Romano, 2006). The Turkish state's response has largely combined military operations with legal and political repression of pro-Kurdish movements, including the closure of political parties and imprisonment of activists.

A notable shift occurred in the early 2000s under the Justice and Development Party (AKP), which, influenced by the European Union accession process, introduced limited cultural rights for Kurds and initiated a peace process with the PKK. The Democratic Opening (2009) and the subsequent Resolution Process (2013–2015) marked the most serious effort to resolve the conflict through political means (Watts, 2010). However, the process collapsed in mid-2015 following renewed violence, exacerbated by the regional spillover of the Syrian Civil War and the rise of Kurdish autonomy in northern Syria.

Since 2015, the Kurdish issue has re-entered a phase of intense securitization. Domestic politics have witnessed a crackdown on the pro-Kurdish Peoples' Democratic Party (HDP), while Turkish foreign policy has prioritized cross-border military operations targeting Kurdish groups in Syria and Iraq. These developments have increasingly internationalized the conflict, embedding it in broader regional geopolitics and straining Turkey's relations with allies and neighbors (Özpek & Tanrikulu, 2019).

Understanding this historical trajectory is essential to contextualize how the Kurdish issue continues to shape Turkey's external engagements and perceptions of security, sovereignty, and regional influence.

2. The Current Situation of Kurdish Issue and ongoing Peace Process Efforts

Over the past one to two years, a renewed, solution-oriented initiative has emerged involving the Turkish government, the Kurdistan Workers' Party (PKK), and other Kurdish political actors. Within this framework, members of the Peoples' Equality and Democracy Party (DEM Party)—a predominantly Kurdish political entity—have played a mediating role between the Turkish government and Abdullah Öcalan, the imprisoned founder of the PKK. This process included organizing indirect communication channels between the state and PKK leadership, thereby facilitating a constructive dialogue.

A significant milestone was reached on May 12, 2025, when the PKK, following a call from Öcalan, announced during its 12th Party Congress that it had decided to dissolve itself and lay down arms permanently. This declaration marks a historic turning point in the Kurdish issue, arguably the most significant development in over a century. It signals a transition from a conflict-ridden, violence-associated narrative to one increasingly characterized by dialogue, com-
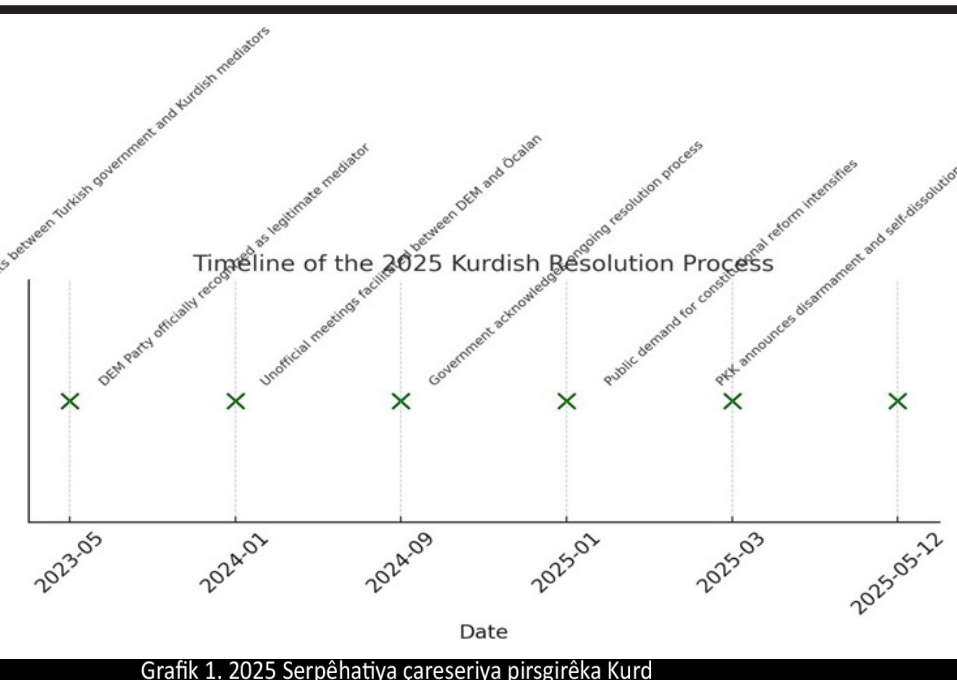
Grafik 1. 2025 Serpêhatiya çareseriya pirsgirêka Kurd

promise, and institutional engagement. This visual representation highlights the progressive institutionalization of the peace initiative, underpinned by increasing public pressure for constitutional reform and the normalization of Kurdish political engagement.

The implications of this shift are profound, offering a unique opportunity to address long-standing Kurdish grievances through peaceful, democratic means. Among the core demands from the Kurdish side are substantial constitutional reforms, particularly concerning the first four articles of the 1982 Constitution, widely criticized for their militaristic and assimilationist orientation as a legacy of the 1980 coup (Watts, 2010; Güneş, 2019). These demands also include the right to mother-tongue education from kindergarten through higher education, official recognition of Kurdish as a second state language, the election of governors by local populations, and greater authority for local governments under a decentralization framework (Yavuz & Özcan, 2006; Çandar, 2012).

The timing and context of this initiative are also influenced by broader regional dynamics. The emergence of a de facto Kurdish autonomous administration in Northern and Eastern Syria, supported

by Western powers including the United States, has shifted strategic calculations and created new political opportunities for Kurdish actors in Turkey (Romano, 2020; Phillips, 2017). In this context, the Turkish government appears to be responding not only to domestic pressures but also to international considerations.

Crucially, the outcome of the 2025 resolution process will have direct and significant ramifications for Turkey's international relations. A successful transition to peace and constitutional reform could enhance Turkey's image as a democratic and inclusive state, potentially improving its relations with the European Union, the United States, and neighboring countries such as Iraq and Syria. Conversely, a breakdown in the process could entrench regional tensions, deepen international skepticism, and jeopardize Turkey's strategic partnerships, particularly in the context of NATO and regional security cooperation (Gunter, 2011; Barkey, 2020).

In sum, the 2025 disarmament and dialogue initiative represents both a historic opportunity and a critical test for Turkey's domestic and international posture. Its success or failure will not only shape the future of Kurdish-Turkish

relations but also recalibrate Ankara's diplomatic relations across the Middle East and the broader international community.

Econometric Indicators of Shifting International Perceptions Post-2025

The 2025 resolution process, marked by the PKK's voluntary disarmament and the Turkish state's tentative engagement with Kurdish political demands, has generated measurable shifts in Turkey's global image. Econometric indicators and public opinion data demonstrate an upward trend in Turkey's international perception across key geopolitical regions.

The graph below shows the percentage of favorable views of Turkey among populations and experts in the European Union, the United States, and the Middle East between 2023 and 2026:

- **European Union:** Favorability increased from 42% in 2024 to 63% in 2026.
- **United States:** Expert perception rose from 38% in 2024 to 57% in 2026.
- **Middle East:** Regional favorability jumped from 47% in 2024 to 68% in 2026.

These increases suggest a clear correlation between the peace-oriented domestic turn in Turkey's Kurdish policy and improvements in its international standing. This perception shift is particularly notable in European circles, where Turkey has long been criticized for its democratic backsliding and human rights record (European Commission, 2024). Post-2025, the process was widely interpreted as a sign of political maturity and reform potential, reviving debates around Turkey's stalled EU accession process.

Similarly, in the United States, where Turkey's role in NATO and its handling of the Syrian conflict have generated friction, the peace initiative helped restore some diplomatic confidence. Policy experts began viewing Turkey as a more constructive regional actor, especially in the stabilization of Northern Syria.

In the Middle East, where ethnic and

REWSENBÎR

sectarian cleavages often dominate foreign policy narratives, Turkey's internal reconciliation process resonated as a model for inclusive governance. Kurdish communities across Iraq and Syria welcomed the Turkish government's new stance, and some regional analysts have suggested it may improve Turkey's leverage in long-standing disputes with Baghdad and Damascus.

3. Bilateral Relations Affected by the Kurdish Issue

3.1. Turkey–United States Relations

The Kurdish issue has become a major source of friction in U.S.–Turkey relations, especially since the onset of the Syrian civil war. The divergence became particularly acute following Washington's military support for the Syrian Democratic Forces (SDF), a group dominated by the Kurdish People's Protection Units (YPG), which Turkey views as the Syrian extension of the PKK (Stein & Foley, 2016). While the U.S. considers the YPG a crucial partner in the fight against ISIS, Turkey classifies it as a terrorist organization, leading to a fundamental clash in security priorities.

Turkey's reaction included launching military operations such as Operation Euphrates Shield (2016), Operation Olive Branch (2018), and Operation Peace Spring (2019), aimed at clearing Kurdish

forces from its southern border (Kasapoğlu, 2019). These incursions strained ties with the U.S., leading to sanctions threats and diplomatic confrontations. Moreover, the U.S. refusal to extradite PKK leader Abdullah Öcalan in the late 1990s, followed by disagreements over Northern Iraq post-2003, have left a lingering mistrust between Ankara and Washington (Gunter, 2011).

Despite shared NATO membership and strategic interests, the Kurdish issue continues to serve as a fault line, prompting Turkey to diversify its alliances, including increased cooperation with Russia and Iran.

3.2. Turkey–Iraq Relations and the KRG

Iraq presents a dual dynamic for Turkey's foreign policy: on one hand, the Baghdad government, and on the other, the semi-autonomous Kurdistan Regional Government (KRG) in northern Iraq. Turkey has developed a pragmatic, albeit uneasy, relationship with the KRG since the early 2000s, largely driven by mutual economic interests and security concerns over PKK presence in the Qandil Mountains (Park, 2014).

Economic interdependence has flourished, particularly in energy and trade, with Turkey becoming a major outlet for KRG oil exports via the Kirkuk-Ceyhan pipeline (Natali, 2010). However,

Turkey remains highly sensitive to any moves toward Kurdish independence. The 2017 KRG independence referendum was strongly opposed by Ankara, which feared the precedent it might set for its own Kurdish population (Barkey, 2019).

At the same time, Turkey has intensified its cross-border military presence in northern Iraq under the pretext of targeting the PKK, often without Baghdad's approval—raising sovereignty concerns and creating diplomatic tension. These incursions, although tolerated to some extent by the KRG, underscore the security dilemma caused by the transnational nature of the Kurdish issue.

3.3. Turkey–Syria Relations

The Syrian Civil War has dramatically altered Turkey's southern security architecture. In the early stages of the conflict, Turkey supported Sunni opposition groups and called for regime change in Damascus. However, the emergence of autonomous Kurdish governance in northern Syria under the Democratic Union Party (PYD) and its armed wing, the YPG, triggered a major recalibration in Ankara's policy (Phillips, 2016).

Turkey fears that the establishment of a contiguous Kurdish zone along its border could embolden separatist sentiments among its own Kurdish population. This fear has led to a series of military operations aimed at preventing Kurdish territorial consolidation. As a result, Turkey's Syria policy has shifted from regime change to border security containment, with the Kurdish issue as the main driver.

Moreover, Ankara's stance on Kurdish actors in Syria has hindered broader diplomatic resolutions to the conflict. Turkey has opposed the inclusion of Kurdish groups in UN-sponsored peace talks and criticized U.S. and European support for Kurdish militias. The Syrian context illustrates how the domestic Kurdish issue shapes not only military engagements but also Turkey's diplomatic posture in conflict resolution efforts.

REWSENBÎR

4. Multilateral Relations and Regional Diplomacy

The Kurdish issue not only affects Turkey's bilateral relations but also shapes its interactions within multilateral frameworks such as the European Union (EU), North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO), and regional alliances involving Iran, Iraq, and Syria. Turkey's responses to the Kurdish question often reveal tensions between domestic security imperatives and the expectations of international norms, alliances, and regional balance-of-power dynamics.

4.1. European Union and the Kurdish Issue

The EU has long viewed Turkey's treatment of its Kurdish population as a litmus test for democratic reform and human rights. The Copenhagen Criteria, which Turkey must meet for accession, emphasize minority rights, freedom of expression, and rule of law—all areas directly affected by Ankara's Kurdish policy (Öniş, 2003). During the early 2000s, Turkey made significant strides by easing restrictions on the Kurdish language and initiating peace talks with the PKK. These moves were largely incentivized by the EU accession process (Tocci, 2005).

However, the breakdown of the peace process in 2015 and the subsequent crackdown on the pro-Kurdish Peoples' Democratic Party (HDP) have strained EU–Turkey relations. The imprisonment of Kurdish politicians and allegations of human rights abuses have drawn repeated condemnation from the European Parliament and the European Commission (European Commission, 2022). Turkey, in turn, has accused the EU of harboring PKK sympathizers and of politicizing the Kurdish issue to block accession.

The Kurdish question thus represents a paradox in EU–Turkey relations: a point of leverage for the EU to promote reform, and simultaneously, a source of deep mistrust for Ankara.

4.2. NATO and Security Dilemmas

As a NATO member, Turkey has utilized the alliance to bolster its defense capabilities, particularly in relation to perceived threats from non-state Kurdish actors. However, its unilateral military interventions in Syria and Iraq have often generated concern among NATO partners. The U.S. partnership with the YPG in Syria, despite Turkish objections, highlighted the lack of consensus within NATO regarding Kurdish armed groups (Erlanger, 2019).

Turkey's threat to veto NATO defense plans unless the alliance recognizes Kurdish groups as terrorist organizations exemplifies how Ankara instrumentalizes its membership to pursue national objectives. This has led to accusations that Turkey is undermining alliance unity, while Ankara counters that its allies are insensitive to its core security concerns (Larrabee, 2020).

4.3. Regional Diplomacy: Iran, Iraq, and Syria

Turkey's regional diplomacy regarding the Kurdish issue is characterized by pragmatic coordination with states that also perceive Kurdish separatism as a threat. Despite ideological and geopolitical differences, Turkey, Iran, Iraq, and Syria have periodically aligned against the prospect of Kurdish autonomy.

Turkey and Iran, for example, have cooperated militarily against PKK-affiliated groups operating across their shared borders. Joint operations and intelligence sharing are driven by mutual concerns about Kurdish insurgency rather than ideological alignment (Entessar & Afrasiabi, 2020). Similarly, Turkey's engagement with Iraq has focused on securing consent—or at least tolerance—for its anti-PKK incursions in northern Iraq.

In Syria, Turkey's relations with the Assad regime have been shaped significantly by concerns over the PYD/YPG. While Ankara originally supported opposition forces seeking Assad's ouster, its later policy shifted to securing territorial buffers against Kurdish expansion, occasionally bringing it into indirect coordination with Damascus and even Moscow (Phillips, 2016).

These dynamics reflect how the Kurdish issue serves as both a catalyst for cooperation and a source of instability in Turkey's regional diplomacy.

5. The Kurdish Issue and Turkey's Strategic Alliances and Foreign Policy Orientation

The Kurdish issue has become a central variable in Turkey's strategic realignments and broader foreign policy orientation. As the domestic conflict has increasingly intersected with regional and international dynamics, Ankara has recalibrated its alliances and external behavior to manage evolving security threats, diplomatic frictions, and power balances. This section examines how

REWSENBÎR

the Kurdish question has influenced Turkey's strategic posture across three major dimensions: its shifting alliances, military assertiveness, and normative positioning in international affairs.

5.1. Shifting Strategic Alliances

Turkey's traditional alignment with the West—primarily through NATO and its EU candidacy—has been increasingly complicated by the Kurdish issue. Diverging threat perceptions, especially with regard to the U.S. support for Kurdish forces in Syria, have eroded mutual trust and encouraged Ankara to pursue a more diversified alliance portfolio (Kardaş, 2013). In response to perceived Western indifference or hostility toward its security concerns, Turkey has deepened ties with non-Western actors, most notably Russia and Iran.

This geopolitical balancing is exemplified by Turkey's cooperation with Russia in the Astana peace process on Syria, despite their opposing positions in the broader conflict. The convergence of interests over preventing Kurdish autonomy in northern Syria has brought Ankara closer to Moscow and Tehran, res-

haping regional security arrangements (Aktürk, 2020). However, such realignments remain tactical rather than strategic, often constrained by underlying rivalries and structural tensions.

5.2. Military Assertiveness and Regional Projection

The securitization of the Kurdish issue has catalyzed a more assertive Turkish military posture, particularly through cross-border interventions in Syria and Iraq. This marks a shift from the traditional policy of territorial defense toward power projection and buffer zone creation aimed at containing Kurdish influence beyond national borders (Aydın-Düzgit & Keyman, 2019). Operations such as Euphrates Shield, Olive Branch, Peace Spring, and recent deployments in northern Iraq represent a significant extension of Turkey's strategic footprint.

This militarized foreign policy orientation has served both domestic and international objectives: it reinforces nationalist legitimacy at home while signaling regional dominance. However, it has also increased Turkey's exposure to diplomatic backlash, complicated pe-

ace efforts in Syria, and strained relations with Western allies who view such operations as destabilizing.

5.3. Normative Tensions in Foreign Policy

The Kurdish issue also reveals contradictions in Turkey's normative foreign policy discourse. While Ankara promotes narratives of anti-terrorism, sovereignty, and national unity, critics argue that its actions often undermine principles of human rights, self-determination, and rule of law (Yılmaz & Bashirov, 2018). These normative inconsistencies have affected Turkey's international image and credibility, particularly in its EU accession bid and within transatlantic institutions.

Moreover, Turkey's internal repression of Kurdish political actors, media, and civil society has triggered censure from international human rights organizations and European institutions. These dynamics contribute to Ankara's growing strategic autonomy rhetoric, wherein foreign policy is framed as sovereign and interest-based rather than norm-driven.

6. Conclusion

The Kurdish issue, long regarded as an internal security matter, has become a central determinant of Turkey's international relations. This article has demonstrated that the conflict's transnational dimensions and Turkey's response strategies have significantly reshaped its alliances, diplomatic priorities, regional interventions, and normative alignment.

At the core of this transformation lies the Turkish state's securitized perception of Kurdish political activism—both within and beyond its borders. The sustained framing of the Kurdish issue through a counter-terrorism lens has led to a pattern of militarized foreign policy decisions, including unilateral interventions in Syria and Iraq. These interventions, while tactically aimed at eliminating the perceived threat of Kurdish autonomy, have complicated Turkey's bilateral relationships with traditional allies such as the United States and the European Union, and pushed Ankara toward alternative partnerships with regional powers like Russia and Iran.

This repositioning has not only reduced Turkey's leverage in multilateral forums but also undermined its normative appeal as a democratic and pluralist regional actor. The erosion of soft power, deterioration of human rights standards, and crimina

lization of pro-Kurdish political representation have compounded Turkey's image problem in the West, resulting in increased diplomatic isolation and skepticism regarding its EU accession bid.

Yet, the persistence of the Kurdish issue as a transnational problem also offers a strategic opportunity. A shift in policy—away from militarization and toward inclusive dialogue, both domestically and regionally—could transform the Kurdish question from a liability into a diplomatic asset. Constructive engagement with legitimate Kurdish political actors, recognition of minority rights, and coordination with regional partners on post-conflict governance could enhance Turkey's international standing and regional stability.

In conclusion, resolving the Kurdish issue through democratic means and multi-level diplomacy is not merely a domestic imperative but an essential precondition for recalibrating Turkey's foreign policy posture. Without addressing this fundamental challenge, Turkey's international relations will remain reactive, securitized, and fragmented. Future research should further investigate the role of diaspora politics, non-state actors, and international legal mechanisms in shaping Turkey's evolving approach to the Kurdish question.

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The Role and Importance of Tribes in Kurdish History

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Abstract

Undoubtedly, the existence of tribes is a reality of the Middle East, both in Kurdistan and in other countries of the region. Tribes have been a significant part of Kurdish history from the time of Prophet Noah to the present day. These communities, composed of families, have been referred to locally as tribes, clans, bands, or "bent" and "ebr."

Throughout history, it is evident that Kurdish tribes came together to establish states, principalities, and dynasties. Kurdish tribes united based on religion, ethnicity, shared culture, and traditions. From the eighth century to the end of the thirteenth century, the establishment of Kurdish states generally occurred through tribal alliances.

Tribes have played a fundamental role in the formation of Kurdish society, ensuring the transmission of customs, traditions, and culture to the present day. In this study, the significance of tribes in Kurdish history will be deeply analyzed, examining their social and political importance in the construction of Kurdish national identity. Additionally, we will explore the history of tribes, starting with the earliest ones, and thoroughly examine the states and principalities established by tribes, as well as the administrative structures of these tribes.

Özet

Şüphesiz, hem Kürdistan'da hem de Ortadoğu'nun diğer ülkelerinde aşiretlerin varlığı Ortaduğunun bir gerçeğidir. Nuh Peygamber'den günümüze kadar süregelen Kürt tarihinin önemli bir parçası olmuşlardır. Ailelerden oluşan bu topluluklar yerel söylemlere göre; aşiret, kabile, boy, bent veya ebr olarak adlandırılmışlardır.

Tarihte Kürt aşiretlerinin bir araya gelerek devletler, mirlikler ve hanedanlıklar kurduğunu görülmektedir. Kürt aşiretleri, din, etnik köken, ortak kültür ve gelenek temelinde birleşmiştir. Sekizinci yüzyıldan on üçüncü yüzyılın sonuna kadar, Kürt devletlerinin kurulması genellikle aşiretlerin ittifakıyla gerçekleşmiştir.

Aşiretler Kürt toplumunun oluşumunda temel bir rol oynamış, örf ve adetlerin, kültürün günümüze taşınmasını sağlamışlardır. Bu çalışmada, aşiretlerin Kürt tarihindeki önemini derinlemesine yorumlanarak, sosyal ve siyasi açıdan, Kürt ulusal kimliğinin inşası sürecinde aşiretlerin önemi irdelenecektir. Ayrıca aşiretler tarihini, en eski aşiretlerden itibaten ele alınarak, aşîretler tarafından kurulan devlet ve mirlik ve aşiretlerin yönetim yapısını ayrıntılı bir şekilde inceleyeceğiz.

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1. Introduction

Undoubtedly, the existence of tribes is a historical reality in the Middle East, both in our country and in neighboring regions. In Kurdish history, from the time of Prophet Noah to the present day, local populations have been referred to as tribes under various names such as Kabile, Bavik, or, depending on the region, Ebr, Bent, and others. Historically, these Kurdish tribes often united to establish states, principalities, and dynasties. Kurdish tribes have traditionally come together based on religion, ethnicity, and shared cultural ties. From the 8th century to the late 13th century, the establishment of Kurdish states generally occurred through tribal alliances.

Kurdish history has been shaped significantly by the influence of tribes, which play a central role in the structure of Kurdish society. As historians and researchers, the purpose of this study is to examine in depth the significance of tribes in Kurdish history. Tribes have provided an essential foundation for the formation of Kurdish national identity, both socially and politically. In this study, we will comprehensively explore the history of tribes, the oldest tribes that founded states and principalities, and their methods of governance.

2. The History of Tribes

The earliest known Kurdish tribe is identified as the Kourdoki tribe, whose homeland is the Zagros Mountains. In tribal literature, this region is referred to as Zagros and Sinjar (Shingal) and has been the subject of many epics and stories. Common names and nicknames include "The Wife of Shingal," "The Wolf of Shingal," "The Hawks of Shingal," and "The Winds of Shingal." Mount Shingal holds legendary significance in tribal literature. This area stretches from Zagros to Shahrizor and Lake Urmia, and it was where the first Kurdish tribe settled.

In first-century records and particularly in the works of early Muslim scholars, the Shahrizor region is frequently mentioned. When the Muslims conquered Shahrizor in 637 CE, many writers noted the tribes in the area. According to these researchers and historians, these tribes included: Celalî (Gulalî), Hekîman, Besiyan (Pîsîyan), Lur (Lorî, Lor, Loran), Bapîrî (Bapîran), Xonsa, Soran, Siyolî (Seyolî, Sîyal), Farnavî, Colemergî, Hakarî (Hekarî), Cîrîkî (Jîrkî), Hezbanî, Bohtî, Rewadî, Yezûlî, Sercelî, and Merwanî (Bozkurt, pp. 50–51).

According to Şeref Han Bitlisi's Şerefname, tribes such as Zilan, Milan, and Hewraman were particularly notable (Şerefhan, 1998, p. 89). These tribes formed powerful confederations during the Middle Ages and continue to exist in some regions today. For instance, the Milan tribe became one of the most influential powers during the Ottoman period, from the 16th to the 19th centuries (Tan, p. 26).

Many historians and travelers have documented the Kurds and the role of tribes in this region. The famous Turkish traveler Evliya Çelebi, in his Seyahatname, introduces the Kurds by their tribal names. Like other historians, he notes that the Kurds are an indigenous people, with lineage likely tracing back to Prophet Noah. Historians such as Ibn al-Athir, Muhammed Emin Zeki Bey, Abdürrakib Yusuf, and Thomas Ripper emphasize that the Kurds are native to the Middle East, primarily inhabiting the region along the Tigris River, from Pirana through Amed (Diyarbakır) and Cizre to Mosul.

After the 11th century, particularly with the rise of the Marwanids (980–1087), Kurdish tribes began to settle from the eastern to the western parts of the Tigris River. According to Thomas Ripper, during the Marwanid era, Amed became a central Kurdish

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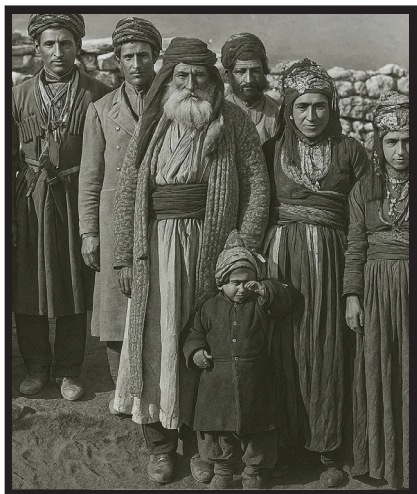
homeland, and the Kurdish population in the Diyarbekir region increased. In Kurdish society, tribes were organized to protect themselves and their members from external attacks and to maintain internal unity. Both tribes and principalities were subjected to pressures and taxes when neighboring peoples were strong, but they regained full independence when those external powers weakened. Until 1847, the Kurds generally avoided allowing outsiders into their territories, protecting themselves in the mountains and highlands.

3. Kurdish Folk Songs and Tribal Music

Tribes have played a significant role in preserving Kurdish culture and traditions. One of the most important traditions is the Dengbêj, which continues through songs and epics in tribal gatherings (O'Shea, p. 24). Nowruz celebrations have remained an important cultural event among tribes (Bulut, p. 78). Despite modernization, tribes have preserved the Kurdish language and traditional ways of life.

İbrahim Bozkurt, in his research History of Tribes, addresses this topic in detail and highlights Kurdish music. Tribal events are often passed down through oral tradition or music. Kur-

dish music reflects their heroism, warriors, biographies of sheikhs and religious scholars, migrations, spiritual practices, and love stories. Thus, one cannot accurately interpret the biographies of Kurdish tribes without understanding their music. Kurdish wars and adventures are all embedded in their musical heritage (Bozkurt, p. 30).

Kurdish music often emphasizes themes of love, heroism, tradition, and sorrow. It can be categorized into several types:

- **Delalan:** Focuses on internal heroism.
- **Bêmal:** Expresses the suffering and grief of the poor and disadvantaged.
- **Dîrokan:** Commonly used in Urfa, Rojava, and Adıyaman; highlights heroism or historical events.
- **Lorandin (Lullabies):** Sung by mothers to their children.
- **Xerîbî:** Sung during weddings and tribal protection rituals.
- **Helbestvan (Poets):** Covers a wide range of topics; notable examples include Feqiyê Teyran and Cegerxwîn.
- **Govende û Dûman:** A traditional tribal performance akin to a sketch or theater, performed among tribes (Bozkurt, p. 31).

4. Tribal Governance

Every society has its governance and organizational system. In Kurdish tribes, this system was led by a tribal chief, often inheriting leadership from father to son, though elections sometimes determined the leader.

Tribes were generally managed with a flexible hierarchy. According to Şerefname, the council (Divanhane) played a critical role in governance. The tribal chief was elected by this council (Şerefhan, 1998, p. 89). The Divanhane, comparable to a parliament, made significant decisions. Council members were elders and wise figures from prominent families, who also distributed land revenues among their families (Yalçın-Heckmann, p. 94). This system maintained local autonomy.

When selecting a leader, the council considered several criteria:

• The chief must be trustworthy and respected by all.

• He must be courageous, protecting the tribe from dangers.

• He should respect religion and act as a commander in times of war.

• He must provide pastures and assist the poor, resolving internal disputes.

• His home should be large and welcoming to guests and the needy.

The council could also remove a chief

for serious misconduct or if he lacked a male heir. Those in charge of decisions included:

• **Malmezin (Family Elder):** Influential members within the tribe.

• **Egîd (Hero):** Known for bravery and heroism.

• **Jin (Women):** Particularly the chief's wife, regarded as the mother of the tribe; she participated in council meetings and tribal courts.

• **Şêx û mele (Sheikh and Mullah):** Religious leaders who held authority in councils and decision-making.

5. The Role of Tribes During the Period of Kurdish Principalities and States

From the 9th century onwards, as the authority of the Abbasid Caliphate over the Islamic state weakened, the caliph was no longer able to protect the people's property and lives from marauders and invaders. In the region of Kurdistan, which was particularly vulnerable to attacks, the Kurds established certain states and principalities according to the circumstances of the time. Historical records show that Kurdish tribes played a central role in the foundation of these states.

According to historians, from the 9th to the 13th century, Kurdish tribes established 12 states. From the 13th to the 19th century, these tribes founded 25 principalities. Tragically, all of these states and principalities were eventually destroyed by the Turks. Among the tribes that established states and principalities, we can mention the following:

5.1. The Marwanid State

The Marwanid State ruled for 107 years, from 980 to 1087. It holds a prominent place in Kurdish history as a powerful state whose population and rulers were of Kurdish origin. The foundations of this state were laid by Bad bin Dostik.

Ibn al-Ezrak identifies Bad as being from the Harbuhti tribe, while Ibn al-Esir, Ibn Miskawayh, Ibn Fuwati, Ibn Shaddad, and Ibn Khaldun claim that he belonged to the Hamidi tribe. Ibn al-Adim states that Bad was from the Hamidi Kurds but was known by the name Charbuhti. Abdurrakib Yusuf emphasizes that Bad was from the Charbuhti tribe and does not accept the claim that he was from the Hamidi tribe. According to Yusuf, the Hamidi tribe currently lives north of Mosul, which is not Bad's homeland. Most historians agree that the Marwanid State was established by the tribe of Bad's family. Bad was the son of a tribal chief and hailed from the Siirt province; all historians are in agreement on this point.

Thomas Ripper notes that Bad's success was facilitated by the presence of Kurdish tribes in the region. All this information demonstrates that tribes held a central place in Kurdish history.

5.2. The Bitlis Principality

Şerefhan mentions a tribal assembly in Şerefname. Although the exact date and the participating tribes are not specified, he refers to the Rojkan tribe and continues as follows: One day, 24 tribes gathered in the Tab region (southwest of Bitlis). This meeting established tribal unity. This tribal confederation later split into two well-known branches. The first branch, consisting of 12 tribes, was called "Bilbasi," and the second was called "Qewalisi." The words "Bilbas" and "Qewalisi" refer to two villages belonging to the Hakkari Principality. According to another account, these two tribes took their names from the Baban tribe (Şerefhan, p. 411). One of the important outcomes of this assembly was the division of land. At this meeting, the lands of the region were distributed among the 24 tribes. They also elected a leader among themselves to act as ruler. They were united in all matters, acted together, and shared one heart. They also seized and divided the remaining lands of the Bitlis province. Among the people, it was said, "Whoever does not have land in the Tab region is not from the Rojkan tribe" (Şerefhan, p. 412).

Şerefname narrates the lives and struggles of hundreds of Kurdish lords and commanders from the period of the Marwanids (11th century) to the Bitlis Principality (16th century). It is clear from Şerefname that the establishment of these states and principalities was carried out by tribes.

5.3. Kurdish Tribes from the Fall of the Principalities to World War I (1847–1915)

In 1803, the Ottoman Empire decided to pursue centralization, nullifying the agreement signed in 1512 between Yavuz Sultan Selim and the Kurdish representative Idris-i Bitlisi. According to this policy, all Kurdish

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principalities were gradually dismantled. The last of these, the Botan Principality, was abolished in 1847. In response, the Ottoman Empire established a nominal federal Kurdistan on paper on December 14, 1847, with Diyarbakır as its capital, aiming to prevent Kurdish uprisings. Twenty years later, when the families of the Botan princes had been fully dispersed and the risk of reestablishing a principality disappeared, the Ottomans tore up this agreement and ignored its provisions.

During this twenty-year period, Kurdish tribes largely remained silent. While there were occasional revolts,

non-Muslims during the 1877–1878 Russo-Turkish War (the 93 Harbi). To maintain the loyalty of Muslim subjects such as Kurds, Arabs, and Albanians, Abdulhamid implemented new projects. The Hamidiye Regiments were established for the Kurds, Tribal Schools for Arabs, and palace guards for Albanians (Örs, p. 238).

From 1512 to 1847, Kurds had largely lived independently. After the fall of the principalities, religious sheikhs rose in prominence. They were deeply embedded within local communities and commanded great respect. Disputes between Kurds and Armenians were often resolved by these

addition to relying on religious sheikhs. He would bring strong and influential leaders to Istanbul under various pretexts, keeping them under observation and neutralizing them as a threat. The Russians also sought alliances with Kurdish tribes, and the Ottomans established the Hamidiye Regiments to prevent this. These regiments tied certain Kurdish tribes to the Ottoman state, as Europeans also sought to exploit Kurdish groups. For tribes considered loyal, Abdulhamid created this law and founded the Hamidiye Regiments (Örs, p. 286).

• **Tribal Schools (1892–1**908): Ano-

such as that led by Ezdîn Şêr Beg, they were unsuccessful. The tribes' relative silence persisted for a long time.

Elders who had lived through the 1960s and 1970s recounted those times, especially the era of Sultan Abdulhamid, referring to it as the "Period of the Tribes." At that time, outside of the tribes, there was no other significant power among the Kurds. A careful study of Abdulhamid's reign reveals the Ottoman policies toward Kurds and their tribes.

During Abdulhamid's period, Islam became more prominent because the Ottoman Empire had lost large territories in Europe inhabited by

sheikhs. The Ottoman administration sought to use the power of these sheikhs for its own purposes. Through land laws, the state granted extensive lands and properties to religious orders, as well as establishing madrasas and dervish lodges. The state leveraged these institutions to limit Kurdish autonomy—a policy that continues in various forms today. Nonetheless, many sheikhs remained outside Ottoman control, including Sheikh Ubeydullah Nehri and Sheikh Abdusselam Barzani.

• **Hamidiye Regiments:** Sultan Abdulhamid used multiple strategies to tie the Kurds to the Ottoman state in

ther Ottoman effort to bind Kurdish tribes to the state was the establishment of Tribal Schools. Initially opened in Istanbul, they were later expanded to other regions. These schools educated the children of Kurdish tribal leaders, as well as students from other Muslim groups like Arabs and Albanians. Turkish was the language of instruction, and the curriculum focused primarily on Islamic sciences. The purpose was to train these children according to the principles of Pan-Islamism and Turkish nationalism, so that upon returning to their tribes, they would lead and serve the Ottoman state.

REWSENBÎR

5.4. The Presence of Kurdish Tribes After the Republic

From 1920 until the Sheikh Said Rebellion in 1925, there was a general silence among the Kurds. Many writers and researchers describe these five years as a period of "sleep and indecision" for the Kurdish population.

During the Sheikh Said Rebellion, both religious orders and tribes generally fell into three categories: the first group supported the rebellion, though their numbers were limited; the second group remained silent, which included the majority; and the third group acted as militias for the state. This division was also reflected among prominent figures. Celal Temel, in his book The First and Middle Generations of Kurdish Leaders and Intellectuals, analyzes this extensively, including evaluating Said Nursi as part of the silent group.

After the suppression of the rebellion in 1926, the state launched operations aimed at punishing tribes that had supported the uprising. One major target was the Sînika tribe, located in the Elmedin (Aydınlar/Tillo) district of Siirt province, consisting of six villages (now part of Batman). With the assistance of the Rema, Receva, and Hebîzbinayan tribes, the state attacked the Sînika tribe. Their neighbors, the Reşko tribe, also joined, fearing the next attack would be on them. During this operation, all villages of the Sînika and Reşko tribes were burned, and many people were killed. The support of the Bekiran tribe was insufficient, and numerous people fled to Syria (Binxet). Eighteen members of the Bekiran tribe were executed. The operation and inter-tribal conflict are commemorated in the lament "Bavê Fexriya."

After Sheikh Said's defeat, the presence of tribes changed significantly. Tribes that had established states, taken up arms, and fought the government no longer existed in the same form. The state, as a deliberate policy, exiled, dispersed, and executed tribal leaders. As a result, tribal activity in the 20th and 21st centuries differed considerably from the past. Today, the state continues to control and co-opt tribes through assimilation policies and the Village Guard System. Currently, tribal unity is most visible in two situations: first, during elections when candidates come from the same tribe, and second, in family disputes and conflicts.

Conclusion

Tribes have always played an important role in Kurdish history. From the old tribes to principalities, from the Hamidiye Regiments to modern autonomous structures, the main role has consistently rested on the shoulders of tribes. Furthermore, Kurdish culture and traditions have been preserved to this day through tribal structures.

The role of tribes in the formation of Kurdish identity remains a matter of debate. Some argue that tribes were crucial in shaping Kurdish identity, while others contend the opposite. According to the latter view, tribalism prevented Kurds from forming a unified national identity, as tribes prioritized their own tribal affiliations over a collective national consciousness.

Although tribes historically served as key elements in governance, resistance, and the continuity of culture, their role today is less significant due to the integration process with modernity.

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The Nation-State and the Formation of National Identity

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Abstract

National identity is the process through which individuals develop a sense of belonging to a nation, constructed upon cultural, historical, and political foundations. This article will examine the key factors and conditions involved in the formation of national identity, as well as its social and political significance. In particular, it will discuss the formation of national identity among the Kurds and the existence of this identity.

Additionally, the study aims to address the construction of national identity from both theoretical and empirical perspectives. The dynamics and significance of national identity will be explored in depth, with a specific focus on its impact on minority groups such as the Kurds.
The study adopts a literature review based on multiple sources and a comparative analysis method.

Özet

Ulusal kimlik, bireylerin bir ulusa ait olma duygusu ve bu aidiyetin kültürel, tarihi ve siyasi temeller üzerine inşa edilmesi sürecidir. Bu makale, ulusal kimlik oluşumunun temel etkenlerini, oluşum şartlarını, ulusal kimliğin toplumsal ve siyasi önemini ele alacaktır. Özellikle Kürtlerde ulusal kimlik oluşumu, bu kimliğin varlığı tartışılacaktır.

Ayrıca ulusal kimlik inşası teorik ve ampirik bir perspektiften ele almayı amaçlamaktadır. Ulusal kimliğin oluşum dinamikleri ve önemi irdelenip özellikle Kürtler gibi azınlık grupları üzerindeki etkileri detaylı bir şekilde incelenecektir.

Çalışma, çoklu kaynaklara dayalı bir literatür taraması ve karşılaştırmalı analiz yöntemini benimsemektedir.

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1. Introduction

National identity is the sense of belonging individuals have to a nation and the process through which this belonging is constructed on cultural, historical, and political foundations. This article will address the main factors shaping national identity, the conditions of its formation, and the social and political significance of national identity. In particular, it will discuss the formation of national identity among the Kurds and the existence of this identity.

It also aims to examine the construction of national identity from both a theoretical and an empirical perspective. The dynamicsa and significance of national identity will be analyzed, with a detailed exploration of its effects on minority groups, especially the Kurds. The study adopts a literature review based on multiple sources and a comparative analysis method.

2. National Identity as a Concept

The concept referred to as "Nasname" in Kurdish has been expressed in the European social science literature with the terms "self" and "identity." The first thinker to systematically define the concept of identity was the English philosopher John Locke. According to Locke, identity is the state of an individual being aware, remembering, and conscious. Since Locke, conceptual debates on identity have generally taken shape within the framework of the "self," but starting from the twentieth century, the term "identity" has gained greater prominence. The word "identity" derives from the Latin term "idem," which carries the meanings of sameness, immutability, and continuity—meanings that have largely been preserved to the present day (Emen, p.2).

National identity, on the other hand, is the process through which individuals perceive themselves as belonging to a nation, shaped by collective consciousness (Anderson, p.6). Phillip Gleason explains the concept of identity through the question of "what something is" (Gleason, p.21). In Kurdish, the concept of identity is associated with this sense of "what" as Gleason defined it. In other words, Nasname, derived from Naskirindan, expresses both what something is and its belonging.

Although it is difficult to provide a fully satisfactory definition due to the multilayered and complex nature of national identity, working on definitions is inevitable in order to establish a theoretical framework. What makes identity difficult to define is that it encompasses physical, cognitive, and social elements. Throughout history, the question of human essence—what it means to be—has been approached by different fields such as philosophy, psychology, and sociology. Philosophy has dealt with identity in terms of "sameness," psychology in terms of "self," and sociology in terms of "social position" (Esen & Didem, p.6). National identity is a sociopolitical phenomenon shaped by individuals' sense of belonging to a specific nation, arising from a combination of historical, cultural, linguistic, and political elements.

National identity is a structure capable of creating a shared perception, feeling, and attitude between the individual, the nation, and the state. Based on these definitions, it can be said that national identity emerges as a phenomenon resulting from the overlap between the nation and the nation-state. Essentially, this identity offers a ground for recognition, differentiation, and belonging, based on the language and culture unique to the nation.

REWSENBÎR

National identity is often a strong form of identity that overshadows other types of identity and serves as a refuge of belonging against the loneliness of individuals in the modern world. However, it must be emphasized that national identity is not identical to cultural identity. While national identity includes various elements of cultural identity, it does not fully overlap with it. This is because the national identity constructed and maintained by modern nation-states does not encompass the entirety of a society's cultural heritage (Şimşek & Ilgaz, 2010: pp. 189–199).

With the emergence of nation-states on the stage of history, national identity became the most dominant form of identity for individuals living within these states' borders. In this process, the roles of reli-

unites society. Second, a political organization or state structure supports the institutionalization of identity (Gellner, p.35). Third, external threats or competition with neighboring nations may strengthen internal solidarity and reinforce identity consciousness.

Smith, who defines national identity as "a type of collective cultural identity" (Smith, p.15), lists the key features that constitute national identity as follows (Smith, pp.31–32):

1. A historic territory/country or homeland
2. Common myths and historical memory
3. A shared mass public culture
4. Common legal rights and duties for all members of the community
5. A common economy with mobility

The construction of national identity is shaped by the interaction of language, culture, education, and political factors. Anderson's concept of "imagined communities" argues that national identity is constructed through a shared perception of language and history. This process is further supported by the invention of traditions.

In addition to a shared language and perception of history, the transformation of individual identity into national identity within society, and the sense of belonging, rest on philosophical, psychological, and sociological dynamics.

4.1. The Role of Language, Culture, and Education in Identity Construction

The formation of national identity is a

gious and ethnic identities, which previously held significant social importance, weakened. The state developed policies to unite its citizens under a common identity; the instruments of this unifying effort were national language and culture (Şen, pp. 133–134).

3. Conditions for the Formation of National Identity

Certain conditions must be met for national identity to form. First, a common language and communication network emerge as a fundamental element that

for members across the territory.

National identity provides individuals with a sense of belonging, thereby strengthening social solidarity, and politically becomes the essential factor that ensures the legitimacy of nation-states. It also plays a critical role in preserving and transmitting cultural heritage. National identity enables individuals to develop a collective consciousness that distinguishes them from other societies.

4. The Fundamental Dynamics of National Identity Construction

highly complex and multilayered process, shaped by the interaction of various historical, social, and cultural dynamics. National identity is largely built around a shared understanding of language, history, and culture. Language, ethnicity, religion, and historical consciousness stand out as fundamental determinants in the construction of identity. At the same time, structural transformations such as modernization processes, the emergence of nation-states, and the standardization of education systems play critical roles in the institutionalization of national identity.

In the evolution of ethnic identity into national identity, cultural elements such as myths, symbols, and collective memory serve a decisive function. These elements enable individuals to connect with the past and position themselves as part of a specific national community. Thus, national identity becomes not only a form of individual belonging but also part of a collective world of meaning.

4.2. The Diversity of the Kurdish Language and Its Place in Identity

Kurdish, as one of the fundamental building blocks of Kurdish identity, plays a central role in the construction of ethnic belonging. Encompassing various dialects such as Kurmanji, Sorani, Zazaki, and Gorani, Kurdish functions both as a

serving the language among Kurds, as well as institutionalized language education activities within diaspora communities (Van Bruinessen, p.67). This resistance should be regarded as an important identity-building strategy that ensured cultural continuity.

In recent years, the Kurdistan Regional Government in Iraq and the Autonomous Administration of Rojava have granted Kurdish official language status, thereby strengthening its institutional representation (Natali, p.47). Furthermore, the expansion of digital media tools, social networks, and audiovisual platforms has broadened the use of Kurdish and facilitated its transmission to younger generations. These developments stand out as key dynamics supporting the integration of Kurdish identity into the process of modernization.

Empire to the Republican regime, Kurdish cultural practices were systematically suppressed and rendered invisible. Yet despite these pressures, the Kurdish people developed forms of cultural resistance and succeeded in keeping identity consciousness alive. This resistance played a critical role not only in maintaining cultural continuity but also in strengthening national consciousness.

Kurdish communities in the diaspora have carried this culture onto the international stage, reproducing Kurdish identity through modern artistic practices and disciplines, and elevating it to a universal dimension. This cultural interaction has contributed to the recognition of Kurdish identity not only regionally but also on a global scale.

tool ensuring historical continuity and as a cultural carrier. Language is a powerful marker of identity in distinguishing communities from others. Both the written and oral forms of Kurdish play a vital role in preserving collective memory and in the formation of national consciousness.

During the Republican era, particularly starting in the 1920s, language bans implemented in Turkey significantly limited the visibility of Kurdish in the public sphere (Zürcher, p.189). Paradoxically, however, these restrictions encouraged informal learning practices aimed at pre-

4.3. The Function of Cultural Elements in Identity Construction

Kurdish culture, as the product of historical accumulation, has formed a fabric of identity enriched with oral literature, the dengbêj tradition, folk music, dances, and handicrafts. These cultural elements are symbolic tools representing the historical memory of the Kurdish people and ensuring the collective preservation of identity. In particular, the Newroz Festival is one of the rituals that most strongly symbolizes historical resistance and expresses cultural identity.

During the transition from the Ottoman

4.4. The Strategic Role of Education in Identity Formation

Education stands out as a decisive factor in processes of national identity construction. In Turkey, the long-standing ban on Kurdish education prevented the transmission of Kurdish identity through school curricula, leading to a weakening of linguistic and cultural memory. However, Kurdish families and civil society actors sought to fill this gap through informal educational networks and home-based learning practices. These alternative methods proved effective in the intergenerational transmission of

identity.

Following the establishment of autonomous administration in Iraqi Kurdistan in 1991, the systematic use of Kurdish as a language of instruction was considered a significant turning point in identity construction. Similarly, the opening of Kurdish-language schools in the Rojava region enabled the local population to receive education in their mother tongue and supported the development of national consciousness.

Today, education has become one of the key tools that raises awareness of ethnic identity among younger generations and keeps historical memory alive. Kurdish universities, language institutes, and various civil society organizations support this process both institutionally and socially, ensuring the continuity of identity.

4.5. The Role of Intellectuals in the Construction of National Identity

In the construction of a nation, the presence of a written national literature and of a settled class of cultural intellectuals and elites writing in the mother tongue played a pioneering role in shaping the idea of nationhood, particularly through writers and artists emerging from the middle class. Hobsbawm argues that intellectuals were influential in the spread of nationalist thought, and that written works and cultural production played a crucial role in the formation of national identity. In this context, intellectuals and cultural elites are considered to hold a leading position in the development of national consciousness (Ebinç, pp.1208–1209).

In Eric Hobsbawm's studies, it is noted that in many countries the rise of nobles, the national middle class, and even the lower middle class, was often accompanied by their spokesmen being professional intellectuals. He also stresses that the culturally educated middle class, thanks to the expansion of educational institutions, extended beyond its previously privileged boundaries, enabling the participation of a wide number of intellectuals in the process—a factor that contributed

significantly to the spread of nationalism (Hobsbawm, 1992: p.55).

Sait Ebinç makes a parallel argument in his article. According to Ebinç, in societies outside the industrialized world, intellectuals played a pioneering role in transforming nationalism into a project of development and modernization to address the problem of underdevelopment (Ebinç, pp.1208–1209).

Benedict Anderson highlights the role of the printing press as one of the essential tools of this cultural and ideological leadership. He emphasizes that the development of ethnic languages and the spread of books in those languages, through the printing press, had a profound impact on the formation of national consciousness. By the 16th century, twenty million books had been printed across Europe. Books published in vernacular languages broke the monopoly of both Latin and the Church, replacing it with capitalist book publishing (Anderson, p.54).

One of the pioneering figures in the construction of Kurdish national identity is undoubtedly Ehmedê Xanî, who played a foundational role in shaping Kurdish nationhood. Xanî is considered a pioneering intellectual who laid the philosophical foundations of Kurdish nationalism. His work Mem û Zîn is more than a literary text; it reflects the social and political realities of the Kurdish people and aims to awaken collective identity consciousness. By putting this work into written form, Xanî institutionali-

zed oral Kurdish literature and provided a cultural basis for Kurdish nationalism.

Ger dê hebûya me ittifaqek
Vêk ra bikira me inqiyadek
Rûm û 'ereb û 'ecem temamî
Hemiyan ji me ra dikir xulamî
Tekmîl dikir me dîn û dewlet
Tehsîl dikir me 'ilm û hikmet
Temyîz dibûn ji hev meqalat
Mumtaz dibûn xwidankemalat
(Xanî, 2016, 42)

In these verses, Xanî explicitly names Arabs, Persians, and Romans, while contrasting them with "us," referring to the Kurds and emphasizing Kurdish national identity.

During the Ottoman Empire, Kurdish identity was largely shaped not around ethnicity but around religious (Islamic) belonging. However, with the empire's decline, Kurdish elites began initiatives to form an ethnically based national identity. From the late 19th century onwards, Kurdish intellectuals accelerated publishing activities aimed at preserving and developing language, history, and cultural heritage. These publications

played a decisive role in redefining Kurdish identity.

The first Kurdish press, operating between 1898 and 1920, pioneered the early stage of Kurdish nationalism. The Kurdish periodicals published in this period represented the first examples of modern Kurdish journalism and at the same time shaped the early discourses of Kurdish nationalism. Kurdish intellectuals during this time voiced demands for autonomy against Ottoman central authority and advocated for the recognition of the political and cultural rights of the Kurdish people. The Bedirxan family, as one of the leading figures of this movement, contributed greatly to the development of Kurdish written culture by initiating efforts to transcribe Kurdish in the Latin alphabet.

With the establishment of the Republic of Turkey and its adoption of the principle of "one nation, one language," the visibility of Kurdish identity in the public sphere was significantly curtailed. Yet despite this repressive environment, Kurdish intellectuals continued their struggle for identity through various platforms, sustaining Kurdish existence

through cultural, artistic, and literary activities.

From the 1980s onward, intellectuals in the Kurdish diaspora, particularly in Europe, made significant contributions to making Kurdish identity visible at the international level. Figures such as Kendal Nezan, Mehmed Uzun, and Cîgerxwîn reconstructed Kurdish identity through both historical narratives and literary production. At the same time, Kurdish institutes, cultural associations, and publishing houses in Europe provided institutional support for this identity-building process, playing a crucial role in ensuring the continuity of Kurdish identity.

4.6. The Role of Oral Culture in Identity Construction

An important element of Kurdish oral culture, dengbêjlik, is the melodic form of oral literature in which epic, tragic, and historical stories are performed in a poetic and rhythmic structure. The term, derived from "deng" (voice) and "bêj" (to say), literally means "the one who speaks with voice" (Blau, J., p.27). Dengbêjs perform these narratives from memory; they are usually shaped around intertribal conflicts, love stories, wars, and social traumas (Allison, p.15).

In the formation of identity, oral narratives are as influential as written history. In societies like the Kurds, who did not possess a long-standing state structure, oral culture

served as the main carrier of historical consciousness and collective identity (Van Bruinessen, p.142). In this context, dengbêjlik functioned as a way of creating and maintaining the "national memory" of the Kurds.

In Kurdish history, the processes of modern national identity construction accelerated especially from the early 20th century. During this period, written Kurdish literature remained limited, but oral literature—particularly dengbêjlik—both ensured cultural continuity and nourished national consciousness (Hassanpour, p.97). For example, the themes present in the epics of famous dengbêjs such as Şakiro, Karapetê Xaço, and Evdalê Zeynikê helped shape the historical memory and imagined identity of the Kurdish people.

Dengbêjlik is also a form of resistance. During times when Kurdish was banned in the public sphere due to state policies, the continuation of this tradition functioned as a form of cultural resistance.

The narratives of dengbêjs are not merely nostalgic folk art but carriers of values that constitute the ideological foundation of the Kurdish national movement. Themes such as "oppression," "land," "resistance," and "migration" found in these narratives form the basis of the Kurdish national discourse. Some researchers argue that these themes, when taken together, constitute the emotional and cultural foundation of modern Kurdish identity (Yıldız, p.121).

Modernization processes have threatened oral traditions like dengbêjlik, but at the same time brought them into new mediums. Since the 2000s, dengbêjlik has experienced revival through music albums, television programs, and digital platforms. The opening of the Dengbêj House in Diyarbakır represents a significant development in institutionalizing this cultural heritage.

The dengbêjlik tradition plays an indispensable role in the construction of Kurdish national identity. It both keeps historical memory alive and ensures the

REWSENBÎR

continuity of identity as a form of cultural resistance. As "historians who speak with their voices," dengbêjs constitute the emotional and cultural foundation of Kurdish national consciousness. Therefore, in analyses of national identity formation, the importance of oral traditions and narrator figures should not be overlooked.

5. The Importance of the Nation-State in the Construction of National Identity

The nation-state has been accepted as the fundamental political and social form of organization in the modern era. Within this structure, national identity is institutionalized by the state and reproduced through various instruments, ranging from education systems to media channels. In this sense, national identity refers not only to individual belonging but also to collective existence. However, the Kurdish case presents an exception that does not conform to this general model.

In addition to being a primary instrument of identity construction, the nation-state plays an important role in standardizing identity consciousness through a common language, education, and historical narratives (Hobsbawm & Ranger, p.12). Nation-states reinforce identities by "inventing traditions." For instance, immediately after its establishment, the Republic of Turkey founded institutions such as the Turkish Historical Society and the Turkish Language Association. Through these institutions, official historiography and the education system shaped Turkish national identity. The nation-state concretizes identity through legal frameworks, flags, and constitutions, uniting individuals as part of a nation. During the Ottoman period, the Turkish identity was often disparaged as Etrak-ı bê idrak ("ignorant Turks"), but with the establishment of the Turkish nation-state, it became the core element. The Kurds, who have lived for nearly

a thousand years under the rule of multiple states, have experienced political fragmentation, cultural suppression, and frequent denial of their identity. This situation has made the construction of a nation-state-based national identity extremely difficult.

Although the Kurds are among the ancient peoples of the Middle East, they have never possessed a nation-state in the modern sense. At the beginning of the 20th century, during the dissolution

> " In addition to being a primary instrument of identity construction, the nation-state plays an important role in standardizing identity consciousness through a common language, education, and historical narratives "

of the Ottoman Empire, the possibility of establishing a Kurdish nation-state briefly emerged. Yet regional and international developments during this period eliminated that possibility. Divided among Turkey, Iran, Iraq, and Syria, the Kurds were subjected to different assimilation and repression policies in each state, which severely weakened their opportunities to establish national unity.

Despite the development of a shared language (Kurmanji, Sorani), culture, and historical consciousness among Kurds, this commonality has never been institutionalized within a political framework. As a result, while Kurdish identity continues to exist at the ethnic and cultural levels, it has not been institutionalized at the level of national identity because it lacks the institutional resources provided by a nation-state.

5.1. Can There Be a National Identity Without a Nation-State?

Smith notes that while the formation of a national identity without a state is theoretically possible, in practice it is difficult. He emphasizes that ethnic identity can transform into national identity, but that a common language, culture, and historical consciousness alone are not sufficient for this transformation (Smith, p.21).

Without a nation-state, identity can be preserved through alternative mechanisms. The Kurds have maintained their identity through cultural resistance and civil society movements. Newroz celebrations and the dengbêj tradition have kept collective memory alive and reinforced identity consciousness.

When identity is not recognized by the state, it is either suppressed or marginalized. In such cases, identity becomes either synonymous with resistance or rendered invisible. Kurdish identity has oscillated between these two extremes—on the one hand suppressed, on the other strengthened through resistance ideology. However, this situation has often led to Kurdish identity being defined not as national, but rather as ethnic or political identity.

At the root of the Kurds' inability to establish a national identity lies their failure to create their own sovereign political structure. Without the institutional, ideological, and cultural resources provided by the nation-state, the institutionalization of national identity is extremely difficult. In this context, Kurdish identity has existed as fragmented, stateless, and frequently repressed.

This situation is not only related to the failure of the Kurds themselves but also to the way the international system, regional states, and modernization processes have worked against them. Ultimately, while Kurdish identity contains a strong sense of belonging to a people's existence, in the absence of a nation-state it has not been able to transform into an institutionalized national identity.

Conclusion

The inability of the Kurds to establish a national identity can be seen as a direct consequence of the absence of a nation-state. The nation-state plays a fundamental role in identity construction through its capacity to standardize and institutionalize identity.

Although attempts have been made to build a national identity on ethnic origins and cultural elements without a state, this process has been continuously interrupted by external pressures. The Kurds have resorted to mechanisms such as cultural resistance, diaspora, and autonomous structures to preserve their identity without a nation-state. However, these efforts have not succeeded in creating a fully developed national identity and have left Kurdish identity in a fragile position.

In the future, models such as autonomy or federalism may contribute to placing Kurdish identity on a stronger foundation. In this context, further empirical research is recommended.

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The Kurds' Conception of Democracy: Can be Democratic Confederalism Model the Middle East's Despotism?

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Abstract

The Middle East has long been associated with authoritarian regimes, monarchical structures, and despotic governance. However, in recent years, the self-administration of Kurdish regions in both Iraq and Syria has introduced a level of democratic practice that exceeds the typical standards of the region. This emerging model in Kurdish regions raises the question: Could it serve as a role model for the broader Middle East?

The Kurdistan Region of Iraq, where a parliamentary system is implemented, minorities are represented, four official languages are recognized, and each minority has the right to education in their own language, offers a model of democracy that goes beyond the standards of the Middle East.

On the other hand, the Rojava region, which still does not have an official status, has already become a center of attraction for all the people of Syria with the democratic model it implements. Based on the principle of democratic confederalism, this governance structure promotes local councils, gender equality, and a multi-ethnic composition, offering a compelling alternative to the authoritarian regimes of the region.

This article analyzes the democratic structures of both the Kurdistan Regional Government (KRG) in Iraq and Rojava in Syria, exploring how they present an alternative to the deeply rooted tradition of despotism in the Middle East. The study aims to discuss whether the democratic achievements of the KRG and Rojava can serve as a source of inspiration for other societies in the region.

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Özet

Ortadoğu, yüzyıllardır otoriter rejimler, monarşik yapılar ve despotik yönetimlerle anılan bir bölge olmuştur. Ancak son yıllarda Kürtlerin gerek Irak ve gerekse de Suriye'de kendi bölgelerini yönetmesi ile Ortadoğu standartların üstünde demokrasi uygulaması ortaya çıktı. Kürt bölgelerinde başlayan bu uygulama Ortadoğu için rol model olabilir mi?

Parlementer sistemin uygulandığı, azınlıkların temsil edildiği, dört resmi dilin kabul gördüğü ve her azınlığın kendi dilinde eğitim hakkına sahip olduğu Irak Kürdistan Bölgesi ortadoğu standartlarının ötesinde bir demokrasi modeli sunmaktadır.

Öte yandan hala resmi bir statüye sahip olmayan Rojava bölgesi, uygulanan demokrasi modeliyle şimdiden tüm Suriye halkı için bir cazibe merkezi haline gelmiştir. Demokratik konfederalizm ilkesi üzerine kurulu bu yönetim, yerel meclisler, cinsiyet eşitliği ve çok etnikli bir yapı aracılığıyla Ortadoğu'nun otoriter rejimlerine alternatif bir model sunmaktadır.

Bu makale, hem Irak Kürdistan Federal Bölge hem de Rojava'nın demokratik yapısını analiz ederek, bunun Ortadoğu'daki köklü despotizm geleneğine nasıl bir alternatif sunduğunu incelemektedir. Çalışma, IKB ve Rojava'nın demokratik kazanımlarının bölgedeki diğer toplumlar için bir ilham kaynağı olup olamayacağını tartışmayı amaçlamaktadır

Makaleyi Türkçe okumak için QR kodunu tarayın.

REWSENBÎR

Introduction

The Middle East has historically been characterized by centralized administrations, authoritarian regimes, and repressive political systems. In much of the region, democracy has either been completely disregarded or limited to nominal elections.

However, both the Kurdistan Region of Iraq (KRI) and Rojava have taken promising democratic steps. The autonomy process of the Kurdistan Region of Iraq began with the establishment of a no-fly zone after the 1991 Gulf War, providing an example that challenges this generalization. With the 2005 Iraqi Constitution, the KRI gained the status of a federal region and distinguished itself from the despotic structures of the Middle East through features such as parliamentary democracy, multilingual governance, and respect for minority rights.

In Rojava, meanwhile, an autonomous model of governance emerged, inspired by Abdullah Öcalan's philosophy of democratic confederalism. This process, which began in Kobane on July 19, 2012, came to be known as the "Rojava Revolution" and took shape through the cantons of Afrin, Jazira, and Euphrates (Bengio, p. 218). In 2016, the "Rojava – Northern Syrian Democratic Federation" was proclaimed, and in 2018 it was renamed the "Autonomous Administration of North and East Syria." This administration, centered on direct democracy, ecological sustainability, and women's rights, represents a challenge to the despotic traditions of the Middle East. Nevertheless, the sustainability of this model remains contested due to both internal dynamics and external pressures.

This article examines the democratic models of the KRI and Rojava, asking whether they can be evaluated as alternatives to despotism in the Middle East. The research focuses on the following central question: Can the democratic practices of the KRI and Rojava serve as an applicable model for other societies in the Middle East?

1. Foundations of the Democratic Structure in Iraqi Kurdistan

The democratic system of the Kurdistan Region of Iraq (KRI) began to take shape in the early 1990s with the weakening of Saddam Hussein's regime. The first regional elections in 1992 laid the foundation for the Kurdistan Regional Government (KRG). Today, the KRI is governed by a 111-seat parliament representing various ethnic and religious groups, including Kurds, Turkmens, Assyrians, Chaldeans, and Arabs (Danilovich, pp. 113–141). The parliamentary system supports a multiparty structure; alongside the mainstream parties such as the Kurdistan Democratic Party (KDP) and the Patriotic Union of Kurdistan (PUK), smaller minority parties also participate in the political process.

Another remarkable feature of the KRI is the recognition of four official languages—Kurdish, Arabic, Turkmen, and Syriac. This practice reflects the region's multicultural composition and is supported by the right of minorities to receive education in their own languages. For example, the Assyrian community can receive education in Syriac

REWSENBÎR

in their own schools, while Turkmens are entitled to education in the Turkmen language (Khalil, p. 12). These rights demonstrate the inclusiveness and pluralism of the KRI's democratic framework.

1.2. Challenges and Limitations

The democratic achievements of the Kurdistan Region of Iraq (KRI) are not flawless and face several challenges. First, the political rivalry between the KDP and the PUK has at times overshadowed democratic processes. The presidential crisis of 2015 is one such example (Dalar, p. 89). Second, economic dependency—particularly on oil revenues—and allegations of corruption have undermined the credibility of democratic institutions. Third, the KRI's vulnerability to external threats, such as Turkey's and Iran's operations against the PKK, can affect internal stability.

These challenges limit the KRI's capacity to fully serve as a model of democracy for the Middle East. Nevertheless, compared with other regimes in the region, the KRI's inclusive and pluralistic structure may still be regarded as a beacon of hope against despotism.

2. The Foundations of Democratic Confederalism and Its Practice in Rojava

Democratic confederalism, developed by Öcalan, is a model of governance that offers an alternative to the nation-state. This system advocates a non-hierarchical democracy organized from the bottom up. In Rojava, this principle has been implemented through local communes and assemblies. Governance is regulated by a constitution known as the 'Social Contract,' which recognizes three official languages: Kurdish, Arabic, and Syriac (Knapp, Flach, & Ayboga, 2016, pp. 45–47). Every ethnic and religious

group enjoys the right to education in its mother tongue, reflecting the multicultural composition of the region. Democratic confederalism is based on the autonomy of society. Rather than being governed by the state, society itself is politicized and empowered to determine its own destiny. In this sense, a model of 'democratic modernity' is placed in opposition to capitalist modernity. In Rojava, one of the concrete examples of this approach, the

Li Kurdistanê Hilbijartin

commune is placed at the center of the social system. The commune—understood as grassroots self-administration—constitutes the foundation of social life (Knapp, 2014, p. 33).

The administrative structure of Rojava was initially composed of the cantons of Jazira, Euphrates, and Afrin, later incorporating Arab-majority regions such as Raqqa, Tabqa, and Deir ez-Zor. Local governance operates through people's assemblies and communes; these assemblies are formed by elected representatives at the

village, neighborhood, and city levels. For instance, the Jazira Canton has a 101-member assembly representing 14 different political parties and a multi-ethnic constituency (Allsopp & van Wilgenburg, p. 89). This structure not only promotes direct democracy but also seeks to broaden participation in decision-making processes.

2.1. Gender Equality and the Role of Women

One of the most striking aspects of Rojava's democratic model is the emphasis placed on gender equality. A 40% gender quota is applied in governing bodies, and a co-chair system is implemented in every institution. Women play active roles not only in politics but also in the military sphere. The Women's Protection Units (YPJ) fought on the frontlines against ISIS and became a symbolic force in the defense of the region (Tank, p. 410). In addition, projects such as Jinwar, a women's village, stand out as innovative initi-

atives that reinforce gender equality. Decisions taken in communes are subject to the quota system. As in all Rojava assemblies, at least 40% female participation in discussions is required for decisions to be considered valid. In the communes, not only basic needs such as electricity and food are addressed, but also social issues such as patriarchal violence and family conflicts, which are resolved whenever possible (Knapp, 2014, p. 33). In particular,

2.3. Multiethnic Governance and Inclusivity

Although Rojava is a predominantly Kurdish region, it has developed a governance model that also includes minorities such as Arabs, Assyrians, Turkmens, Armenians, and Yazidis. The Syrian Democratic Forces (SDF) constitute the military wing of this multiethnic structure, while minority representation is guaranteed in governing bodies. For example, the Assyrian

carries the risk of ethnic hegemony. Each commune in Rojava has a variety of commissions designed to respond to different societal needs. These commissions operate in areas such as defense, justice, infrastructure, youth, and economy. Communes also support the establishment of cooperatives, including bakeries, sewing workshops, or agricultural projects. Ecology commissions deal with issues such as urban cleanliness and environmental challenges (Knapp, 2014, p. 33).

2.4. Challenges Facing the Functioning of Democracy

The democratic experiment in Rojava faces serious challenges from both internal and external factors.

External pressures: Turkey views Rojava as an extension of the PKK and, in 2018, occupied Afrin while pursuing a policy of establishing a "safe zone" east of the Euphrates. These interventions have resulted in civilian casualties and displacement, threatening the stability of the autonomous administration (Amnesty International, p. 10). Furthermore, the lack of recognition from the Syrian regime and the international community has left Rojava diplomatically and economically isolated.

Internal challenges: The dominant role of the PYD has created tensions with other Kurdish parties (such as the Kurdish National Council in Syria, ENKS) and has drawn criticism regarding political pluralism. Economically, the region remains dependent on oil revenues, while agriculture and trade are restricted due to embargoes. Human rights organizations have also reported instances of arbitrary detentions and violations of freedom of expression (Human Rights Watch, p. 15).

Meclîsa gel ya bajarê Dêrikê

women's economy committees aim to strengthen women's social position. Through these committees, women gain economic independence and establish a stronger presence in society. This approach challenges the despotic structures of the Middle East while increasing women's participation in political and social processes. However, some critics argue that this system has been shaped under the ideological hegemony of the PYD and that participation may be more compulsory than voluntary.

community has secured the protection of its cultural and religious rights in the Jazira region, which they refer to as Gozarto (Tejel, p. 112).

This inclusivity distinguishes Rojava from the sectarian or authoritarian administrations in other parts of Syria. However, in Arab-majority areas (such as Raqqa), challenges remain regarding the full integration of local populations into the autonomous administration. Some groups criticize the PYD's Kurdish-dominated structure, arguing that the system

3. Despotism's Deep Roots in the Middle East

According to the 2025 report publis-

REWSENBÎR

hed on the official website of Freedom House, a civil society organization that conducts research on democracy, political freedoms, and human rights, none of the 41 Muslim-majority countries were ranked as 'free.' Of these 41 states, 10 were categorized as 'partly free,' while the rest were classified as 'not free.' Furthermore, seven Muslim-majority states were listed among the world's eleven most repressive regimes. Of the 10 partly free countries, only two—Lebanon and Jordan—are located in the Middle East (Freedom House, 2025).

Despotism in the Middle East has typically manifested in monarchical systems, military dictatorships, and one-party regimes. Political systems in the region have sought not to promote popular participation but rather to centralize power and consolidate authority around a leader or an elite group. For example, absolute monarchies such as Saudi Arabia, the theocratic regime in Iran, and the Ba'athist regimes in Iraq and Syria have long restricted citizens' participation in political processes. According to the World Democracy Index, Middle Eastern and North African countries receive some of the lowest global scores with regard to democratic principles (The Economist Intelligence Unit, p. 45).

This despotic tradition has extended beyond political structures into social and cultural spheres. Minority rights have often been neglected, while linguistic and cultural diversity has been repressed. For instance, the decades-long prohibition of Kurdish in Turkey, or the denial of linguistic rights to Kurds and Azeri Turks in Iran, exemplifies this repressive approach. Against this general backdrop, the democratic practices of the Kurdistan Region of Iraq (KRI) appear all the more striking.

3.1. The KRI as a Democratic Model for the Middle East

The democratic framework of the KRI presents a contrast to the despotism prevalent in the Middle East. First, its parliamentary system and multiparty structure encourage citizen participation in political processes, representing a clear departure from one-man rule in the region. Second, minority representation and language rights demonstrate that the ethnic and religious diversity of the Middle East can

> ## Despotism in the Middle East has typically manifested in monarchical systems, military dictatorships, and one party regimes.

be managed peacefully. Third, the autonomy of the KRI within a federal framework offers an alternative governance model to centralized despotism.

The KRI's model may serve as an inspiration for other societies in the Middle East. For instance, the Kurdish experiment with autonomous administration in Rojava has drawn upon the KRI as a precedent. Similarly, Shi'a and Sunni communities in other parts of Iraq may view the federalist experience of the KRI as a reference point for their own political demands. Nonetheless, the diffusion of this model remains cons-

trained by geopolitical obstacles and the resistance of entrenched authoritarian regimes.

3.2. The Regional and Global Significance of the Rojava Model

Rojava can be regarded as a laboratory demonstrating the possibility of democracy in the Middle East. Its model promotes multiethnic governance within a federal framework, while offering an alternative vision to the nation-state paradigm. U.S. support for the Syrian Democratic Forces (SDF) in the fight against ISIS has elevated Rojava's geopolitical significance, but this dependency has also raised questions about the sustainability of its autonomy. Russia and the Syrian regime, meanwhile, perceive the U.S. presence as an obstacle and have refused to reach an accommodation with Rojava.

For other oppressed peoples in the region, Rojava may serve as an inspiring example. However, the model's success depends on the reduction of external interventions and the continuation of internal reforms.

The most significant criticism of the Democratic Confederalism model has come from different factions within the Kurdish political sphere itself. Democratic Confederalism, as a form of self-administration opposed to the nation-state model, represents a continuous approach to social revolution that permeates all structural aspects of society. In the long term, it aims to abolish nation-states altogether. In this process, neither state institutions nor borders are to play a determining role. Political perspectives that argue for the necessity of a Kurdish state react critically to Democratic Confederalism precisely because it rejects the nation-state paradigm at its core.

REWSENBÎR

Conclusion

The Kurdistan Region of Iraq (KRI) presents a democratic model that challenges the despotic traditions of the Middle East. Its parliamentary system, minority representation, multilingual governance, and educational rights distinguish the KRI from the authoritarian regimes of the region.

These features hold the potential to serve as an alternative for Middle Eastern societies; however, the success of the model depends on overcoming internal and external challenges. The democratic experience of the KRI demonstrates that democracy in the Middle East is not impossible and offers hope that despotism is not an inevitable destiny. In the future, international support and regional cooperation will be of critical importance for this model to spread to other parts of the region.

The functioning of democracy in Rojava, with its emphasis on local assemblies, gender equality, and multiethnic representation, presents another remarkable model. Democratic confederalism, while offering a radical alternative to the authoritarian regimes of the Middle East, has implemented a governance system organized from the bottom up. Yet, Turkey's military threats, the lack of international recognition, and internal political and economic challenges increase the fragility of this experiment. Although Rojava provides hope in the search for democracy, its sustainability depends on changes in regional and global dynamics.

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REWSENBÎR

Russia's Middle East and Kurdish Policy

Is it a New Era or a Continuation of Traditional Imperial Policy?

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Abstract

This article examines Russia's Middle East policy, focusing on its geopolitical objectives, strategic maneuvers in Syria, and complex relations with the Kurds.

Russia aims to counter U.S. hegemony, secure economic interests through energy investments, and mitigate security threats from radical Islamism.

Its 2015 military intervention in Syria bolstered the Assad regime, securing strategic bases like Tartus and Hmeymim, but economic constraints and the Ukraine conflict led to a withdrawal by 2024, contributing to Assad's collapse. Relations with the HTS-led interim government under Ahmad Al-Shara are pragmatic, prioritizing Russian military assets.

Historically, Russia has leveraged Kurdish groups as a tactical tool against regional rivals like Turkey and the U.S., yet it refrains from supporting Kurdish statehood due to alliances with Turkey and Iran and concerns over regional stability.

The article draws on historical and contemporary sources to analyze Russia's pragmatic yet opportunistic approach, highlighting its impact on Kurdish aspirations and Middle Eastern dynamics.

Özet

Bu makale, Rusya'nın Ortadoğu politikalarını, jeopolitik hedeflerini, Suriye'deki stratejik hamlelerini ve Kürtlerle karmaşık ilişkilerini incelemektedir.

Rusya, ABD hegemonyasını dengelemeyi, enerji yatırımlarıyla ekonomik çıkarlarını güvence altına almayı ve radikal İslamcılığın güvenlik tehditlerini önlemeyi amaçlamaktadır.

2015'teki Suriye müdahalesi, Esad rejimini güçlendirmiş ve Tartus ile Hmeymim gibi stratejik üsleri korumuştur; ancak Ukrayna savaşı ve ekonomik kısıtlamalar, 2024'te Rusya'nın çekilmesine ve Esad'ın çöküşüne yol açmıştır. Ahmet El Şara liderliğindeki HTS geçici yönetimiyle ilişkiler, Rus askeri varlıklarını koruma odaklı pragmatik bir çerçevede ilerlemektedir.

Tarihsel olarak, Rusya, Kürt gruplarını Türkiye ve ABD'ye karşı taktiksel bir araç olarak kullanmış, ancak Türkiye ve İran ile ittifakları ve bölgesel istikrar kaygıları nedeniyle Kürt devletini desteklememektedir.

Makale, Rusya'nın pragmatik ancak fırsatçı yaklaşımını tarihsel ve güncel kaynaklarla analiz ederek, bu politikaların Kürt hedefleri ve Ortadoğu dinamikleri üzerindeki etkisini ortaya koymaktadır.

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1. Introduction

Historically, Russia has been an influential actor in the Middle East, playing a significant role in regional power balances from Tsarist Russia to the Soviet Union and the contemporary Russian Federation. In the post-Cold War era, particularly following its intervention in Syria in 2015, Russia has reemerged as a major power in the region.

The Kurdish issue occupies a dual role in Russia's Middle East policies: it acts as both a strategic lever and a complex balancing factor. This article examines Russia's geopolitical objectives in the Middle East, its policies toward the Assad regime in Syria, its relations with Hayat Tahrir al-Sham (HTS) led by Ahmed al-Shara, and its historical and contemporary relations with the Kurds, drawing on scientific and empirical data. Furthermore, it analyzes Russia's stance toward a potential Kurdish state and the underlying reasons behind these policies.

2. Russia's Middle East Policy: Goals and Expectations

Russia's Middle East policy has been shaped around four primary objectives. First, its most important aim is to end U.S.-dominated practices in the region and establish a balance of power (Magen & Moldavsky, 2011: 78). Second, Russia seeks to strengthen political and economic ties with regional countries, turning the Middle East into a market for the Russian economy (Malashenko, 2013: 2). Third, by developing relations with Islamic countries, Russia aims to restrict the activities of radical Islamist terrorist groups with potential to infiltrate its sphere of influence, thereby preventing threats against itself (Trenin, 2016: 1). Finally, Russia aims to use diplomacy as an effective tool to mediate regional issues, thereby regaining prestige as a major power capable of solving problems in the Middle East (Bagno, 2009: 96).

Thus, Russia's Middle East policy rests on the goals of consolidating its global power status, counterbalancing U.S. regional hegemony, and protecting its economic interests. According to the Carnegie Endowment, Russia has strengthened its presence in the Mediterranean through strategic assets such as the Tartus naval base and the Hmeymim airbase in Syria (Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, 2019).

In 2015, Russia intervened directly in the Syrian Civil War, becoming the regime's strongest supporter. This intervention allowed Russia to establish permanent military bases in the Eastern Mediterranean (Tartus and Hmeymim) and enhanced its military and political influence in the region via Syria. Economically, Russian energy companies like Rosneft and Gazprom have gained influence in Iraq's Kurdistan region through multi-billion-dollar investments in the energy sector.

From a security perspective, instability in the Middle East and the spread of Islamist radicalism pose potential threats to Russia's Muslim population and the Caucasus, prompting Moscow to remain actively engaged in the region (Middle East Institute, 2021).

Russia has elevated its relations with Syria, Iran, and Egypt to the level of strategic partnerships. Defense, energy, and trade agreements with these countries have helped expand Russia's influence in the Middle East. Additionally, Russia pursues pragmatic diplomacy by maintaining simultaneous relations with opposing actors such as Iran, Turkey, Israel, and Saudi Arabia. This flexibility has increased Russia's diplomatic weight, for example, through initiatives like the Astana Process, which established de-escalation zones in Syria (CSIS, 2020). Russia's core expectation is to serve as a counterwe-

REWSENBÎR

ight to the U.S. in the Middle East while maintaining influence in energy markets.

3. Russia – Relations with the Kurds: Historical Development

3.1. Initial Contact during the Tsarist Period

Russia's relations with the Kurds began during the 34-year reign of Empress Catherine II (1729–1796), and significant progress was made during this period. The Tsarist administration believed that leveraging ethnic groups in its expansionist policies would facilitate its occupation efforts. To better understand these groups, the government established special institutes and translated their cultural documents into Russian. In this context, the world's first Kurdology Department was established in 1787 within the Russian Academy of Sciences in Russia (Özdemir & Arslan, 2018: 196).

Following the initial steps toward co-

operation with the Kurds during Catherine II's reign, physical contact was established in 1801 during the reign of Alexander I, coinciding with the annexation of Georgia. After establishing this contact, conditions for collaboration with the Kurds were pursued through consuls and envoys operating in the Ottoman eastern provinces and in Iran (Özdemir, 2018: 26).

Within the framework of the Kurdish cooperation strategy, the opinions and recommendations of local commanders, as well as ambassadors and consuls in the region, were taken into account for decisions made at the center. The first official report submitted to the central administration on this matter was by Marshal Ivan Paskevich (Özdemir, 2018: 27). Serving as the Commander of the Caucasus, Paskevich predicted that cooperating with the Kurds would facilitate Russian military operations reaching both the Gulf of Iskenderun and the Persian Gulf. For this reason, he emphasized maintaining good relations with the Kurds residing in this geostrategically important region, which could provide access to the Mediterranean or Indian Ocean, and these efforts proved successful. Following Paskevich's recommendations, the Tsarist administration provided material support, allowing approximately 10,000 Kurds to join the Russian army (Ünal, 2008: 134).

The successes achieved through cooperation with the Kurds during this period highlighted the necessity of institutionalizing studies in this area on a scientific basis. Accordingly, in 1860, it was decided to establish the "Kurdology Institute" (Özdemir & Arslan, 2018: 196).

In subsequent periods, Kurdish-Russian relations relied on Tsarist Russia's contacts with Kurdish tribes in the Ottoman and Persian empires. Tsa-

rist Russia continued its efforts to win Kurdish support against the Ottomans (Middle East Policy, 2023).

In this context, the Tsarist administration invited certain leaders with potential to mobilize Kurdish tribes to the capital, St. Petersburg. For instance, in 1898, the Shikak tribal leader Ja'far Agha, Abdürrezzak Bedirhan, and Seyyid Taha, grandson of Sheikh Ubeydullah, visited the Tsarist capital at the special invitation of Tsar Nicholas II. The three tribal leaders were warmly received, rewarded with various gifts, and returned to their homelands with the hope that cooperating with Russia would increase the likelihood of achieving their future objectives (Aegleton, 1989: 31).

Although Aegleton states that Abdürrezzak Bedirhan was invited to St. Petersburg by Russia, it is known that he was appointed as a secretary at the Ottoman Consulate in St. Petersburg in 1889. Similarly, during the Ottoman-Russian wars—particularly the 1829 Ottoman-Russian War—Seyyid Taha encouraged Sunni Kurds in the region to fight alongside the Ottoman state and issued a jihad fatwa. Despite Iran's cooperation with Russia during this period, Seyyid Taha maintained a cautious stance toward Iran and pursued a pro-Ottoman policy. He organized Sunni Kurds in Iran, leading the preparation of a significant militia force against the Russians.

3.2. Kurdish-Russian Relations during the USSR Period

After the Bolshevik Revolution, Kurdology studies continued under the socialist government established in Russia. For this purpose, the USSR Academy of Sciences' Institute of Oriental Studies continued these studies within its Near and Middle East Department under the name "Depart-

ment of the Contemporary Kurdish Question."

Within the ideology of the Soviet Socialist Republics, which promoted the principle of nations' self-determination, "Red Kurdistan" was established as an autonomous administration on July 7, 1923, and this administration existed until April 8, 1929.

In subsequent periods, interest in the Kurdish issue persisted, and ideological and logistical support was provided for entities such as the Mahabad Kurdish Republic (1946). Mustafa Barzani, who served as the Chief of Staff of the Mahabad Kurdish Republic, lived in exile in the Soviet Union from 1945 to 1958.

During this period, schools were opened for Caucasian Kurds living under Soviet administration, radio broadcasts were launched, and books and newspapers were published. The first Kurdish novel was also published during this era.

3.3. Contemporary Russian-Kurdish Relations and Pragmatic Approach

Russia's Middle East policy is based on two fundamental principles. First, it emphasizes that state sovereignty must be respected in international relations. Second, closely linked to this principle, it asserts that interference in the internal affairs of states should be avoided. Therefore, Russia strongly opposes attempts at regime change that disregard decisions by international bodies such as the UN Security Council (Mamedov, 2019: 9).

Moscow maintains that any changes regarding the status of Kurdish regions in different countries are internal matters of the respective states. For instance, it believes that any modification in the status of the Kurdistan Regional Government in Southern Kurdistan should be determined th-

rough negotiations between Baghdad and Erbil (Mamedov, 2019: 11).

Russia seeks to maintain a neutral stance among conflicting parties in the Middle East and avoids provoking them. In a press statement in December 2016 regarding the referendum planned in Northern Iraq on September 25, 2017, Vladimir Putin stated that Russia would adhere to international law. He emphasized that while the rights of the Kurdish people should be protected, how the process unfolds should be decided jointly by Iraq and the Kurdish people, signaling that Russia has no intention of intervening in the Iraqi process (Bielicki, 2018: 39).

Russia's current Kurdish policy is shaped through "soft power" and pragmatic maneuvering. According to Middle East Policy, Russia uses the Kurds as leverage against Turkey and the United States but avoids supporting an independent Kurdistan (The Washington Institute, 2020). In Syria, Russia attempted to include the PYD/YPG in negotiations with the Assad regime, but Turkey's objections limited this effort. In 2019, after the U.S. withdrew from northern Syria, Russia assumed a mediating role between the Kurds and Assad, yet it left the Kurds vulnerable by allowing Turkish operations in Afrin to use Syrian airspace.

Russia has stren-

gthened its economic ties with Southern Kurdistan. In 2017, Rosneft provided the KRG with a $3.5 billion loan and invested in oil fields (The Washington Institute, 2020). During the 2017 Kurdistan independence referendum, Russia remained neutral, indirectly supporting the KRG in contrast to the U.S. (Middle East Policy, 2023). However, when engaging positively with the Kurds, Russia acts cautiously to avoid jeopardizing its relations with Turkey and Iran.

Russia's cautious approach toward Southern Kurdistan is also evident in its interactions between the Kurds in Syria and the Damascus administration.

The PYD, established in 2004 with PKK support, became a key actor in northern Syria during the Syrian Crisis through its military branch, the People's Protection Units (YPG) (Bengio, 2017: 18). Russia's close relations with the Rojava region emerged following its military operations in the area. Seeking to maximize benefits from these

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developments, the Rojava Administration opened a representative office in Moscow in February 2016 (Gülşen, 2017: 64). No formal agreement was reached for this office, yet it was allowed to operate similarly to an embassy.

Immediately after the plane crisis with Turkey, Russia intensified its contacts with the Kurds. During its mediation in Syrian reconciliation talks, Russia included the phrase "cultural autonomy for the Kurds" in its draft Syrian constitution, signaling concrete support for the Kurds (Köstem, 2017: 18). The same draft also envisioned granting certain privileges to Kurdish elites within a unified Syrian administration (Ganiev & Karyakin, 2018: 7). This step can be interpreted as Russia's broader policy to empower the Kurds, particularly through the Rojava Administration, aiming to exert greater influence over Syrian domestic politics.

The Russian-Kurdish cooperation in Syria advances in ways that align with the interests of both parties. This positive relationship has also strengthened ties between the Kurds and the central government. The connection established between Kurdish groups and the Assad regime, maintained with Russian support, enhances Russia's position in Syria and its influence in the Middle East.

3.4. How Does Russia View the Establishment of a Kurdish State?

Russia does not openly support a Kurdish state. Foreign Minister Sergey Lavrov claimed in 2022 that the US was trying to establish a Kurdish state in Syria, stating that this made the "Kurdish problem" dangerous. The reasons for Russia's stance are as follows:

1. Geopolitical Balance: Russia prioritizes maintaining its strategic partnerships with Turkey and Iran. An independent Kurdistan could lead to conflict with these countries.
2. Regional Stability: Russia opposes changes to state borders in the Middle East.
3. Pragmatic Interests: Kurds are a tactical tool for Russia; Moscow aims to discomfort the US and keep Turkey at the negotiation table by supporting the Kurds, but it does not have a long-term goal like statehood (Middle East Institute,

> ❝
> **Russia views the status of Kurds in Rojava within the framework of Syria's territorial integrity. It acts for the stability of the Middle East.**
> ❞

2021).

We see that Russia considers the status of Kurds in Rojava within the scope of Syria's territorial integrity. Vedomosti, one of Russia's largest newspapers, quotes Russian Presidential spokesman Dmitry Peskov as stating that Russia strives for Syria's stability and regional security, which means wanting Syria to be "predictable." Peskov also mentioned a message sent by Vladimir Putin to the Syrian president. The message specifically states that Russia supports Syria's territorial integrity, unity of its lands, and sovereignty.

3.5. Russia's Role in the Afrin Occupation

During the Syrian Civil War, Russia occasionally engaged in tactical cooperation with the PYD and its armed wing, the YPG. This cooperation was primarily shaped by a shared perception of ISIS as a common enemy and a balancing policy against the U.S. presence in the region. However, Russia preferred to remain cautious regarding Kurdish federal demands, taking into account its relations with Turkey. Russia's indirect approval of Turkish operations in the Rojava regions, especially in Kobani and Afrin, led to the displacement of Kurdish refugees. During the 2015 Kobani conflicts, more than 100,000 Kurds were forced to flee (Human Rights Watch, 2014). Additionally, under an agreement brokered by Russia in Astana among Turkey, Iran, and Syria regarding the occupation of Afrin, over 300,000 residents of Afrin were displaced to Shehba. After the Afrin occupation, the proportion of Kurds remaining in Afrin dropped to 23%.

The Syrian-Africa Human Rights Organization reported that over 400,000 people were settled in Afrin's villages and districts, most of whom came from other Syrian regions—particularly southern Idlib, Aleppo, and Eastern Ghouta in Damascus—and were largely members of jihadist terrorist groups and their families. Russia turned a blind eye to Turkey's demographic alteration policies in Afrin.

Although Kurdish groups expected more support from Russia, Moscow's stance proved disappointing. During the 2018 Afrin operation, Russia's opening of Turkish airspace was described as "betrayal" by PYD commander Sipan Hamo (The Washington Institute, 2020). The Kurds have criticized Russia's policy as "opportunistic."

4. Conclusion

Russia's Middle East policy is shaped around geopolitical influence, economic interests, and security concerns. Its support for the Assad regime in Syria began in 2015 to protect strategic bases and counterbalance the U.S., but the war in Ukraine and economic pressures led to its withdrawal in 2024. Relations with the HTS administration have developed pragmatically; however, Shara's stance against Kurdish autonomy complicates these ties.

Historically, Russia has used its relationship with the Kurds as a tactical tool. Due to its desire to maintain partnerships with Turkey and Iran and concerns over regional stability, Russia does not support an independent Kurdistan. It believes the ongoing Kurdish issue in the Middle East should be resolved internally by the states concerned.

A more inclusive Kurdish policy could enhance Russia's regional influence, but current dynamics do not indicate a shift in this direction.

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Will the United States Implement the Wilson Principles After 100 Years?

Kurdistan in the Greater Middle East Project (GMEP)...

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Abstract

The Middle East, with its geopolitical significance, abundant energy resources, and cultural diversity, constitutes a key arena for strategic competition among global powers. Since the end of World War II, the United States has been one of the most influential actors in the region, pursuing objectives such as ensuring energy security, safeguarding Israel's security, combating terrorism, and shaping regional stability. From the Cold War era to the post-9/11 period, U.S. policy in the Middle East has encompassed a broad spectrum, ranging from ideological confrontations (notably anti-communism) to the war on terror and the implementation of the Greater Middle East Project (GMEP). As of 2025, with Donald Trump's second presidential term, American strategies in the region are once again undergoing transformation. This article aims to analyze the short- and long-term objectives of the United States in the Middle East, its relations with Iraqi Kurdistan and Rojava, its stance on the Kurdish statehood question, and its broader regional goals.

On January 8, 1918, U.S. President Woodrow Wilson presented to Congress a set of principles known as the "Wilson Principles," which included a provision advocating the establishment of an independent state for the Kurdish people. At that time, the United States was not a dominant force in Middle Eastern affairs. However, today it has become a leading and decisive actor in the region. In this context, a critical question arises: Will the United States, in line with the spirit of the Wilson Principles, regard the Kurdish people's right to self-determination and their aspiration for statehood as a historical and moral responsibility within its regional policy framework?

Özet

Ortadoğu, jeopolitik konumu, enerji kaynakları ve kültürel çeşitliliğiyle küresel güçlerin stratejik rekabet alanıdır. Amerika Birleşik Devletleri (ABD), İkinci Dünya Savaşı'ndan bu yana bölgedeki en etkili aktörlerden biri olarak, enerji güvenliğini sağlama, İsrail'in güvenliğini koruma, terörizmle mücadele ve bölgesel istikrarı şekillendirme hedefleriyle hareket etmiştir.

Soğuk Savaş'tan 11 Eylül sonrası döneme kadar, ABD'nin Ortadoğu politikası, ideolojik mücadelelerden (komünizm karşıtlığı) terörizmle savaşa ve Büyük Ortadoğu Projesi'ne (BOP) kadar geniş bir yelpazede evrilmiştir. 2025 itibarıyla, Donald Trump'ın ikinci başkanlık dönemiyle birlikte, ABD'nin Ortadoğu stratejileri yeniden şekillenmektedir.

Bu makale, ABD'nin yakın ve uzak vadeli planlarını, Irak Kürdistanı ve Rojava ile ilişkilerini, Kürt devleti konusundaki tutumunu ve Ortadoğu'daki temel hedeflerini analiz etmeyi amaçlamaktadır.

8 Ocak 1918 tarihinde, Amerika Birleşik Devletleri Başkanı Woodrow Wilson tarafından Kongre'ye sunulan ve "Wilson İlkeleri" olarak bilinen prensipler, Kürt halkı için bağımsız bir devlet kurulması gerekliliğini öngörmüştü. O dönemde Amerika Birleşik Devletleri, Ortadoğu'da etkin ve belirleyici bir güç konumunda değildi. Ancak günümüzde bölge politikalarında dominant bir aktör haline gelmiştir. Bu bağlamda, Wilson İlkeleri'nin ruhuna uygun olarak, Kürt halkının kendi kaderini tayin hakkı ve bağımsız bir devlet kurma talebi, Amerika Birleşik Devletleri'nin bölge politikalarında dikkate alması gereken tarihsel ve ahlaki bir sorumluluk olarak değerlendirecek mi?

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1. Introduction

The Middle East, with its geopolitical position, energy resources, and cultural diversity, is an arena of strategic competition among global powers. Since the Second World War, the United States (U.S.) has been one of the most influential actors in the region, acting with the objectives of ensuring energy security, protecting Israel's security, combating terrorism, and shaping regional stability.

From the Cold War to the post-September 11 period, U.S. policy in the Middle East has evolved across a wide spectrum—from ideological struggles (anti-communism) to the war on terror and the Greater Middle East Project (GMEP). As of 2025, with Donald Trump's second presidential term, U.S. strategies in the Middle East are being reshaped.

This article aims to analyze the U.S.'s near- and long-term plans, its relations with Iraqi Kurdistan and Rojava, its stance on a Kurdish state, and its fundamental objectives in the Middle East.

On January 8, 1918, the principles presented to Congress by President Woodrow Wilson—known as the "Wilson Principles"—envisaged the necessity of establishing an independent state for the Kurdish people. At that time, the United States was not an active and decisive power in the Middle East. However, today it has become a dominant actor in regional politics. In this context, will the United States, in accordance with the spirit of the Wilson Principles, regard the Kurdish people's right to self-determination and demand to establish an independent state as a historical and moral responsibility to be taken into account in its regional policies?

2. The Greater Middle East Project and the Kurds

The Greater Middle East Project (GMEP) is a strategic initiative developed by the United States in the early 2000s that aims for political, economic, and social reforms across a broad geography encompassing the Middle East, North Africa, and South Asia.

Officially introduced in 2004 at the G8 Summit as the "Broader Middle East and North Africa Initiative," this project sought to promote democratic governance, support economic development, and implement security reforms (Volker, 2004).

The GMEP reflects the U.S.'s foreign policy vision at the beginning of the 21st century to achieve a comprehensive transformation in the Middle East and surrounding countries. The project envisaged strengthening democratic structures in place of authoritarian regimes, promoting economic liberalization, and encouraging social modernization across a geography spanning approximately 22 countries from Afghanistan to Morocco. While the official discourse of the GMEP aimed to promote universal values such as democratization and human rights,

REWSENBÎR

some critics linked it to the goals of bringing energy resources under control, guaranteeing Israel's security, and limiting the influence of regional rivals such as Iran and China (Al Jazeera Türk, 2014).

However, the objective of strengthening democracy and human rights in the Middle East carries the potential to produce outcomes indirectly in favor of the Kurdish people. The Kurds constitute one of the largest communities in the Middle East whose rights have been systematically violated and who have been victimized by anti-democratic practices. In this context, the condition of the Kurds should be evaluated as a consequence of the regional transformation targeted by the GMEP; however, there is no explicit emphasis on the Kurds in the project. Only when we look at the map put forward by Ralph Peters and Bernard-Henri Lévy—said to have been prepared as an idea—can we arrive at the conclusion that there was a plan regarding Kurdistan.

Among the intellectual authors of the GMEP, Ralph Peters and Bernard-Henri Lévy published a GMEP map at the time. On this map there was a large, unified Kurdistan that would encompass 40 million Kurds

In addition to the map he prepared, Ralph Peters addressed the issue in his article published on June 1, 2006, in the American Armed Forces Journal as follows:

"In the notorious unjust geography between the Balkan Mountains and the Himalayas, the most conspicuous injustice is the absence of a Kurdish state. Between 27 and 36 million Kurds live within contiguous borders. With a population larger than that of today's Iraq, the Kurds constitute the world's largest stateless ethnic group. After the fall of Baghdad, the United States and its allies missed a great opportunity to begin to correct this injustice. Iraq should have been divided into smaller states immediately. Because of our cowardice and lack of foresight, we forced the Kurds to support

the Iraqi government." (Özuğurlu, 2017) With the Greater Middle East Project, while the U.S. risked losing the Islamic world, it also had to take the risk of losing Turkey for the sake of the Kurds. The Greater Middle East Project would be the guide for U.S. foreign policy strategy extending as far as Afghanistan, Pakistan, and Central Asia (Kissinger, Boston: 1979).

2.1. U.S. Objectives in the Middle East

The U.S.'s fundamental objectives in the Middle East, in historical and current context, can be summarized as follows:

Energy Security: The control of oil and natural gas resources and the security of transit routes are critically important for the U.S. to sustain its global economic leadership.

Israel's Security: Preserving Israel's regional superiority and imposing a solution to the Palestinian question that favors Israel are among the U.S.'s priority objectives.

Counter-Terrorism: Combating ISIS and other radical groups is important for ensuring regional stability and protecting U.S. homeland security.

Balancing China and Russia: Reducing the economic and military influence of Russia and China in the Middle East is connected to the U.S.'s goal of maintaining its global hegemony.

Regional Stability and Cooperation: Through initiatives such as the Abraham Accords, the U.S. aims to create a regional alliance by normalizing relations between Arab countries and Israel.

3. Historical Context: U.S.–Kurdish Relations

U.S. interest in the Middle East began in the 19th century with missionary activities, but in political terms the first serious discourse regarding America–Kurdish relations came after the First World War with the "Fourteen Points" presented to Congress on January 8, 1918, by U.S. President Woodrow Wilson—principles aimed at shaping the post-war world order (history.state.gov, 1918).

The Wilson Principles were put forward to shape the world order after World War I and revived hopes of independence for stateless peoples like the Kurds. In particular, Article 12 supported the Kurds' claims to the right of self-determination and proposed the establishment of Kurdistan and Armenia. However, the interests of the great powers prevented these hopes from being realized.

In the post-World War II period, the issue acquired a strategic dimension. During the Cold War, with the Eisenhower Doctrine (1957), the U.S. aimed to establish a security network in the Middle East against communism (Arı, 2007: 245).

REWSENBÎR

In subsequent periods, there were contacts, but these relations did not go beyond reciprocal exchanges of ideas rather than political or military cooperation. First, in the 1970s, we see that the American government provided not only economic support for Kurdish refugees but also weapons support.

On March 11, 1970, with the agreement known as "Rêkeftina 11 Adarê," signed by Mulla Mustafa Barzani on behalf of the KDP and Saddam Hussein al-Tikriti, deputy to Hasan al-Bakr, on behalf of the Ba'ath, a new period began in Iraqi Kurdistan. With that agreement, gains close to the current status and rights of Iraqi Kurdistan were also obtained.

When in 1974 Saddam abandoned this agreement and announced that he was giving up granting autonomy to the Kurds, Mulla Mustafa Barzani went to Iran and met with the CIA station chief. Soviet weapons and 1 million dollars in refugee aid were provided to the Iraqi Kurds. In his memoirs, Kissinger would write of their aims as follows (Gibson, 2019):

1. To give the Kurds a reasonable capacity by which they could obtain their rights through negotiations with the Baghdad government;

2. To topple the existing Iraqi administration;

3. Not to divide Iraq permanently, because an independent Kurdish region would not be economically viable; mo-

reover, the U.S. and Iran did not want to close the door to a new and modern Iraqi administration.

The attacks of September 11, 2001, accelerated "war on terror" policies, leading to the invasions of Afghanistan (2001) and Iraq (2003). The Greater Middle East Project sought to promote democratization and "moderate Islam" models in the region; however, the instabilities in Iraq overshadowed the success of this undertaking (Wikipedia, 2009).

Relations with the Kurds have played a historically pragmatic role in U.S. Middle East policy. After the 1991 Gulf War, the creation of a no-fly zone in Iraq ensured the protection of the Kurds and laid the foundations of the Kurdistan Regional Government (KRG). In the 2003 invasion of Iraq, Kurdish Peshmerga forces were key allies in the U.S. effort to topple Saddam Hussein. In the Syrian civil war, the Syrian Democratic Forces (SDF) in Rojava—particularly the YPG/YPJ—became the U.S.'s most important local partner against ISIS.

However, U.S. Kurdish policy created tensions with NATO allies such as Turkey, and Washington's stance on the Kurds' demands for an independent state remained ambiguous. For example, in 2017, the KRG's independence referendum was not supported by the U.S., and the central government's recapture of Kirkuk was met with silence (BBC News

Türkçe, 2017).

3.1 Relations with Iraqi Kurdistan

U.S. relations with Iraqi Kurdistan accelerated after the 1991 Gulf War. Saddam Hussein's repression of the Kurdish population—especially the Halabja Massacre (1988)—laid the groundwork for the U.S. to regard the Kurds as an ally. In 1991, the U.S.-led coalition's intervention in Iraq and the establishment of the no-fly zone enabled the Kurds to set up a de facto autonomous region. The 2003 invasion of Iraq, with the toppling of Saddam's regime, ensured that the KRG officially gained federal region status.

The Kurdistan Region is one of the U.S.'s most reliable allies in Iraq. Recognized as an autonomous region under the 2005 Iraqi Constitution, the Kurdistan Regional Government (KRG) emerged as a political, military, and economic actor. Since the 2003 invasion, the KRG has strengthened its autonomy with U.S. military and economic support. America developed close relations with the KRG and regarded the region as an important partner both in the fight against ISIS and in its regional strategies.

However, U.S. KRG policy is built on a complex balance among protecting Iraq's territorial integrity, balancing relations with regional allies such as Turkey and Iran, and sustaining strategic interests in the Middle East. The KRG's 2017 independence referendum was a critical turning point testing these policies; it clarified the U.S. stance against Kurdish independence. The U.S. did not support the referendum on the grounds that it would lead to regional instability and remained silent as the Iraqi central government retook Kirkuk.

The U.S. continues its energy and security cooperation with the KRG, but avoids open support for an independent Kurdish state.

U.S. policy toward the KRG rests on several fundamental strategic objectives:

• **Fight Against ISIS:** With ISIS's seizure of Mosul in 2014, the Peshmerga, the KRG's military force, became one of the

REWSENBÎR

U.S.'s most important allies.

• **Regional Balances:** The U.S. has used the KRG as a tool to balance Iran's influence in Iraq and to limit Russia's regional clout.

• **Oil and Energy Security:** The KRG controls a significant portion of Iraq's oil reserves. The U.S. supported ensuring the security of these resources and their access to international markets independently of Baghdad's control.

However, U.S.–KRG relations are constrained by the pledge to preserve Iraq's territorial integrity and by relations with regional allies such as Turkey. Turkey views KRG independence as a threat that could embolden Kurdish movements within its own borders. For this reason, while providing support to the KRG, the U.S. has avoided any explicit support for an independent Kurdish state.

3.1.1. Military Relations

U.S. military relations with the KRG have been concentrated especially in the fight against ISIS. Since 2014, the Peshmerga have been the most important ground force of the U.S.-led coalition against ISIS. U.S. military support includes the followings:

• **Arms and Equipment Assistance:** The U.S. provided the Peshmerga with light weapons, anti-tank missiles, and armored vehicles. However, these deliveries were generally made indirectly via Baghdad, and direct shipments to the KRG were limited (kurdarastirmalari.com, 2021).

• **Training and Advising:** U.S. special forces provided tactical training to the Peshmerga and offered advice during operations against ISIS.

•**Air Support:** The U.S.-led coalition conducted air strikes to support Peshmerga ground operations in areas such as Mosul and Kirkuk (BBC News Türkçe, 2017). This military cooperation played a critical role in the expulsion of ISIS from Mosul in 2017. However, the U.S.'s avoidance of direct arms assistance to the KRG demonstrates its adherence to the "One Iraq" policy.

As of 2025, the U.S. military presence in Iraq continues. U.S. bases in Erbil support both operations against ISIS and military cooperation with the KRG. However, the purpose of this presence is to ensure regional stability and energy security rather than to support KRG independence.

3.1.2. Political Relations

U.S. political relations with the KRG strengthened after the 2003 invasion of Iraq. The KRG, recognized as an autonomous region within a federal structure in post-Saddam Iraq, has maintained regular diplomatic contacts with U.S. officials.

The U.S. has expressed support for the KRG's democratic model of governance, but this support has not gone beyond that of an official recognition. The reasons include:

• **Iraq's Territorial Integrity:** The U.S. is committed to preserving Iraq's federal structure and considers that supporting KRG independence could lead to the partition of Iraq (kurdarastirmalari.com, 2021).

• **Relations with Turkey:** Turkey views KRG independence as a threat to its national security. The U.S. has avoided jeopardizing relations with NATO ally Turkey.

• **Regional Stability:** KRG independence could provoke reactions from Iran and other neighboring countries and lead to new conflicts in the region.

The U.S. has supported negotiations between the KRG and Baghdad and has mediated issues such as the budget and oil revenues between Erbil and Baghdad. For example, the visit of Iraqi Prime Minister Mustafa al-Kadhimi to Erbil in 2020 took place at U.S. encouragement.

3.2. Relations with Rojava

The Syrian Civil War, which began in 2011, created a complex conflict environment in which regional and international actors became heavily involved. In this conflict, the Rojava (Western Kurdistan) region in northeastern Syria drew attention by establishing an autonomous administration under the leadership of the Democratic Union Party (PYD). The United States developed close cooperation with actors in Rojava, particularly the Syrian Democratic Forces (SDF) and their main component, the People's Protection Units (YPG). This cooperation took shape as a strategic partnership in the fight against ISIS, but also led at times to tensions with regional allies such as Turkey.

Turkey's view of the YPG as an extension of the PKK complicates the U.S.'s Rojava policy. Although the U.S. supports the autonomous administration in Rojava in terms of democratic values and the fight against ISIS, it keeps this support limited in order not to lose Turkey.

The U.S.'s Rojava policy rests on several fundamental strategic objectives:

•**Fight Against ISIS:** The U.S. has

regarded the SDF as the main ground force against ISIS and has provided this group with weapons, training, and logistical support (Wikipedia, 2024).

• **Regional Balances:** The U.S. has used its presence in Rojava to balance Iran's influence in Syria and to gain a strategic advantage against Russia.

• **Oil and Energy Security:** Rojava controls a significant portion of Syria's oil and gas resources. The U.S. aims to ensure the security of these resources and to prevent them from falling into the hands of the Assad regime (Fars News Agency, 2023).

3.2.1. U.S. Military Relations with Rojava

U.S. military relations with Rojava have been concentrated in the context of the fight against ISIS. Since 2014, the U.S. has provided comprehensive military support to the YPG/SDF. This support has included:

• **Arms and Equipment Assistance:** The U.S. has provided the SDF with billions of dollars in military aid, including anti-tank missiles, light weapons, and armored vehicles.

• **Training and Advising:** U.S. special forces have provided tactical training to SDF fighters and support in operational planning.

• **Air Support:** In critical areas such as Kobani, Raqqa, and Deir ez-Zor, the U.S.-led coalition has carried out air strikes to support SDF ground operations.

This military cooperation played a critical role in the SDF's defeat of ISIS in Raqqa in 2017 and in Baghouz in 2019. However, this support drew Turkey's reaction and forced the U.S. to strike a balance between Turkey and the SDF. For example, during Turkey's Operation Peace Spring in 2019, while the U.S. continued to support the SDF, it also gave a green light to Turkey's operation, exhibiting a contradictory position (Gazete Duvar, 2023).

As of 2025, the U.S. military presence in Rojava continues. Approximately 900

U.S. soldiers are deployed in northeastern Syria, conducting joint patrols with the SDF (jusoor.co, 2024). In addition, the U.S. has established military bases to ensure the security of oil fields in Rojava. This indicates that the U.S. views Rojava not only as a partner against ISIS but also as a strategic area for energy security and regional stability.

3.2.2. U.S. Political Relations with Rojava

U.S. political relations with Rojava have been shaped under the shadow of military cooperation. The U.S. has not officially recognized the Autonomous Administration of North and East Syria (AANES), but has developed de facto cooperation. This cooperation has manifested itself through diplomatic contacts, humanitarian aid, and political support. For example, Ilham Ahmed, Co-Chair of the Department of Foreign Relations of the Autonomous Administration, regularly meets with U.S. officials.

The U.S. political approach is based on avoiding taking a clear position on whether Rojava should have the status of an independent state or a federation, even though it regards Rojava as an actor in Syria's future. The reasons include:

• **Relations with Turkey:** Taking into account Turkey's hard stance against the autonomous administration in Rojava, the U.S. avoids granting an official status to Rojava.

• **Conflict with the Syrian Regime:** The

U.S. avoids entering into direct conflict with the Assad regime and prefers to leave Rojava's status to the broader Syrian political settlement process.

International Community: The autonomous administration in Rojava has only been recognized by the Parliament of Catalonia and has not received official support from other states (Wikipedia, 2024).

Nevertheless, the U.S. has expressed support for the democratic and inclusive structure of the autonomous administration in Rojava. The Rojava Social Contract offers a model of governance that includes Kurds, Arabs, Syriacs, and other ethnic groups. The U.S. regards this model as an example for Syria's future, but this support has not translated into official recognition.

3.2.3. The Planned Status for Rojava: Federation or State?

Rojava's status is one of the most controversial topics of the Syrian Civil War. The PYD declared the Democratic Federation of Northern Syria in 2016, but this federation has not been recognized by either the Syrian regime or the international community. The status envisaged by the U.S. for Rojava has been left ambiguous in official statements, but various sources and analyses indicate that the U.S. is warmer to a federation model.

Federation Model: The U.S. supports Rojava's remaining as an autonomous region within Syria. This model could

REWSENBÎR

preserve Syria's territorial integrity while providing Rojava with cultural, political, and administrative autonomy. U.S. officials have stated that Rojava's democratic governance model could be an example for other regions of Syria. In addition, countries such as the U.S. and France are known to support negotiations between Rojava and Damascus and to advocate that the Kurds secure their rights in Syria's new constitutional process.

From the U.S. perspective, the advantages of the federation model include:

• **Reducing Turkey's Reaction:** An autonomous region instead of an independent state could partially alleviate Turkey's security concerns.

• **Unity of Syria:** A federation could prevent Syria's fragmentation and support regional stability.

• **Inclusivity:** Rojava's multi-ethnic structure could be better represented under a federation model.

State Status: Although the attainment of independent state status by Rojava is seen as one of the PYD's long-term goals, the U.S. approaches this idea cautiously. An independent Rojava would be strongly rejected by Turkey, Iran, and the Syrian regime. Moreover, such a scenario could trigger a new wave of conflict in the region. For this reason, the U.S. focuses on an autonomous status for Rojava within Syria rather than supporting Rojava's independence.

Within this framework, it can be inferred from high-level meetings that U.S. and French support for federation status for Rojava has increased. While U.S. military and political support for Rojava may be read as encouraging a federation status, these claims remain speculative in the absence of official confirmation.

U.S. policy toward Rojava is an effort to strike a balance between strategic interests and regional equilibria. The partnership with the SDF in the fight against ISIS has led the U.S. to view Rojava as an ally, but this relationship has created tensions with Turkey. U.S. military and political support for Rojava has strengthened the region's autonomous structure, but the

U.S. has remained reluctant to grant an official status. While the federation model appears to be the preferred solution from the U.S. perspective, its feasibility depends on political processes in Syria and on the stances of regional actors.

Relations with HTS reflect the U.S.'s pragmatic approach in Syria. HTS's toppling of the Assad regime has produced a new political equation in Syria, but the U.S. has not officially recognized this group. Negotiations between Rojava and HTS may be a development indirectly supported by the U.S.; however, this process would need to take into account the reactions of Turkey and other actors.

4. The U.S. Stance on a Kurdish State

Because the geography of Kurdistan is divided among four key countries in the Middle East, the U.S. was prevented from developing a broad foreign policy and strategy regarding the Kurds (Gunter, 2011: 93). Relations with the countries to which the Kurds belonged were more important in U.S. foreign policy than the Kurds themselves. For this reason, Kurdish foreign policy often ended with betrayal and isolation.

This situation continued for many years, up until August 2, 1990, when Iraq's army entered Kuwait. With the 1991 Gulf War, America's relations with the Kurds underwent a compulsory change and developed especially in the military field.

It is evident from Turkish officials' hostile attitudes and statements toward the Kurds that Turkey is the biggest obstacle to the Kurds' right to self-determination. The answer to the following question reveals the seriousness and sincerity of America's Kurdish policy:

If America had to choose between NATO ally Turkey and the Kurds—an emerging actor and rising value in the Middle East—whose side would it take? Or would Turkey dare to attack the Kurds despite America?

5. Why Are the Kurds Cautious Toward the U.S.?

The U.S.'s current relations with the Kurds are built on strategic pragmatism. In both Iraq and Syria, the Kurds have been key allies of the U.S. in its objectives of fighting ISIS, controlling energy resources, and ensuring regional stability. However, the U.S.'s stance on a Kurdish state is ambiguous due to concerns about preserving relations with regional allies (especially Turkey). This breeds distrust of America among the Kurds.

According to Kurdish intellectuals, the U.S. has betrayed the Kurds eight times over the last 100 years (Schwarz, 2019):

1. After World War I, the Kurdish map drawn in the Treaty of Sèvres in 1920 was not supported in Lausanne; the British and the French did not take the Kurds into account when drawing the maps of Iraq and Syria. The U.S.'s decision not to recognize Lausanne was about the Armenian map.

2. When Saddam leaned toward the Soviets in the 1970s, Henry Kissinger decided once again—at the encouragement of Iran and Israel—to arm the Iraqi Kurds. But when the Shah of Iran and Saddam reached an agreement, the promises made to the Kurds were forgotten and the aid was cut off again. When asked about it, Kissinger replied: "Covert action should not be confused with missionary work."

3. In the 1980s, when Saddam attacked the Kurds with chemical weapons, the U.S. administration—supporting Iraq against Iran—did not want to impose sanctions.

4. In 1991, while the U.S. was bombing Iraq, the Bush administration did not support either the Shiites or the Kurds. The U.S. plan—just as Turkey and Saudi Arabia wanted—was to keep Iraq intact; it was the Iraqi army, not the people, who were expected to topple Saddam.

5. However, when the plight of the Iraqi Kurds appeared in the international media, they decided—with British efforts—to support northern Iraq. In the 1990s,

the Kurds were viewed with sympathy for being enemies of Saddam, but care was taken not to anger Turkey.

6. Before the 2003 Iraq War, while inviting Turkey to join the war, the U.S. was ready once again to betray the Kurds. The independence of the Iraqi Kurds after the war greatly angered Turkey. In 2007, the U.S. allowed Turkey to bomb northern Iraq extensively.

7. It did not support the 2017 Southern Kurdistan (KRG) Independence Referendum and approved the subsequent attacks by Hashd al-Shaabi.

8. President Trump's decision in 2019 to withdraw U.S. troops from Syria was perceived as a new betrayal by the Kurds.

In an environment of escalating conflict in the Middle East and rising anti-American rhetoric, the strategic importance of Kurdish actors may once again come to the fore. The fundamental question in this context is whether the U.S. approach toward the Kurds will evolve into a permanent and institutionalized partnership, or whether—just as in the past—it will remain within the framework of a temporary and instrumental strategic co-operation. Historically, the U.S. has often viewed the Kurds as a balancing factor against its regional rivals. However, when the geopolitical importance of the Kurds diminished, a distinct decline was observed in Washington's support, which left the Kurds defenseless against regional powers such as Iran and Turkey.

6.Conclusion

U.S. Kurdish policy has been shaped around objectives such as the fight against ISIS, energy security, and regional stability. In Iraqi Kurdistan, military, political, and economic relations with the KRG supported U.S. regional interests; however, the 2017 independence referendum showed that the U.S. prioritized Iraq's territorial integrity.

In Rojava, the partnership with the SDF achieved success against ISIS, but it has been constrained due to tensions with Turkey. The U.S. supports a federation model for Rojava but approaches an independent state with caution.

Although the idea of a Kurdish state does not appear in official U.S. policies, the autonomous statuses of the KRG and Rojava continue to support U.S. strategic interests. The future of the Kurds depends on the complex interactions among U.S. strategic interests, Turkey's security concerns, and the political processes in Iraq and Syria.

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REWSENBÎR

Conditions for Statehood from the Perspective of International Law and the Montevideo Convention

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Abstract

Statehood is a status defined under international law and requires the fulfillment of specific criteria. The 1933 Montevideo Convention established these criteria, which have been broadly accepted by the United Nations (UN).

A state signifies a community's attainment of sovereignty and the right to international recognition. The UN serves as a fundamental platform in this process, and certain conditions are required for states to gain legitimacy.

The Kurds, with an estimated population of around 50 million, are a people dispersed across Turkey, Iraq, Iran, and Syria, who have pursued statehood throughout the 20th century. However, this goal has remained unrealized due to internal divisions, external pressures, and a lack of international support.

Kurdistan, as a region where Kurds form the majority population, is at the center of debates concerning the extent to which it meets the established statehood criteria. Over the past 100 years, Kurds have paid a heavy price in their pursuit of an independent state. This article analyzes Kurdistan's potential for statehood in light of UN criteria, explores the importance of support from global powers, examines the historical struggle of the Kurdish people, and evaluates the strategic significance of an independent Kurdistan. It also addresses why such a state is essential for both the Kurds and the broader Middle East, and outlines the risks Kurds face in the absence of statehood.

Özet

Devlet olma, uluslararası hukukta tanımlı bir statü olup, belirli kriterlerin yerine getirilmesini gerektirir. 1933 Montevideo Sözleşmesi, bu kriterleri belirlemiş ve Birleşmiş Milletler (BM) tarafından genel kabul görmüştür.

Devlet, bir topluluğun egemenlik ve uluslararası tanınma hakkını elde etmesi anlamına gelir. BM, bu süreçte temel bir platformdur ve devletlerin meşruiyet kazanması için belirli şartlar aranır.

Kürtler, yaklaşık 50 milyonluk bir nüfusla, Türkiye, Irak, İran ve Suriye'ye yayılmış bir halk olarak, 20. yüzyıl boyunca devletleşme mücadelesi vermiştir. Ancak bu hedef, iç bölünmeler, dış baskılar ve uluslararası destek eksikliği nedeniyle gerçekleşmemiştir.

Kürdistan, Kürtlerin çoğunlukta yaşadığı bir bölge olarak, bu şartları ne ölçüde karşıladığıyla ilgili tartışmalara konu olmaktadır. Son 100 yılda Kürtler, devletleşme hedefi uğruna ağır bedeller ödemişlerdir.

Bu makale, Kürdistan'ın devletleşme potansiyelini BM kriterleri ışığında analiz ederek, süper güçlerin desteğinin önemini, Kürtlerin tarihsel mücadelesini, Kürdistan'ın devletleşmesinin stratejik önemini, Kürdistan'ın Kürtler ve Ortadoğu için neden elzem olduğunu ve devlet kurulmaması durumunda Kürtleri bekleyen tehlikeleri incelemektedir.

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REWSENBÎR

1. Introduction

Statehood is a status defined under international law, requiring the fulfillment of certain criteria. The 1933 Montevideo Convention set out these criteria, which have been generally accepted by the United Nations (UN).

A state means the attainment of sovereignty and the right to international recognition by a community. The UN serves as a fundamental platform in this process, and certain conditions are required for states to gain legitimacy. The Kurds, with a population of around 50 million spread across Turkey, Iraq, Iran, and Syria, have struggled for statehood throughout the 20th century. However, this goal has not been achieved due to internal divisions, external pressures, and lack of international support.

Kurdistan, as a region where Kurds form the majority, has been the subject of debate regarding the extent to which it meets these conditions. Over the last 100 years, Kurds have paid a heavy price in pursuit of the goal of statehood.

This article analyzes the potential of Kurdistan to become a state in light of UN criteria, examining the importance of superpower support, the historical struggle of the Kurds, the strategic significance of Kurdistan's statehood, why Kurdistan is essential for the Kurds and the Middle East, and the dangers awaiting the Kurds in the absence of state formation.

2. Conditions of Statehood: The Montevideo Convention and UN Criteria

In international law, four criteria outlined in the Montevideo Convention are generally taken as the basis for a political entity to be considered a state. An entity that fulfills all these conditions is legally regarded as a state. For instance, Article 1 of Montevideo explains that these qualities are mandatory. Article 4 of the UN Charter, meanwhile, highlights the definition of a "peace-loving state" and emphasizes these qualifications for membership. States seeking membership are expected to undertake the obligations of the Charter; however, the UN Charter does not explicitly provide a procedure for the declaration of a new state. Instead, in practice, the emergence of new states has depended both on compliance with the above definition and on the political acceptance of powerful states and the international community. For example, Article 3 of the 1933 Montevideo Convention states that recognition is not a requirement for an entity to be considered a "state": the definition itself constitutes the essential criteria of statehood. Therefore, while the legal definition of statehood is determined by the Montevideo criteria, additional dynamics such as de facto recognition and allied support shape the process in international politics. The 1933 Montevideo Convention identifies four essential conditions for the recognition of a community as a state (Montevideo Convention, Article 1, 1933):

1. Permanent Population: According to Montevideo, a state must have a fixed and permanent population. No minimum threshold is required in terms of population size, since even very small

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communities such as Monaco (pop. ~38,000) are considered states. (Andrea, 2014, p.3)

2. Defined Territory: A state must possess a clearly defined piece of territory over which it can claim sovereignty. The borders do not need to be fully settled; borders established through war or negotiations are also considered sufficient. For example, despite Israel's border disputes after World War II, it was nevertheless recognized as a state.

3. Government: A state must have an administration that maintains public order within its territory. The form of governance is not prescribed; it may be presidential, parliamentary, monarchical, etc. What matters is the existence of an institutionalized distribution of authority. For instance, under the Iraqi Constitution, the Kurdistan Regional Government is effectively able to enact and implement laws within its own territory and manage its security forces.

4. Capacity to Enter into Relations with Other States: A state must have the ability to establish diplomatic or economic relations with other states. In the modern era, it is sufficient to establish contacts with foreign states at the level of embassies. For example, the Kurdistan Region has established its own Ministry of Foreign Relations and opened representations in various countries.

When examining the issue of recognition of states in international law, it is observed that the first and most significant definition of recognition was made by the Institute of International Law at its Brussels meeting between 17–24 April 1936. At this meeting, the Institute defined the recognition of states as follows: "The recognition of a new state is a free act whereby one or several states acknowledge the existence of a politically organized community of people, independent from any other existing state within a certain territory, and capable of fulfilling the obligations arising from international law, and declare their intention to regard this new state as a member of the international community" (Şöhret, p.65).

As for UN practice, the UN decision-making bodies (the General Assembly and the Security Council) do not directly declare new states. However, a Security Council membership application is an important step toward the de facto recognition of statehood. According to Article 4 of the Charter, "Membership in the UN is open to peace-loving states which accept the obligations contained in the Charter." Thus, membership can be considered a method of being counted as a state within the UN. Moreover, with Resolution 1514, the UN General Assembly granted the right of self-determination to colonial peoples, thereby formally approving the path toward "creating new states."

In conclusion, while international law is based on the Montevideo criteria, political realities (the recognition process, balance of power) constitute other significant elements in bringing a state into existence.

3. Does Kurdistan Meet the Montevideo Criteria?

The demand for statehood exists across the four parts of Kurdistan, but since it is currently officially recognized as a federal region, we will evaluate whether the Kurdistan Region of Iraq (KRI) meets the conditions for statehood under the Montevideo Convention. From the perspective of Montevideo criteria, although Kurdistan does not meet them 100%, there are examples of similar ca-

ses that have been recognized as states.

3.1. Permanent Population:

The total population of Kurds is estimated to be between 40–50 million. Since we are focusing on Southern Kurdistan, we need to consider the population of this region. A general census was conducted in Iraq and the Kurdistan Region from 20–22 November 2024, for the first time in 37 years. According to the announcement on 24 February 2025, the population of the Kurdistan Region of Iraq was determined to be 6,503,000 (Rudaw, 2025). Countries with even smaller populations have become UN members. Therefore, it cannot be said that the Kurds fail to meet the population criterion for statehood.

3.2. Defined Territory:

The Iraqi Constitution officially defines the Kurdistan Region in the north of the country. However, under Article 140 of the Constitution, there are still

disputed areas. This article covers Kurdistani regions whose demographics were altered during Saddam Hussein's Baathist Arabization policies. According to this framework, the demographic situation in Kirkuk and other disputed areas (Diyala, Mosul, and Salahaddin) affected during Saddam Hussein's regime and after 2003 would first be normalized, followed by a census, and then a referendum would decide whether these areas would join the central government or the Kurdistan Region. According to the Constitution, all of this should have been completed by December 2007 (Independent Türkçe, 2019). The referendum has not been held due to interventions by Turkey and Iran.

Similarly, in cases such as Cyprus (south/north), Israel/Palestine, or the European Union, border disputes have not prevented statehood. Under its current status, Iraqi Kurdistan can operate within defined borders and has a voice in foreign affairs.

3.3. Government:

The Kurdistan Regional Government (KRG) operates in Iraqi Kurdistan. This local administration was recognized by the 2005 Iraqi Constitution and has the authority to pass laws for the region (including setting tariffs and taxes) and manage security forces (Peshmerga). The KRG effectively performs many governmental functions, largely fulfilling this criterion (Bradosti, Chapter 5, p.48).

3.4. Capacity to Enter into Relations with Other States:

The KRI conducts limited relations with actors such as the United States, primarily in oil exports. Rojava cooperated with the US during the Syrian Civil War. However, it does not have the full ability to conduct an independent foreign policy, showing that the fourth criterion is incomplete for Rojava (Allsopp & van Wilgenburg, p.45).

The KRG, however, has had its own Ministry of Foreign Relations since 2006 and shapes its foreign policy regarding Kurdistan. Despite Baghdad, it conducts independent oil export agreements and accepts representatives from foreign states. Some countries have even opened consulates in Erbil instead of Baghdad. Accordingly, the Kurdistan Region has significantly developed its capacity to establish foreign relations, fulfilling this criterion.

In light of this data, the Kurdistan Region of Iraq fulfills most of the Montevideo criteria in practice. Nevertheless, it does not hold state status, showing that Montevideo criteria alone are insufficient.

It is also important to mention Article 3 of the Montevideo Convention here. While the four conditions discussed above cover the sufficiency for statehood, the key point is recognition by other states and UN membership. Recognition by other states, especially neighboring ones, is a handicap for the Kurds, as their independence is opposed by neighbors.

In fact, Article 3 of the Montevideo Convention clarifies this issue, stating that "the existence of a state is not dependent on recognition by other states." Thus, theoretically, the Kurds have state status as long as they meet all the criteria. However, in the international system, the lack of de facto recognition and strong support prevents Kurdistan from functioning as an independent state. Currently, the Iraqi central government also considers Kurdistan part of Iraq. Consequently, although the Kurdistan Region has acquired organs that could legally be seen as a state, it is not fully recognized as a state internationally.

The International Court of Justice, on the other hand, has issued clear decisions in many cases, consistently supporting peoples advocating for the right to self-determination. It has been emphasized that the right to self-determination is legal, inherent, absolute, and inviolable (Ibid, Chapter 3).

4. The Dangers of Declaring Statehood Without the Support of Major Powers

When a new state is declared, the international context and the balance of great powers play a decisive role. If one or more global powers do not support the new entity, the independence initiative faces significant challenges. For example, before Kosovo declared independence in 2008, it received strong backing from the US and the EU, which enabled rapid recognition by many states. Iraqi Kurdistan, however, has not

REWSENBÎR

received such support. Studies comparing Kurdistan and Kosovo indicate: "The presence of a powerful ally directly affects the international status of a separatist region; support from major powers is critical for the recognition of a new state" (Agushi, p.29). In other words, even if the legitimacy of Kurdish steps toward independence is proven, the support or opposition of capitals like Washington, Moscow, Beijing, or Ankara will determine success.

• **Challenges of Recognition and Membership:** Lack of recognition is a major obstacle for UN and international organization membership. If any powerful state uses its veto in the UN Security Council, Kurdistan's membership could be blocked. Without membership, full legal personality in the international legal system cannot be achieved.

• **Security Risks:** Declaring independence may be seen as a threat to the security of neighboring countries. Without the protection of superpowers, Turkey, Iran, or the Iraqi central government could attempt to suppress the situation through military intervention, potentially sparking new conflicts.

• **Economic and Administrative Capacity:** Independence requires a sustainable economy and institutional capacity. International credit, investment,

and trade largely depend on the approval of global actors. Without external support, it is extremely difficult for the government to finance expenditures, security, and diplomatic needs.

In short, the declaration of an independent Kurdistan depends more on the judgment of the international system than on whether it meets the Montevideo criteria. Academic analyses consistently emphasize that the veto/approval powers of great powers—referred to as the "zero-fourth power"—cannot be ignored. Therefore, Kurdistan's declaration must either align with the interests of major powers or require decades of diplomatic effort. Lack of external support may trigger internal conflicts (Romano, p.130).

The Kurds have experienced the importance of external support firsthand in Mahabad. The Kurdish Republic of Mahabad in 1946 collapsed under Iranian forces when Soviet support was withdrawn. Today, US support for Başûr (Iraqi Kurdistan) and Rojava in the fight against ISIS demonstrates the importance of superpowers. However, this support is based on strategic interests and does not constitute official recognition.

4.1. U.S. Criteria for Recognizing States

In 1976, the United States outlined its criteria for recognition as follows (Şöhret, pp. 83–84):

1. The U.S., based on the principle that it is not obliged under international law to recognize every state and that recognition constitutes a reward to the new state,

2. Reserves the right of its authorities to require that traditionally accepted conditions for recognition are met,

3. Considers, among the relevant facts, whether the entity effectively controls a specific territory and population,

4. Requires that the organized government has the authority to administer the country, possesses the capacity to conduct external representation, and can fulfill international obligations, and

5. Takes into account the attitudes and behavior of other members of the international community when making decisions regarding the new entity.

According to the U.S. approach, international law does not obligate a state to recognize another political entity as a state. This decision depends on each state's assessment of whether the entity deserves statehood. In making this assessment, the United States traditionally considers concrete criteria, including effective control over a population within a defined territory, the presence of an organized government managing that area, the capacity to conduct foreign relations, and the ability to meet international obligations. Additionally, the potential for recognition by other members of the international community is also taken into account.

4.2. European Union Criteria for Recognizing States

The European Union established general principles for recognizing new states that emerged in the Soviet Union and Eastern Europe through the declaration

titled "Guiding Principles on the Recognition of New States in Eastern Europe and the Soviet Union" dated 16 December 1991 (Şöhret, pp. 82–83):

1. To respect the rules of the UN Charter, the Helsinki Final Act, and the Paris Charter, particularly regarding the rule of law, democracy, and human rights,

2. To accept guarantees recognized for ethnic groups and national minorities under the OSCE framework,

3. To respect borders and acknowledge that changes can only occur through peaceful means and mutual agreements,

4. To comply with all rules concerning disarmament, the prevention of nuclear weapons proliferation, and regional security,

5. To accept state succession and resolve disputes arising from regional issues through treaties and, if necessary, arbitration.

The recognition process conducted by the European Union essentially required that principles of the rule of law, democracy, and human rights, as adopted by the Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe (OSCE), be upheld by EU member states. This approach, since recognition fundamentally remains a discretionary act, has not posed any legal issues under international law until a new normative framework is established (Atay, p.158).

5. The Costs Paid by the Kurds on the Road to Statehood

The Kurds' desire for independence has persisted since the collapse of the Ottoman Empire. After World War I, the great powers dividing the Middle East appeared willing to grant Kurds the right to establish a state under the Treaty of Sèvres (1920), which envisioned independence for Kurdish regions in both the Caucasus and Anatolia. However,

when the Treaty of Lausanne was signed in 1923, this promise was shelved. Lausanne annulled provisions concerning Kurdish independence, dividing the region between the newly established Kingdoms of Turkey and Iraq. For example, in a 1921 Iraqi referendum, Southern Kurdistan was excluded from the boundaries of the newly formed Iraqi Kingdom. Consequently, the Kurds were deprived of the promised right to independence for over a century.

Between 1925 and 1938, uprisings and massacres in Northern Kurdistan—such as the Sheikh Said Rebellion, the Zilan Massacre, the Ağrı Rebellion, and the Dersim Massacre—left deep human and social scars. Different sources provide varying figures regarding the number of casualties, making exact totals difficult to determine. However, it is certain that each of these events resulted in tens of thousands of deaths and major humanitarian tragedies.

After 1970, numerous Kurdish movements fighting for freedom were similarly met with massacres and tragedies. In the 1980s, torture and inhumane treatment in Diyarbakır Prison left a lasting mark on the Kurdish collective memory. Furthermore, the armed struggle led by the PKK between 1984 and 1999 resulted in tens of thousands of civili-

an and military deaths on both sides. Thousands of villages were burned, and hundreds of thousands of people were forced to leave their homes.

In Iraq, when uprisings in the 1960s and the autonomy promises of 1970 failed, Saddam Hussein implemented harsh measures in the 1970s and 1980s. During the Anfal Campaign from April 1987 to January 1989, thousands of villages were destroyed, and tens of thousands of Kurds were erased from official records (Council on Foreign Relations, 2025). The apex of the war was the Halabja Massacre on 16 March 1988, when Saddam's regime killed at least 5,000 Kurdish civilians using chemical weapons. The total number of victims of the genocidal campaigns is estimated to exceed 180,000 (Human Rights Watch, p.10). These sufferings reflect the price paid by the Kurdish people in their struggle for statehood.

Additionally, the recent Yazidi genocide in Iraqi Kurdistan, referred to by the Kurds as the 73rd Ferman, cannot be ignored. This massacre carried out by ISIS was recognized as genocide by the European Parliament in February 2016. According to the latest data from the Yazidi Rescue Office, ISIS abducted 6,417 Yazidi Kurds in Shengal and surrounding areas in August 2014, of whom 3,548

REWSENBÎR

were women and 2,869 were men. As of 2019, following ISIS's defeat, 3,562 of the abducted individuals have been rescued, while approximately 2,600 remain missing (IHD, 2024).

In Syria, in the 1960s, 120,000 Kurdish citizens were stripped of citizenship, and serious rights violations continued for years. On 13 November 1960, a fire at the Şehrazat Cinema in the town of Amûdê killed 280 children, most of them Kurdish (ANHA, 2024). Similarly, the Qamishli massacre remains a tragic event in Kurdish collective memory. Although Rojava has gained relative autonomy in recent years, an official Kurdish state has yet to be established, and attacks and massacres against Kurds continue.

In Iran, the Mahabad Republic, established in 1946 with Soviet support, was short-lived; it was violently suppressed by the Pahlavi government in 1947, and its leaders were executed. During the Iranian Revolution, Kurds were initially promised autonomy, but these promises were revoked after Ayatollah Khomeini came to power. Military operations intensified in Kurdish regions from 1979 onward. In August 1979, Kurdish cities and villages were bombarded, resulting in numerous civilian casualties. In particular, hundreds of Kurds were killed in conflicts around Mahabad. After the 1979 revolution, Kurdish leaders continued to be executed (Gunter, p.75).

In short, over more than a century of struggle, the Kurds have paid a heavy price: massacres, exile, chemical attacks, and assimilation policies. This entire process has left deep marks on Kurdish society and collective memory.

6. The Importance of a Kurdish State for the Kurds and the Middle East

The establishment of Kurdistan is vital for the Kurds in terms of identity, culture, and security. A state can ensure the preservation of the Kurdish language, create a national market, and strengthen ties with the diaspora. The statehood of Kurdistan is essential for the following reasons:

6.1. For the Kurds:

If Kurdistan does not achieve statehood, the Kurdish people will continue to face risks of insecurity and rights viola-

> **If Kurdistan does not become a state, the Kurdish people will continue to live in four different countries facing security threats, massacres, and human rights violations.**

tions in the four countries where they currently live. Each neighboring state views Kurdish nationalism as a potential threat to its territorial integrity and may continue its suppressive actions.

• **Identity Protection:** A sovereign structure is necessary to guarantee language, culture, and rights.
• **Security:** Statehood provides protection from oppression and massacres.
• Economic Prosperity: Control over resources, such as the KRI's oil reserves, offers development opportunities (Chaliand, p.120).
• **Political Pressure:** Statehood will end the labeling of Kurdish movements as "terrorist," enabling the Kurdish nation to gain recognition in the international arena (McDowall, p.400).

6.2. For the Middle East:

A future Kurdish state could serve as a model in the region and act as a stabilizing factor against terrorist threats like ISIS. Democratic autonomous governance models can offer alternatives to authoritarian regimes and contribute to peace processes. Moreover, strategic resources, such as oil and water, could make Kurdistan a regional actor. This could provide a balancing element against the hegemony of Iran and Turkey.

• **Stability:** A Kurdish state could reduce conflicts.
• **Democratic Model:** Pluralistic structures in the KRI and Rojava provide an alternative to authoritarian regimes.
• **Geopolitical Balance:** Kurdistan could serve as a buffer zone between Iran, Turkey, and Arab countries (Özoğlu, p.150).

The longer the establishment of Kurdistan is delayed, the more insecure the Kurdish people will remain both domestically and regionally. Neighboring states may implement harsh measures under the guise of internal security, and rights violations against Kurdish settlements could continue. Politically, Kurds outside the region could face marginalization and weak status, while emerging power vacuums may be exploited by extremist groups.

Thus, the lack of statehood or official status could exacerbate security threats and human rights issues, posing serious concerns for both the Kurds and the international community. Without a state, especially for Kurds in Turkey and Iran, assimilation policies are likely to succeed. These dangers threaten the survival of the Kurdish people and make statehood an urgent necessity.

REWSENBÎR

7. Conclusion

When evaluated within the framework of the Montevideo Convention criteria and UN principles, the process of Kurdish statehood demonstrates significant achievement. However, geographical fragmentation, external interventions, and the inconsistent policies of superpowers complicate this process. Declaring statehood without the support of major powers carries military, diplomatic, and economic risks.

For over a century, the Kurds have endured massacres, displacement, and oppression in pursuit of statehood. The establishment of Kurdistan is essential for preserving Kurdish identity and ensuring stability in the Middle East; otherwise, threats such as massacres, assimilation, and forced migration will persist. In this context, the international community must play a fair mediatory role and recognize the legitimate rights of the Kurds. Achieving this goal is possible through the united will of the Kurdish people combined with international support.

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REWSENBÎR

Salih Muslim:

The era of nation-states has expired; we do not want a nation-state.

Interview : Fethi Kaya

Mr. Muslim, I would like to start with the governance system in Rojava. Rojava uses Democratic Confederalism as its system of governance. Could you briefly explain this system?

We can consider Democratic Confederalism as the organization of society. That is, every part of society—the youth, women, all individuals, workers, intellectuals—everyone must be organized. This organization must exist in every city and everywhere. In this system, society is never left unorganized. Confederalism is undoubtedly the unity of communes. In other words, it is a system we call Communalism. Society exists through its communes. Each segment of society—based on its work, expertise, or field—should have its own communes, and according to the commune system, every commune should have its representatives. At the top, there is the assembly, and beneath it are the administrative and coordination units. We call this system Communalism or Confederalism.

Democratic Confederalism is known as Mr. Öcalan's paradigm. How do you evaluate Mr. Öcalan's influence in building the political administration in Rojava?

Undoubtedly, this comes from Leader Apo's ideas, philosophy, and ideology. Mr. Öcalan, taking into account his experiences and readings on world systems such as Marxism and Capitalism, as well as the conditions the Kurds have endured, developed this system as a solution for society to play its political role. In this system, there are coordination units above, but the real decision-making power belongs to the people themselves. That is why it is a democ-

ratic system. In this system, the people govern themselves. This, without doubt, reflects Leader Apo's views. From an ideological and intellectual standpoint, we found this system suitable for our society, and we are striving to put it into practice.

What advantages and disadvantages does this system have for the Middle East, particularly for Syria? What kinds of challenges and obstacles might arise?

This system of Democratic Confederalism can work not only for Syria but for the entire world. It is particularly suitable for the Middle East, where there are conflicts, differing ideas, diverse nations, and religions. For all these different groups to organize themselves, for everyone to express their identity and cultural characteristics, organization is necessary. To sustain a common life in a country, religious groups must organize in their religious domain, and ethnic groups must organize nationally. For Syria, this system is a great advantage because Syria is a very diverse country, both in terms of religion and nationality. We can say the same for the entire Middle East. This system prevents wars and conflicts because through it, different peoples and religions come to understand and respect each other. They become friends and allies. The wars fought up to now have been wars of domination, wars of monopoly. These wars stem from nation-states. But the Communal system eliminates such wars; all pe-

oples, however many there may be, live together.

Can this paradigm of Democratic Confederalism serve as a model for the Middle East, which has historically been ruled by despotism and dictatorship?

The system we have established now, despite its shortcomings, is one that everyone can use to preserve and govern their own culture and interests. It has already become an example. For instance, today the Druze are saying "we also want autonomous administration," the Alevis are asking the same, and others are too. This is a new model, and when we established it, we actually intended to spread it throughout Syria. Rojava is a small example for Syria; it is a small example for the Middle East. Despite wars, conflicts, and hostili-

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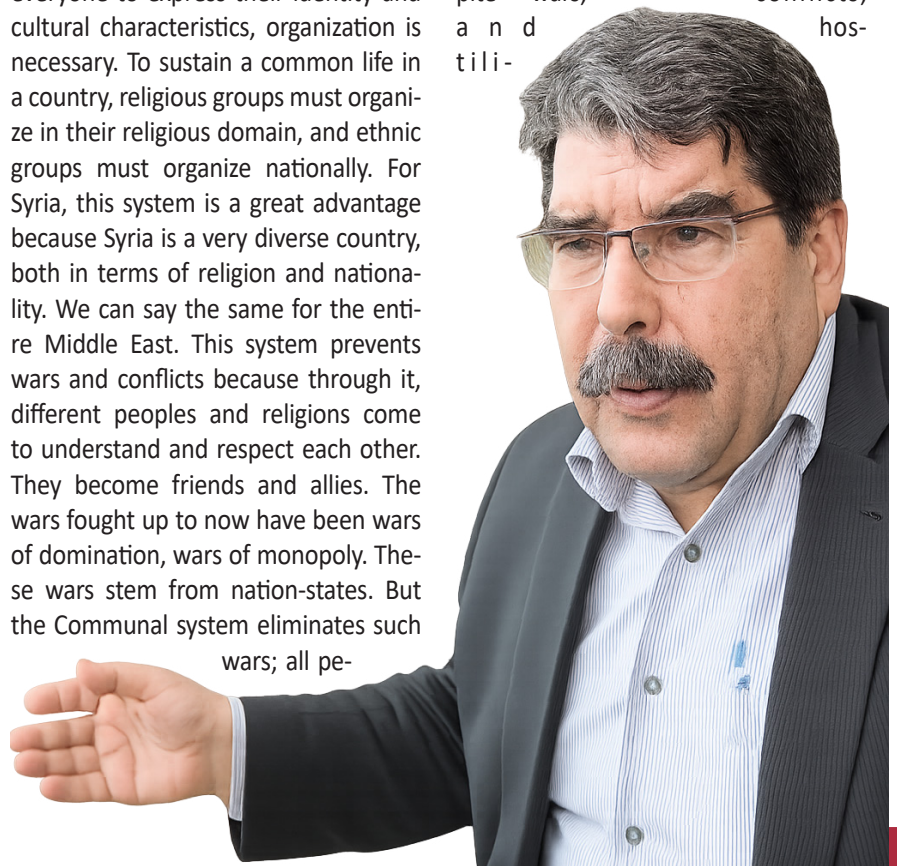
ties, this model has survived until today. If it continues, it will become a model for the entire Middle East.

Mr. Muslim, there is also this concern: Democratic Confederalism is fundamentally against the nation-state. Yet the Kurds are the largest people on earth without a state. Therefore, Kurds also want a nation-state. Does this system represent a step toward that demand, or does it disregard it?

When we look carefully, the oppression, massacres, atrocities, and the fact that Kurds have not been able to obtain their rights until now are all consequences of the nation-state. The Arabs, for their Arab nation-state, sought to annihilate the Kurds; the Turks, to build their own nation-state, sought to assimilate the Kurds; the Persians acted in the same way. In other words, the great calamities that have befallen the Kurds have come because of nation-states. It is because of nation-state systems that the Kurds have remained stateless until today. And what is the nation-state itself? It is a monopoly. Sovereignty belongs only to one segment. It is controlled by an elite group, and they run the system according to their own interests. For us to now stand up and impose the same oppression on others in the name of our own nation-state would not be right. Secondly, the nation-state has already failed. Europe, where the nation-state first appeared, now wants to rid itself of it. They fought wars for nation-states, and 300 million people were killed. Afterwards, they came to the conclusion that they should abandon the nation-state and established the European Union instead. The European Union can be called a form of Confederalism. So there is no need for us to repeat that mistake, no need for us to fight our neighbors for a nation-sta-

te. The war waged against us today is also because of the nation-state. They attack us saying, "You want to establish a nation-state." That is why we do not want sovereignty to be monopolized in the hands of a few; we want it to be in the hands of the people. We want the people to protect themselves. We want the people to preserve their own values and to be able to develop themselves freely. For us, freedom is more important than sovereignty.

The Colani Government is not free in its decisions, Turkey interferes.

Sir, I would also like to talk a bit about the current agenda and ongoing issues. How are Rojava's relations with the central government in Damascus being conducted? At what stage are they now?

Not only with the current government, but also with the previous Assad governments, we always sought to resolve our issues through dialogue. Even when they attacked us, we defended ourselves. We also developed dialogue with the administration of Ahmad al-Shara (Abu Muhammad al-Julani, leader of Hay'at Tahrir al-Sham), and we are still in dialogue. However, nothing concrete has yet been achieved; no serious progress has been made. According to the eight-point agreement signed between Mr. Mazlum Abdi and Colani, committees were supposed to be established. The agreement already stated that these committees should be prepared and begin their duties within a year. The biggest obstacle so far has been Turkey's interference. Turkey does not leave them alone. It constantly wants to impose its own policies on them. In other words, the central government is not free in its decisions. If they were free in their decisions, we could resolve

problems more effectively.

On March 10, 2025, an agreement was signed between General Mazlum Abdi and Ahmad al-Shara. According to this agreement, commissions were to be formed and the provisions of the agreement implemented. What is the situation now? Is the agreement still in force? Have the commissions been formed?

Yes, that agreement is still in force. There was already a one-year period allocated for the establishment of the commissions. As you know, there were eight main articles, and under these articles, there were clauses. For these clauses to be implemented, commissions needed to be formed. Some commissions have been established, while others have not yet been formed. So progress is being made gradually. As we said earlier, there are also obstacles. The Turkish state is creating obstacles.

The Kurdish language issue is our red line.
At what stage are the constitutional preparations? If a constitution is drafted, what will Rojava's status be?

Will Kurdish be recognized as an official and educational language? The Central Government, 2–3 days after the March 10, 2025 agreement, issued a statement declaring a temporary constitution. Their statement was the exact opposite of the agreement we had signed. Not only us, but all of Syria rejected this temporary constitution and voiced their dissatisfaction. Therefore, it either needs to be corrected or a new constitution must be drafted. In fact, one of the commissions to be established is the constitutional commission. The constitutional commission must draft provisions suitable for all components of Syria. But for us, as already stated in the Kurdish Conference, the Kurdish language issue and the characteristics of Kurdish identity are fundamental matters. We expect a permanent constitution to be drafted by the constitutional commission, and for all these matters to be included in it.

Ahmad al-Shara's international recognition is increasing day by day. He met with U.S. President Trump and with Macron. He is constantly traveling to Turkey. What is being asked of him? How is Turkey influencing Ahmad al-Shara?

That's correct. Since Colani came to power, he has established contacts with many foreign countries. He wants to prove himself to them, saying, "I will do whatever you ask." In other words, he did not come to power on his own; some brought him to power. And those "some" are major powers: the United States, France, the United Kingdom—international powers. He wants to please these powers. Each time they meet with him, they present their conditions. It is said that he has been given deadlines to fulfill these conditions. Some say six months, others four months. Within this time frame, he must solve Syria's problems. Most of these issues are domestic ones. He may be pleasing outsiders, but so far he has not pleased any segment of the Syrian people. He has not shared power with anyone. This undoubtedly undermines him. I believe Turkey also has a hand in all this, because Turkey does not want him to act independently. For example, that temporary constitution was prepared by Turkey. Erdoğan could not achieve what he wanted directly, so now he wants to implement it through him.

If Shara does not solve the problems, he will fall, and then a civil war will begin.

U.S. Secretary of State Rubio said, "The Shara government may collapse soon." Is that possible? If Shara's government collapses, what would be the alternative? Who might replace him?

Yes, we also heard the U.S. Secretary of State's statement, but it had a purpose. That message was directed at the U.S. Senate and Congress. He was asking for support, essentially saying, "If we don't get help, it will collapse." Indeed, if they

do not provide support, and if Colani himself does not implement some reforms, he will fall. If he falls, Syria's situation will only worsen. No one can foresee Syria's future. Who will replace him is not yet clear. But the risk of civil war is very high, because not all of the Syrian people accept him. The current structure has been put together under pressure from foreign powers, and they want to maintain it. Their hope is that he will solve the problems. If he fails, Syria's future will be bleak.

The United States has not fired a single bullet for us until today.

What are your relations with Donald Trump's government? What kind of assistance does the U.S. provide to Rojava?

There are claims that America may withdraw from Rojava—could this happen? Our relations with the Americans continue; this relationship was established under the framework of the International Coalition. It has continued since 2015. We signed the agreement to fight terrorism. This agreement is still in effect. Cooperation between the International Coalition and the SDF (Syrian Democratic Forces) still exists. From time to time, the U.S. reduces troop numbers, sometimes increases them. Until now, they have never said whether they will leave or stay. And we have never asked America to "stay and protect us." From 2015 until today, America has not fired a single bullet for us. But we want to cooperate in political and diplomatic fields. If they don't cooperate, that's their choice; if they do, it's not for us, it's for their own interests. These are mutual interests. As long as they are here, we will cooperate with America.

How does Rojava's international policy work? Which country provides the most

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political support? In the Middle East, Israel is known as an important actor. What are your relations with Israel?

We don't have extensive diplomacy with states. Yes, there are visitors coming and going. But our relations are mostly with NGOs. All our diplomatic efforts in Europe and other countries are conducted this way. Still, we do see that some states send their representatives. Americans, British, French, and others sometimes visit us. However, no official relations have been established so far. But we always want dialogue. Whoever extends a hand to us, we will hold it. With Israel, we have had no contact until now. Only once did our colleague Ilham (Ahmed) have a phone call with them. Apart from that, there has been no relationship.

Rojava is a red line for Öcalan.

After talks with Mr. Abdullah Öcalan began, meaning during the process in Turkey, did Turkey's attacks on Rojava decrease, or do they continue? If the PKK lays down arms, what effect would this have on Rojava? Would Turkey's excuse end?

Since that process began, Turkey's attacks decreased somewhat—they are not like before. But the militias dependent on Turkey remain on alert. If there were a ceasefire or peace between the PKK and the Turkish regime, it could also benefit us. Because the Turkish state uses the PKK as a pretext to attack us. If the PKK lays down arms or dissolves itself, then they would have no excuse

to attack us. We hope that peace in the North (in Turkey) will have a positive impact on us.

In the talks with Mr. Öcalan, is the issue of Rojava also being discussed? Will the decisions taken include Rojava?

Yes, the issue of Rojava is already an important matter, both for this process and for other issues. We hope that Turkey does not intervene in Syria. Turkey is an important neighbor for us. We want to be good neighbors. I believe we are important for them as well. We always want good relations with Turkey. But Turkey must abandon its Ottomanist ideas. Mr. Öcalan is the leader of the entire Kurdish people. Rojava is also important for him. During the 2014–2015 attacks, Mr. Öcalan said, "Rojava is a red line for me." I believe it is still a red line. If Turkey attempts to intervene in Rojava, it will be harmful both for itself and for this process.

I want to ask about Afrin. Is there any development regarding the situation in Afrin? What initiatives are you pursuing for its liberation?

Afrin is our wound. Both the Turkish military and militias are present in Afrin, Serêkanî (Ras al-Ayn), and Girê Spî (Tel Abyad). A committee needs to be formed so that people can return to their homes. The Damascus government already accepts this, saying, "They should return to their homes." For this purpose, a commission was established in Aleppo. Negotiations are ongoing. However, Turkish-backed militias are not allowing people to return. In the coming period, we hope both the Turkish military and their militias will withdraw. We cannot tell people "go back to your homes" without guaranteeing

their safety. Unfortunately, some who returned were tortured; they were arrested, killed, or oppressed. Without guarantees, we do not want the people of Afrin to return. Meanwhile, the Damascus government keeps stalling and is not taking concrete steps.

If the attacks against us stop, we can serve our people more.

them is Kurdish. There are also some departments that provide education in Arabic. Relations are good as well. Many courses are being taught online by our Kurdish professors from the United Kingdom and the United States. So, the state of education is good. In addition, in schools up to high school, the language of education is Kurdish. We hope to achieve even better in the coming period.

as diaspora Kurds, do for Rojava?

Thanks to the resistance in Rojava, Kurds are now recognized worldwide. The whole world has come to understand who the Kurds are. Now every Kurd can proudly say, "I am a Kurd." The struggle we have carried out was not only for ourselves but also for the values of humanity. The whole world knows this very well. We want all Kurds to stand by

Sir, we have focused mostly on the political situation. But I am also curious about the social, economic, and educational situation. Could you briefly talk about education, the economy, and social life in Rojava?

We have not yet emerged from a state of war. Everything we have built was established under war conditions. All of our infrastructure, all of our institutions, which we built with tears, have been bombed 2–3 times by the Turkish state. The Turkish state completely destroyed our infrastructure 2–3 times with its attacks. Therefore, the economic situation is really very difficult. The people are also suffering greatly.
On the issue of education: As you know, we have three universities, and the language of instruction in all of

Regarding social and community life: How can social life flourish when a person is living under wartime conditions? Alongside that, there are other problems as well. Yet our people have achieved sacred things with honor and dignity. They were subjected to so many attacks to force them to leave their homes and homeland, but our people did not abandon their villages or houses. They remained attached to their land. Still, they endured enormous hardships, and these hardships continue. We hope that once the attacks against us end, we will be able to serve our people even more.

Finally, I want to ask about the Kurdish diaspora. How are your relations with the diaspora? What can we,

Rojava and be proud of it. Across Europe and in the diaspora, we have offices and representations. We have many activities. Our Kurds in the diaspora can connect with them. They should visit one another, cooperate, and get to know each other. If they unite their strength, their influence on the states where they live will also grow. What we are doing in Rojava is a source of pride for every Kurd.

Mr. Muslim, thank you very much for sincerely answering our questions and for giving us your time.

Thank you too. We are also very pleased. I wish Rewşenbîr magazine success.

Is History is repeating Itself?

A Peace Process, or a Deception?

News : Fethi Kaya

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Turkey is witnessing a new peace process, one that hopes to end the conflict between the PKK and the government, a conflict that has lasted over 40 years. The PKK's decision to disband and disarm in May 2025 is seen as a historic turning point. However, the process has been filled with questions, hesitations, and criticism since its beginning

A significant portion of the Kurdish people view this process as a "deception project" and approach it with suspicion due to past experiences. On the Turkish side, despite the PKK having destroyed their weapons, the concern of "were all the weapons destroyed?" persists.

The Background and Start of the Process

The peace process began with a surprising move. On October 22, 2024, MHP Chairman Devlet Bahçeli made a call during his party's parliamentary group meeting. Bahçeli suggested that the isolation of PKK leader Abdullah Öcalan be lifted and that Öcalan should come to parliament to declare the PKK dissolved. This call was evaluated as part of the government's "Terror-Free Turkey Vision" project. Although some circles claimed that Turkey was forced to take this step at the request of the U.S. and the U.K., official sources deny these claims. Öcalan's nephew, Ömer Öcalan's visit to İmralı on October 23, 2024, can be accepted as the de facto start of the process.

Journalist and writer Fehim Işık, in a statement to Rewşenbîr Magazine, said he was not surprised by Devlet Bahçeli's move, stating, "It's very natural that the two names who led the conflict between Turks and Kurds in this war also lead the peace period in the same way. That's

When we Look at the history of the Kurdish issue in Turkey, we encounter some symbolic phrases similar to Bahçeli's call:

- In 1991, then-Prime Minister Süleyman Demirel: "We recognize the Kurdish reality."
- In 1999, then-Deputy Prime Minister Mesut Yılmaz: "The road to the European Union passes through Diyarbakır."
- In 2006, DYP Chairman Mehmet Ağar: "Lay down your arms in the mountains, do politics in the plains."

Each of these sentences carried a very important message when evaluated in the conjuncture of its time. However, the latest call coming from the leader of the institutional party of Turkish nationalists, a person associated with the deep state, despite being a historically significant initiative, is met with caution by the Kurds.

why I'm not surprised by Devlet Bahçeli's presence. Without a doubt, both Kurds and Turks will look out for their own interests in this process. However, it seems the interests of both sides lie more in living together."

Former HDP Member of Parliament and politician İmam Taşçıer emphasized the importance of the Constitution, commenting on Bahçeli's call as follows: "Those who are fighting must come together and make a deal. This is why it's very important that this step came from Bahçeli. Because up until now, they wanted to destroy the Kurds. We don't have faith in Bahçeli, we have faith in the laws changing. We trust the constitution."

In a statement to Rewşenbîr Magazine, journalist Günay Aslan argued that Bahçeli's move was not for the Kurds but for the benefit of the Turks. Aslan explained Bahçeli's role as follows: "It would be a great act of carelessness for the Kurds to expect a positive step from Bahçeli. Bahçeli took this step not for the Kurds, but for the interests of the Turks. In the new era, significant opportunities lie ahead for Turkey. The new Turkey, which is racist and Islamist, wants to strengthen its influence in the region, unlike the Kemalist Turkey. A war or tension with the Kurds could risk these opportunities. Under the policy of 'Religious Brother-

hood,' 'Thousand-Year Brotherhood,' or the 'Turk-Kurd-Arab Alliance,' they want to continue their usual tricks, to make the Kurds take the fall . "Alavere dalavere Kürt Memet nöbete" policy continues.

İmralı Visits and Political Meetings

A concrete step was taken the day after

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Fehmi Işık   **Gunay Aslan**   **Imam Taşçıer**

Bahçeli's call. On October 23, 2024, Abdullah Öcalan's family visited him in İmralı after a four-year hiatus. The peace process officially began after this visit. Then, on December 28, 2024, DEM Party members of parliament Pervin Buldan and Sırrı Süreyya Önder met with Öcalan. On February 27, 2025, Öcalan issued a call for "Democratic Society and Peace," instructing the PKK to disarm and disband. The process gained momentum after the İmralı delegation met with President Recep Tayyip Erdoğan on April 10.

The Government Rejects the Role of International Powers

In the public eye, it is claimed that international diplomacy is behind the scenes of this process. It is especially said that the U.S. and the U.K. are forcing Turkey to return to the peace process to ensure stability in the Middle East and to end Turkey's operations in Rojava. However, the government side has explicitly denied these claims. AK Party officials stated that the process is moving forward with internal dynamics and the goal of social peace.

Fehim Işık highlights the role of the U.S. as follows: "The peace process started after Israel's attacks on Gaza. This situation revealed the fear within the state.

This was the biggest reason for Devlet Bahçeli's stance, and he acted as the spokesperson for the state's owners. Yes, there was American pressure as well. The U.S. had been making efforts for a long time for the Kurds and Turks to reach an agreement. This was also evident from the relationship with Rojava."

Former HDP member of parliament İmam Taşçıer, on the other hand, sees the process more as a decision of internal dynamics than the role of international diplomacy. Stating that Turkey's economy and legal system can no longer withstand this war, Taşçıer said, "The role of the U.S. or the U.K. in this process has not been shared with the public. However, more than the role of international diplomacy, Turkey's economy and law can no longer cope with the Kurdish issue. The Kurds have been fighting for freedom for 150 years, and their demands are being violently suppressed. Now they too have understood that this problem cannot be solved with weapons."

Günay Aslan draws attention to the influence of international diplomacy through developments in the Middle East: "Officials have stated the reason for the start of the process many times. After Hamas attacked Israel on October 7, 2023, the war spread in waves across the Middle

East. Turkey's concern is that the Kurds will form an alliance with Israel, which is a rival in the Middle East. In my opinion, the U.S., along with its allies, wants to fulfill some of the Kurds' demands. Stability in the Middle East is not possible unless the Kurds are satisfied. Turkey also sees that the Kurds might get out of control and seek their own solution, and they took this step to preempt them."

The PKK's 12th Congress and Dissolution Decision

The PKK held its 12th Congress on May 5-7, 2025, and shared the results with the public on May 12. The statement announced that, at the request of their leader Öcalan, the PKK had decided to disband and disarm, stating, "The Kurdish issue will be resolved through democratic means."

Fehim Işık commented on the matter as follows: "Yes, the two main actors are openly stating their positions. However, the dominant actor, the government and its leader Erdoğan, is still acting with clear indecisiveness. In my opinion, he can't see his own future after this process and is seeking certain guarantees. From the Kurdish perspective, the new line for this period is strategic. Yes, they will abandon armed struggle, but they won't le-

ave themselves defenseless. We will see more clearly how this will happen in the coming days."

A Historic Day: The PKK Destroys Its Weapons

July 11, 2025, has taken its place in the history books as a very significant day for Kurdish political history. The PKK movement, founded on November 27, 1978, announced on this date that it was ending its armed struggle. Symbolically, a group of 30 guerrillas destroyed their weapons in a ceremony held in Sulaymaniyah.

KCK Executive Council Co-Chair Besê Hozat stated at the ceremony: "From now on, our struggle for freedom, democracy, and socialism will continue on the basis of legal methods and democratic politics. To achieve this goal, we are destroying our weapons today, in your presence, with our free will."

Günay Aslan commented on this decision as follows: "The PKK destroying its weapons has many meanings. First, the PKK has ended the war and does not want to fight again. Second, the PKK knows the state is not sincere, but it still wants to encourage a political solution. It's been 9-10 months since this process began, and very important steps have been taken, but the state side is still taking its time."

İmam Taşçıer said, "Disarming does not mean the end of the PKK. The PKK is a reality and has a great political power. As

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Video Message from Abdullah Öcalan from İmralı Prison

On June 19th, the Kurdish public was excited by a message from İmralı. For the first time since Öcalan's arrest, the public heard his voice and saw his image. Öcalan's message was disseminated by ANF.

Öcalan stated in his call, "The PKK has abandoned the goal of establishing a nation-state, and with this, it has also abandoned the strategy of war. In other words, it has brought an end to its own existence."

Abdullah Öcalan's new call was as follows:

"Dear Comrades,

Our movement, based on communalist comradeship, regarding its current situation and existing problems, and the ways to solve these problems, even if repetitive, I will give you creative answers with a comprehensive and concrete letter, and I see this as a moral duty.

On February 27, 2025, I made a call for Peace and a Democratic Society, and I still uphold this call. In the 12th Congress on the Dissolution of the PKK, you responded extensively and positively, and I consider your stance a historical response.

The current situation should be seen as a historical and valuable outcome. Meanwhile, the efforts of comrades who have acted as a bridge are equally valuable and precious."

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Öcalan also said, from today on, its struggle will be carried out through democratic means."

Fehim Işık added that it is now the government's turn: "Constitutional change is essential for a lasting solution. Democratic steps should be taken, starting with education in the Kurdish language and the definition of citizenship, and the foundation of equality must be solidified."

Furthermore, Erdoğan had stated, "From now on, the AK Party, the MHP, and the DEM Party will walk together." What does this statement mean? Journalist Günay Aslan commented on this statement as follows:

"We know that PKK leader Öcalan wants to support the paradigm of Erdoğan and Bahçeli, but we don't know the content of this paradigm. We also don't know the content of the meetings, but we know there is a dialogue between Bahçeli, Erdoğan, and Öcalan, at least through a delegation to İmralı. In addition to the state's meetings at İmralı, there is also this kind of traffic. It's not clear if Erdoğan's words, 'We will rise and walk together with the AKP-MHP-DEM Party,' is a sign

of an agreement with Öcalan or if it aims to create distrust toward the DEM Party within the opposition. However, both possibilities could be true."

Parliamentary Process and Constitutional Amendment

Following the destruction of arms, Erdoğan indicated that a commission would be established in Parliament. Legal arrangements will be made under the roof of the Parliament. It is not yet clear how the commission's members will be determined or what its role and duties will be. Moreover, under Turkey's current conditions, the creation of a new democratic constitution does not seem very likely.

On the constitutional issue, Journalist Günay Aslan claims the likelihood of producing a democratic text is low: "Erdoğan needs a new Constitution to continue and entrench the 'one-man presidential system' regime. They want this constitution to be a Turkist and Islamist constitution instead of the secular Kemalist constitution. In the new century, Turkey is pursuing a national strategy based on a Turkish-Islamic ideology. It views the Kurds as part of this regime within Islam and assigns them a religious mission. There-

fore, there is no chance this new constitution will be democratic."

Taşçıer draws attention to two articles of the Constitution, saying that Articles 42 and 66 must be changed immediately: "The current Constitution is entirely against the Kurds. It contains denial of the Kurds' rights, identity, culture, and language, and is founded on the basis of assimilation. Therefore, the current Constitution must be completely changed. A comprehensive overhaul will take time, but Articles 42 and 66 should be changed swiftly. These two articles directly pose an obstacle to the Kurds' language, identity, and culture. By changing these two articles, Kurds can live their identity and the way can be opened for education in the mother tongue."

The Kurds expect the process to be conducted in an official manner. Journalist Fehim Işık states that this process cannot be carried out solely between the state and the PKK: "They may lead this process, but Parliament must take responsibility as well. Additionally, society must have a role. If these don't happen, the process will not progress."

Politician İmam Taşçıer also emphasizes

the importance of the commission: "A commission should be formed under the roof of Parliament. This commission should consist of at least 40 people and should talk with wise individuals, non-governmental organizations, Kurdistani parties, and people who strive to solve the Kurdish issue, gathering their ideas. In this way, the foundation of the project

education in the mother tongue — are not discussed on this platform and a political solution found, then how will a resolution be achieved?"

Release of Prisoners and Cessation of Operations

At this point, the first step should be for the Turkish State to halt its operations

ken to establish trust. Işık stresses that political prisoners — especially ill detainees — should be released over time, and he also draws attention to attacks targeting Kurds: "Additionally, attacks against Kurdish fighters must also be halted. If operations continue, the process can not continue anyway. Clearly, some forces within the state, the current profi-

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Statements from the Government and State

Following the PKK's destruction of its weapons, all eyes turned to the State and Government; it was now the government's turn to take action. The first statement came from Devlet Bahçeli.

MHP Chairman Devlet Bahçeli stated after the PKK's weapons destruction ceremony that PKK leader Abdullah Öcalan had kept his word and stood by his commitments. Bahçeli said, "Indeed, extraordinary days are being experienced for both our Turkey and our region."

On the same day, President and AK Party Chairman Erdoğan shared a message on his X account regarding the PKK's weapons destruction ceremony. Erdoğan said, "I wish this important step taken to-

day to be auspicious. May Allah grant us to reach our goals on this path we walk for the security of our country, the peace of our nation, and the establishment of a lasting peace in our region."

The next day, Erdoğan also addressed the issue of the PKK laying down its arms at the AK Party's 32nd Consultation and Evaluation Camp in Kızılcahamam, Ankara, saying: "Yesterday, the organization fulfilled its decision and especially laid down its arms with a ceremony. The 47-year scourge of terror, hopefully, entered

the process of ending as of yesterday. Turkey began to close a long, painful chapter yesterday. Today, let's not forget, is a new day. Today, a new page has been opened in history. Today, the doors of a great Turkey, a strong Turkey, the Century of Turkey, have been opened wide." Erdoğan also stated that a commission would be established in the Parliament, adding, "From today onwards, AK Party, MHP, and DEM will walk together."

Support also came from the main opposition. CHP Chairman Özgür Özel called the weapons burning ceremony "satisfying" and added: "Complete peace is possible with the implementation of justice and democracy. The process should be carried out with fast and determined steps in the Parliament."
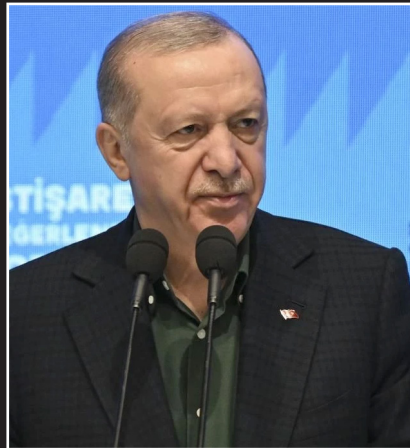
broadens."

Journalist Günay Aslan, however, views the formation of the commission as a mere formality: "It will be established at the initiative of the Parliament Speaker and its scope of work will be limited to the disarmament process. In other words, the commission will not look at the Kurdish issue from a political perspective. If Parliament does not address the political aspect and if the Kurds' national-democratic demands — especially

against the PKK and in Rojava, and then to begin work on constitutional amendments.

It is also necessary to immediately release those imprisoned in PKK-related cases and other political prisoners. A few months ago, a change in the penal code led to some prisoners being released, but a comprehensive amnesty has not occurred as expected.

Fehim Işık says certain steps must be ta-

teers and factions loyal to Erdoğan, want to strengthen their hand, and to that end they are sustaining their provocations. This is a big problem. If it isn't resolved, there will be no process left."

The Situation of Rojava

One of the uncertain issues is the situation of Rojava (northern Syria). What role will Rojava play in this process? The Turkish government regards the YPG as a branch of the PKK and says that the YPG must also lay down arms and join

the ranks of the Syrian army. The Kurds, however, see the Rojava issue as a "red line," viewing any intervention in Rojava as an obstacle in front of the peace process.

Fehim Işık notes that Rojava has already benefited from the process and continues: "Undoubtedly, if this process advances, it will affect Rojava as well — but that doesn't mean Rojava will be harmed. We can say that Rojava has already benefited from this process. The Turkish state's attacks on Rojava have stopped. There is a de facto mutual ceasefire. If Kurds act together and in unison, no one can stand in the way of Rojava's status. Rojava's hand is very strong."

İmam Taşçıer does not see the fate of Rojava and the North as separate: "We cannot consider the Rojava and Northern issues separately. Events in Rojava directly affect the North. The PKK's decision to destroy its weapons will also positively affect Rojava."

Journalist Günay Aslan, however, views Rojava's situation with concern and voices his doubts: "Rojava is, now as it was during the 2012–2015 solution process, the most important issue. Back then, Turkey was forcing the Kurds to negotiate with the FSA (Free Syrian Army), but

that process failed. Now they are pushing the Kurds to talk with HTŞ (Hay'at Tahrir al-Sham) and, in their words, 'to dissolve into the Syrian army,' but this is unacceptable. Turkey does not want an autonomous administration or a local defense force in Rojava; it wants them dismantled. Therefore, this process could also fail."

Kurds' Lack of Confidence in the Process

Throughout history, due to the experiences the Kurds have endured, the Kurds also view this process with suspicion and lack confidence in it. During Turkey's War of Independence, Kurds were promised a federation, but this promise was later forgotten and a nation-state was established.

So, with this process, are the Kurds going to be deceived once again? When we look at the political history of the Kurds, we frequently encounter political maneuvers and deceptions. Such ploys have happened to the Kurds time and again. For example, Dr. Ghassemlou (Qasimlo) was assassinated at the negotiating table. Because of experiences like this, Kurds approach the process with

doubt and worry, and have no trust in the state side.

Journalist Günay Aslan, while particularly highlighting this point, also notes that the Kurds are no longer the Kurds of the past. Aslan voices his concerns as follows: "It could be a new trick, and indeed it already looks that way. But the Kurds' memory is not like a fish's; they have been fighting this state for at least 50 years. Now they are experienced. That's why I believe and hope that this time the Kurds will not be deceived. At the same time, I believe and hope that they will act selflessly and determinedly until the end for an honorable, lasting, and just peace. Indeed, now it is the state's turn, and the outcome will depend on its attitude."

Fehim Işık also draws attention to policies of deception, noting that the state has protected all its own interests and has been duplicitous. Işık continues: "But the Kurds are also no longer the Kurds of yesterday. Now they are strong, they are influential, and they can play their roles on the international stage. This is a great achievement for the Kurds, and the Kurds must have faith in these achievements."

National Solidarity, Brotherhood, and Democracy Commission

It was decided to establish a commission within the Turkish Grand National Assembly (TBMM) to conduct the peace process. On August 5, 2025, the TBMM Presidency announced the commission's name as the 'National Solidarity, Brotherhood, and Democracy Commission.' The commission was planned to consist of 51 members; however, after the İYİ Party refused to provide members, the number of members decreased to 48.

Party	Count	Members
Ak Parti	21	Abdulhamit Gül, Mustafa Şen, Kürşad Zorlu, Hüseyin Yayman, Cüneyt Yüksel, Sunay Karamık, Selami Altınok, Kemal Çelik, Mehmet Sait Yaz, Mahmut Atilla Kaya, Şengül Karslı, Mehmet Şahin, Ayşe Böhürler, Radiye Sezer Katırcıoğlu, Tahir Akyürek, Ali Kıratlı, Cevahir Asuman Yazmacı, Gökhan Diktaş, Burhan Kayatürk, Abdurrahman Babacan, Ersan Aksu
CHP	10	Murat Emir, Okan Konuralp, Nurhayat Altaca Kayışoğlu, Sezgin Tanrıkulu, Türkan Elçi, Turan Taşkın Özer, Oğuz Kaan Salıcı, Murat Bakan, Gökçe Gökçen, Mehmet Salih Uzun
DEM Parti	5	Gülistan Kılıç Koçyiğit, Meral Danış Beştaş, Saruhan Oluç, Cengiz Çiçek, Celal Fırat
MHP	4	Feti Yıldız, Levent Bülbül, Halil Öztürk, Yücel Bulut
Yeni Yol Partisi	3	Bülent Kaya, Emin Ekmen, Mustafa Bilici
YRP	1	Doğan Bekin
HÜDA PAR	1	Zekeriya Yapıcıoğlu
TİP	1	Ahmet Şık
EMEP	1	İskender Bayhan
DSP	1	Önder Aksakal
DP	1	Haydar Altıntaş

Li gor ropora Komîsyona Lêkolîna Binpêkirina Mafê Jiyanê ku di bin Komîsyona Mafên Mîrovan ya TBMMê de cih digre, bîlançoya şerê PKK û Devleta Tirkiyeyê wiya ye:

1984 - 2012	Hêzên Ewlehîyê	Sivîl	Gerîla	Tevahî mirî	Gundê şewitandî	Koçberî	Girtî
Tevahî	7,918	5,557	22,101	35,576	4,000	380,000 - 1,000,000	119,000

Koma Alozîyê, ku navenda wê li Belçîkayê ye jî li ser vê şerê raporek amede kiribû. (Di raporê de, hejmara mirêyên li derveye sînor cih negirtîyê)

2013 - 2025	Hêzên ewlehîyê û Xebatkarên Dewletê	Sivîl	Gerîla	Tevahî
Tevahî	1,501	875	4,851	7,227
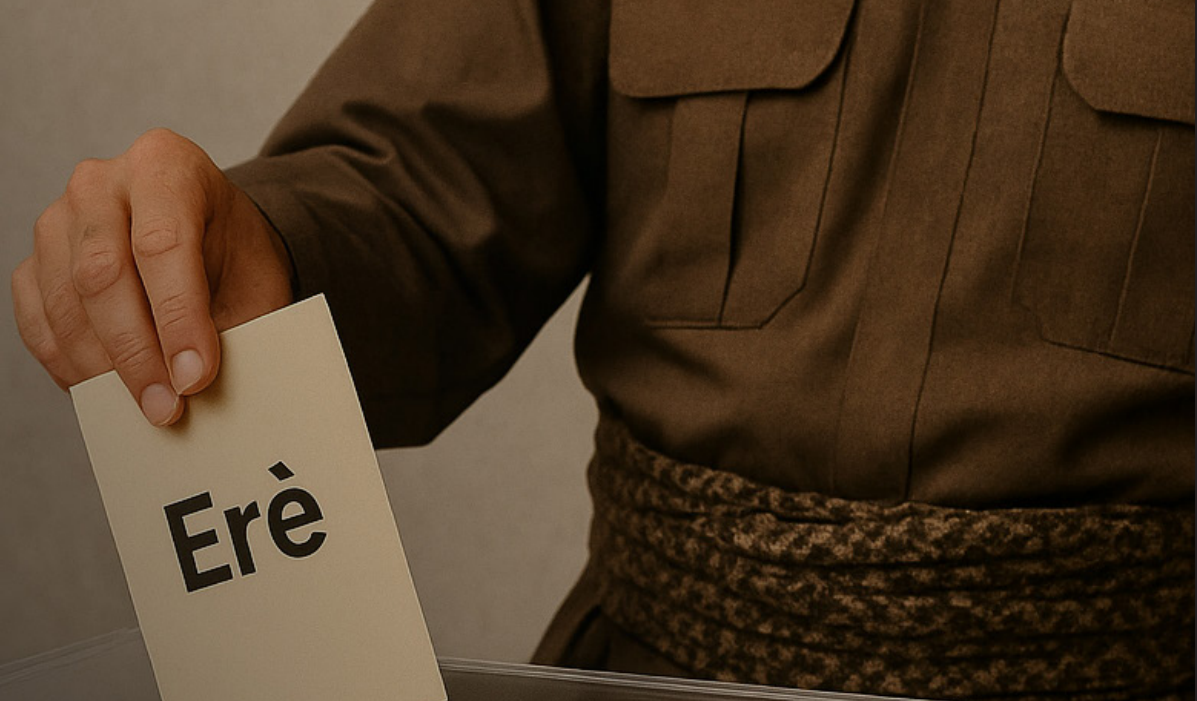
The Kurdistan Referendum is a passport to statehood!

The people of the South Kurdistan put the document of statehood in their pockets with the Referendum...

News : M. Emin Demir

Nearly 8 years have passed since the Kurdistan Region referendum, but discussions about its benefits and harms continue. Many people, including some Kurds, say that the conditions at that time were not suitable for the referendum, but on the other hand, many people say that the "Kurdistan Region Independence Referendum" was held at the most appropriate and best time. Because, in the war against ISIS, the Peshmerga played a very important role, and this created great respect and honor for the Kurdistan Region throughout the world. Also, Iraq was very weak and had no force that could stand against and fight the Peshmerga. Therefore, the most appropriate time was when 95% of the land of Southern Kurdistan was under the control of the Peshmerga.

The Kurds showed their will with great support for the independence of Kurdistan. However, due to regional and international conditions and the strong opposition of Iraq, Iran, and Turkey, the independence process has not yet reached a conclusion. Under suitable conditions, Southern Kurdistan can use the results of the Independence Referendum, which it holds like a title deed. In this article, we will talk about the Kurdistan Region Referendum and its gains and harms with Professor Kaiwan Azad Enwer from the University

of Sulaimani and the former Kurdistan Democratic Party (KDP) Member of the Iraqi Parliament, Beyar Doskî. Why did the Kurds of Southern Kurdistan decide to hold an independence referendum, at a time when conditions were more suitable after the overthrow of Saddam Hussein's regime in 2003, but they did not declare their independence?

Prof. Dr. Kaiwan Azad Enwer says that the Kurdistan Region made and implemented the referendum decision as a legal and constitutional right. Enwer said: "Because Iraq does not truly believe in human rights, Kurdistan decided to hold a referendum." Politician Bayer Doskî draws attention to the timing of the referendum and claims that at that time, international public opinion was not yet ready: "The international and regional situation was not suitable for declaring independence."
One of the greatest benefits of the Kurdistan Independence Referendum was that the people of Southern Kurdistan proved with their will that they demand independence, and despite the disputed areas, the results of the referendum became a title deed in the hands of the Kurds.

Kaiwan Azad Enwer stated about the gains of the referendum: "The biggest gain was that the whole world knew that when there are good relations and suitable conditions, the Kurds will declare their independence." Beyar Doskî, in this regard, draws attention to the disunity of the Kurds and expressed his opinion as follows: "The Kurds were not united. A Kurdish force united with Iraq, and the Kurds were divided, and this led Kurdistan to a great defeat. Also, Turkey and Iran were against Kurdistan."

The Kurdistan Independence Referendum resonated throughout the world, and all eyes, especially those of neighboring countries, were on what kind of step the Kurds would take after the strong results of the referendum.

Was it possible to declare independence immediately, or not, and what would have happened if independence had been declared immediately? Kaiwan Azad Enwer talks about some major obstacles regarding the declaration of independence and says: "For the declaration of independence, there should be no economic problems. Especially the payment of salaries. The society should be economically problem-free. The economic infrastructure should have been prepared and necessary measures should have been taken domestically. Especially agriculture, animal husbandry and trade, i.e., domestic products with which it can sustain itself. The life of Kurdistan continued with things coming from Turkey and Iran. That was also the biggest obstacle to declaring independence." Doskî says that despite all the negativities, the referendum remained a document in the hands of the Kurds and can be used under suitable conditions.

Kurdistan Region Independence Referendum Process
On June 7, 2017, the then President of the Kurdistan Region, Masoud Barzani, held a meeting with several political parties and movements, including the Kurdistan Democratic Party (KDP), the Patriotic Union of Kurdistan (PUK), the Kurdistan Islamic Union Party, the Kurdistan Communist Party, the Kurdistan

Prof. Dr. Kaiwan Azad Enwer

Beyar Doskî

REWSENBÎR

Toilers Party, the Kurdistan Workers and Toilers Party, the Kurdistan Development and Reform Party, the Iraqi Turkmen Front (ITC), the Turkmen Development Party, the Assyrian Democratic Movement, the Chaldean-Syriac-Assyrian Popular Council, the Erbil Turkmen List, and the Kurdistan Armenian List, and in the meeting, it was confirmed that the independence referendum would be held on September 25, 2017.

Despite all regional and international pressures, the Kurds did not back down from the referendum decision, and the Kurdistan Parliament approved the Kurdistan Independence Referendum decision on September 15, 2017. 68 parliamentarians from Kurdish, Turkmen, Christian (Assyrian, Syriac, Chaldean, and Armenian) and Yazidi Kurdish components and KDP, PUK, Yekgirtû, Communist Party, Third Direction, Socialist Party, Turkmen Reform, and Turkmen Develop-

ment factions participated in the parliament meeting, and the decision was approved with 65 votes. At that time, the Kurdistan Parliament had 111 seats. As decided, the Kurdistan Independence Referendum was held on September 25, 2017. The referendum was also held in Kirkuk, Sinjar, and other areas outside the borders of the Kurdistan Region, and a total of 3 million 85 thousand 935 people out of 4 million 581 thousand 255 voters participated. The participation rate was 72%, and 2 million 861 thousand 471 people voted yes. The Kurdish people supported the Kurdistan Independence Referendum with a rate of 92.73%. 224 thousand 464 people used "no" votes, and 219 thousand 990 votes were canceled.

Beyar Doskî explained the importance of the referendum to Rewşenbîrê as follows: "Its benefit was that a nation under oppression declared its message

of independence to the world and demanded its right to statehood. Due to statelessness, the Kurds were divided and Kurdistan was occupied. Delivering the voice of the Kurdish people to the world was very important. It also influenced the Northern, Eastern, and Western parts and raised the awareness of the Kurdish people. It conveyed the will of the Kurdish people to the world."

Enwer stated that: "There were many obstacles before the referendum, one of them was Kirkuk, which was a red line for Turkey. Because of the Turkmens. Turkey wanted Kirkuk to remain outside the referendum for its country's security. Perhaps if Kirkuk had not been included, Turkey would have agreed. Iran also said that Kirkuk is the main artery for Iraq's economy, and in the absence of Kirkuk, Iraq would weaken and not become strong. Iran saw the strengthening of Kurdistan as a threat to itself. Some Gulf

Regional and International Reactions and Discontent

Despite all regional and international pressures, the Kurdistan Independence Referendum was held on the planned date, and the Kurdish people gave strong support to the referendum. After the referendum, Iraq, Turkey, and Iran, in particular, showed strong reactions. Prof. Enwer sees the lack of international support for the referendum as the biggest reason for the failure of the referendum process, stating that especially major powers like the United States and the European Union, and neighboring countries Turkey, Iran, and Syria, were against the right to a referendum.

Iraq:
The then Iraqi Prime Minister Haider al-Abadi declared the referendum illegal and demanded the cancellation of the results. Abadi announced that if necessary, they could use military force to protect Iraq's territorial integrity.
Before the referendum, Iraq had suspended flights to the Kurdistan Region, and Erbil and Sulaimaniyah airports were closed to all flights.

Turkey:
Turkey also viewed the referendum as a threat to Iraq's territorial integrity and expressed concerns about border security. Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan announced that they would close the border gates with Southern Kurdistan and stop the export of Kurdish oil. Erdogan's words at the time, "If we close the border gates, you will starve to death," are still etched in the minds of Kurds.

Iran:
Iran also opposed the referendum, stating that it supported Iraq's territorial integrity and that this could lead to instability in the region.

International Community:
Countries like the United States and the European Union criticized the referendum because it threatened Iraq's territorial integrity and called on all parties to engage in dialogue. The United States asked President Masoud Barzani to cancel and postpone the referendum. President Barzani, in turn, asked the United States for a guarantee of Kurdistan's rights, but because the United States did not provide a guarantee, Barzani did not cancel the referendum.

UN:
United Nations (UN) Secretary-General Antonio Guterres announced on September 25, 2017, that the problems between Erbil and Baghdad should be resolved through dialogue.

REWSENBÎR

countries were also against the referendum. The economic situation of Kurdistan was another obstacle, and Turkey imposed a heavy embargo on Kurdistan. Some Kurdistan parties were also against the referendum. Kurdistan had emerged from a war and was very exhausted." Doskî also says that the Kurds could not declare their independence in Iraq's weakest state, and the disunity of the Kurds became a bad example for the world.

October 16 Events
In October 2017, Iraq demanded the handover of disputed areas from Kurdistan,

The then President of the Kurdistan Region, Masoud Barzani, said after the referendum: "The people of Kurdistan have shown their will for independence to the world through the referendum, and the whole world must respect the will of the Kurdish people."
President Barzani also announced that they want to develop their relations with neighboring countries and are ready for dialogue with Baghdad.

including Kirkuk. Kurdistan rejected Iraq's demand. As a result, with the agreement of Iraq, Iran, and Turkey, the Iraqi army, with the support of Hashd al-Shaabi and the Iranian army, attacked the Peshmerga in Kirkuk on October 16, 2017. After a group of PUK Peshmerga allied with the Iraqi army and opened the way for them, the Peshmerga withdrew from Kirkuk, and Kirkuk fell to the Iraqi army. On October 17, Sinjar was also surrendered to the Iraqi army without a fight. In this way, most of the disputed areas came under the control of the Iraqi army and Hashd al-Shaabi. The Kurdish people, especially America, showed great dissatisfaction with the international community.
Enwer also draws attention to military shortcomings and the disunity of the Kurds. Enwer said: "The military base of
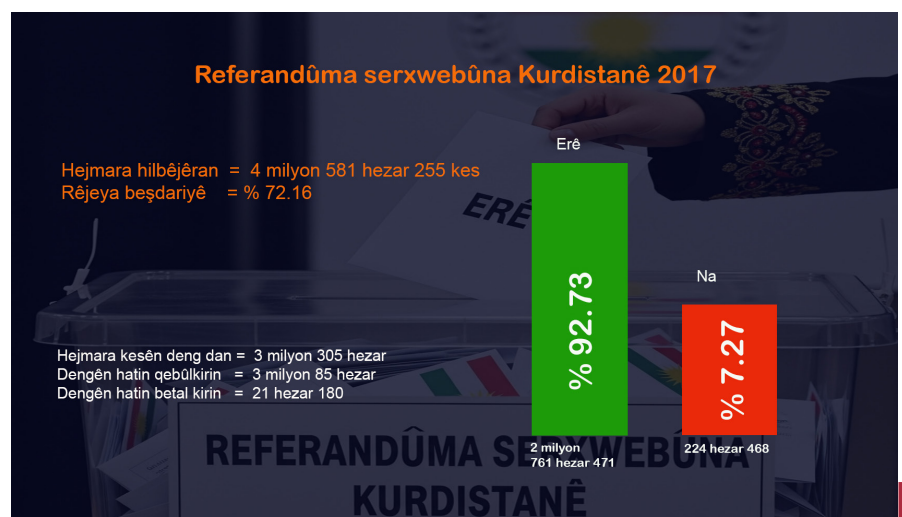
Kurdistan was not at the required level. Some parties that reluctantly supported the referendum allied with Iraq and stood against the referendum. If Kirkuk had been defended, Iraq would have been defeated, and international forces would have intervened. The Iraqi government used its forces and weapons against the referendum, and many areas were occupied. America and other major states did not show any reaction. On the contrary, they supported Iraq."
Doskî said about the post-referendum period and the loss of Kirkuk and other disputed areas: "The Kurds were weak, and now they are all making concessions because of receiving salaries. The Kurds were weak against Iraq. Despite the intellectuals, the hopes of the people were shattered."

Referandûma serxwebûna Kurdistanê 2017

Hejmara hilbêjêran = 4 milyon 581 hezar 255 kes
Rêjeya beşdariyê   = % 72.16

Hejmara kesên deng dan = 3 milyon 305 hezar
Dengên hatin qebûlkirin   = 3 milyon 85 hezar
Dengên hatin betal kirin = 21 hezar 180

Erê
% 92.73

Na
% 7.27

2 milyon
761 hezar 471

224 hezar 468

REFERANDÛMA SERXWEBÛNA
KURDISTANÊ

REWŞENBÎR

Between Geography and Politics: Is the Unity of Syria Ending at the Rojava Frontier?

Dr. Younes Behram

Amid the complex realities of Syria, questions concerning the future configuration of the state and the relationships among its components—particularly between Kurds and Arabs have resurfaced. Although the central authority in Damascus attempts to present itself as the guarantor of unity, efforts to assimilate diverse ethnic, linguistic, and cultural identities into a single uniform identity have only generated deeper exclusion and conflict. In this context, the concepts of "majority" and "minority" are frequently employed to describe the components of Syrian society. Yet these concepts are often oversimplified and misleading when invoked in discourses aimed at redefining political legitimacy. The Druze (of Jabal al-Arab) and the Alawites (on the Syrian coast), for instance, cannot be considered "minorities" in either a political or social sense; they are Syrians rooted in the land, who have contributed to state-building and national struggles and who possess enduring cultural and historical legacies. Likewise, portraying "Sunnis" as a political majority is equally misleading, for Syria's structure transcends such sectarian simplifications. The Kurdish case, however, is distinct, and it goes beyond being described merely as a "minority within an Arab state." The Kurds constitute a distinct people, speaking their own language and inhabiting contiguous geographical areas in Syria's north and northeast such

as Afrin, Kobani, and Jazira. Kurdish presence in these regions predates the Islamic conquests. Historical sources such as al-Mas'udi's Muruj al-Dhahab and Yaqut al-Hamawi's Mu'jam al-Buldan document the presence of Kurdish tribes in these territories centuries before Arab armies advanced from the Hijaz and Yemen into the lands of Greater Syria. The incorporation of Kurdish regions into the Syrian state was not the outcome of an internal social contract but rather the result of colonial divisions following the First World War most notably the 1916 Sykes–Picot Agreement. France, under its mandate over Syria, delineated the country's borders without regard for its ethnic composition, annexing Kurdish-majority areas into the newly created entity later known as the Syrian Republic, without the consent or referendum of the Kurdish population.

Can Kurds and Arabs separate like Czechs and Slovaks?
This situation is strikingly reminiscent of Eastern Europe. The Czech and Slovak peoples were compelled to coexist within the common state of Czechoslovakia, but following the collapse of communism in the 1990s, they separated peacefully to establish two independent republics. The lesson here is evident: enforced unity does not bring stability; it merely postpones collapse or deepens conflict. Today, Syrian Kurds do not necessarily seek separation. Rather, they demand clear rights: recognition of their national identity and the right to govern their regions within a democratic, civilian, and decentralized framework. Such demands do not imply secession but instead signify a genuine partnership based on equality and mutual respect,

rather than domination and subordination. Yet, should the central government in Damascus persist—both politically and ideologically—in ignoring these demands and rejecting any decentralized model that acknowledges ethnic plurality, Kurds may be compelled to reconsider their political options. As with the Czechs and Slovaks, a peaceful separation might emerge not as a threat but as a rational solution to the crisis of enforced coexistence. Kurdish regions were not originally "Arab," nor did they join the Syrian state through the free will of their people. Thus, framing Kurdish demands for autonomy as "the division of Syria" obscures the historical reality that the Syrian state itself was externally imposed and not founded on mutual consent.

The future of Syria cannot be built upon denial or suppression but must rest upon an explicit acknowledgment of its multilayered social fabric and the rights of all its components including the Kurds. Either a new Syria is established on the principles of citizenship, pluralism, and partnership, or the mistakes of the past will be repeated, perpetuating the threat of internal fragmentation.

The ongoing negotiations in Paris between Rojava (the Autonomous Administration of North and East Syria—AANES) and the Syrian central government mark a critical turning point in the post–civil war reconstruction of the region. This analysis situates the current situation and possible scenarios for Syria within the broader context of past failed negotiations in Lebanon, U.S. mediation in Paris, French initiatives, Turkish pressures, and observable shifts in American policy.

Current Context and the Background of the Negotiations
Following the collapse of the Assad regime in late 2024, a new government was established in Damascus under Ahmad Shara. Since 2012, Rojava, under the leadership of the Syrian Democratic Forces (SDF) and the Peop-

le's Protection Units (YPG), has operated with a degree of autonomy. In March 2025, an agreement was signed in Damascus aiming to integrate the SDF into the Syrian army and reincorporate Rojava under central authority. However, this arrangement soon encountered practical difficulties. After failed negotiations in Lebanon, France took the initiative to transfer the process to Paris, where the U.S., represented by Tom Barrack, attempted to impose five specific conditions on Rojava.

The Paris Negotiations and the Role of International Actors

According to media reports, negotiations between the SDF and the Syrian government in Paris have faced delays but are expected to proceed shortly. Co-hosted by France, Syria, and the United States, these talks are seen as an attempt to implement the "March 10 Agreement." Yet the content of these negotiations remains overshadowed by the demands and pressures of external actors. For years, the SDF served as Washington's principal partner in the fight against ISIS. However, under U.S. Special Envoy Tom Barrack, Washington has adopted a new policy grounded in the principle of "one Syria, one nation, one army." This approach firmly rejects any autonomous or federal status for Rojava. Barrack's statements in New York underscored this policy shift: "There is no sign of a free Kurdistan in Syria, nor of a separate SDF state. The only existing entity is the unitary Syrian state."

The Five Critical Issues on the Negotiating Table

Political sources suggest that the U.S. and its allies are pressing the Autonomous Administration to accept five core provisions:
1. Abandonment of Strategic Territories: Transfer of administrative and security control of regions such as Deir ez-Zor, Raqqa, Tabqa, and Hasakah to Damascus.
2. Administrative Rather than Constitutional Recognition: Substituting constitutional recognition of Rojava's status with limited administrative adjustments and restricted decentralization.
3. Transfer of Institutions and Resources: Complete transfer of official institutions, border crossings, and especially ener-

gy resources (oil and gas) to Damascus.
4. Dissolution of the Autonomous Administration: Termination of the Autonomous Administration project and full reintegration of the region into the centralized Syrian state.
5. Integration of the YPG into the Syrian Army: Disarmament of the SDF and the dissolution of the YPG, followed by their incorporation into the Syrian army.

The Kurds have rejected these conditions, viewing them as "red lines" that compromise their cultural, administrative, and security rights. France has therefore sought to maintain the negotiations in Paris as a balancing initiative.

Turkey's Influence over Damascus

Turkey also plays a decisive role in these talks. The Syrian government is unable to make significant decisions without Turkish approval. Ankara's demands—dissolution of the YPG and abolition of autonomy—align with those of Washington, reflecting a convergence between Turkey and the United States that directly impacts Damascus' position. Turkish pressure extends not only over Rojava but also over ensuring that Damascus does not concede to Kurdish demands

France's Initiative and the U.S. Policy Shift

Amid the U.S. policy's increasing convergence with Turkish positions, France has emerged as a counterbalancing actor. Concerned about Turkey's growing influence over Damascus and the possible establishment of a theocratic regime in Syria, Paris views Rojava's pluralistic and secular model as a stabilizing force. By leading the Paris talks, France seeks to avert worst-case scenarios.

The U.S. policy shift is linked to several factors: the defeat of ISIS, shifting American priorities, and the new administration's greater emphasis on Syrian state stability and normali-

zation with NATO ally Turkey. The U.S. no longer feels indebted to support the SDF in creating an independent entity, presenting integration as the sole viable solution. Syria's Uncertain Future

Several scenarios may emerge from the current situation:

Limited Agreement: Kurds and Damascus may reach a compromise on restricted autonomy and conditional integration, contingent upon Turkish approval.
Renewed Conflict: Failure of negotiations could spark new confrontations between Rojava and Damascus, deepening instability.
De Facto Fragmentation: Should the central government be forced to concede, Syria may become informally divided into separate entities such as Rojava, Druze areas, and others.

Conclusion

Although the Paris negotiations represent a significant step for Syria, the process remains highly challenging. The Kurds seek to preserve their rights, yet they face immense pressure from the United States, Turkey, and Damascus. The convergence of American and Turkish demands to abolish autonomy may only exacerbate instability. While several outcomes are possible, the most likely scenario is the imposition of a limited autonomy, forcibly maintained providing only temporary stability. Unless fundamental issues are addressed, Syria risks descending into renewed crisis.

Ultimately, the outcome of the Paris negotiations will not only shape the future of the Kurds but will also mark the beginning of a new phase for all the peoples of Syria.

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The Epic of Kobani;

The Struggle Between Angels and Demons

Fetullah Kaya

Kobani is a modest town located on the border between Bakûr and Rojava, closely tied to Bakûr. In the autumn of 2014, a dark shadow fell over this quiet land. ISIS, representing one of the most brutal forms of violence in modern times, launched a heavy assault. Their black flags waved in the wind, their tanks filled the air with dust, and their militants surrounded the town, seeking to turn it into a place of fear. Their goal was clear and ruthless: to capture Kobani, to destroy the Kurdish presence, and to build an empire th-

rough terror. Streets fell silent, houses were abandoned, and hopes began to fade. The attackers prepared to declare victory.

However, a light shone in Kobani: the resistance of the Women's Protection Units (YPJ). These women carried the honor of their people in their struggle. Their hair blew freely in the wind, and their eyes reflected the fire of freedom. With weapons in their hands and determination in their hearts, they stood firmly against the assault. This was not only the defense of a town; it was the struggle for the very existence of a people.

The First Spark of Resistance

The attacks left Kobani in flames. Tanks, artillery, and rockets destroyed houses, and the sound of fighting echoed everywhere. Yet the fighters of the YPJ stood like fortresses in their positions. Among them was Arin Mirkan, a 20-year-old commander and mother of two. With determination she declared: "This land is ours; no one can take it from us." Her comrades saw the fire in her eyes and drew strength from it.As the battles began, ISIS militants were shocked by the courage of these women. Some called them "devils," but their words revealed fear. Who was the demon? Who was the angel? Only God knew, and the whole world knew.

The war angels of the YPJ fought in every street, in every ruin, putting their lives on the line. On the 20th day of resistance, the evening of October 5, 2014, Arin and her comrades were on watch at Miştenur Hill. The hill was burning under the fire of tanks and heavy weapons. Arin was afraid, but it was not the fear of death; it was the fear that Kobani might fall. She strapped explosives to her body and looked into the eyes of her comrades one last time. "Rather than fall into the hands of the gangs, we will sacrifice ourselves," she said, her voice both sorrowful and proud. And then the moment came—she threw herself in front of a tank. The sky turned crimson with flames. Arin took with her 17 barbaric demons, not allowing them to lay even a finger on her. In that instant, she declared to the whole world the courage of Kurdish women and their devotion to their people, their land, and their values.

Angels of War and Demons in the Shadow of Darkness

Days turned into nights, and for 120 days Kobani was tested with blood and tears. ISIS had captured half of the town and displayed its brutality among the ruins. Yet the fighters of the YPJ resisted with their spirit. They were the angels of war; with delicate hands they held rifles, and with brave hearts they defied death. One ISIS militant, with a trembling voice, asked, "How can these women be so strong?" There was

no answer to this question. For the strength of the YPJ did not come from weapons, but from an unshakable love of freedom.

Through this resistance, the Kurds were writing a legend. The Peshmerga, the PKK, and the YPG fought shoulder to shoulder, as one heart. While the enemy dreamed of victory and awaited the fall of Kobani, the unity of the Kurds grew stronger and more unbreakable with each passing day. For the first time in history, the Kurdish nation set aside its divisions and stood together for a common cause.

And then the moment came...

- The cool wind carried by the hands of the Peshmerga,
- The shadow of the PKK rising from the mountains,
- The resilience of the YPG spread through the streets,

All united in the same ranks, under the same flag.

Victory Came with the Light of Day
After 120 days, on January 26, 2015, dawn broke with a brighter light on the horizon. The day was illuminated by the victory of the Kurds. The YPJ fighters, with a final effort, expelled ISIS from Kobani. Arin's comrades stood in the heart of the town, carrying the Ala kesk û sor û zer flag and their weapons on their shoulders. Their faces reflected the bittersweet smile of victory, and their eyes held the silent tears of sacrifice. Many of their comrades had fallen as martyrs; each had become a seed for freedom. Yet Kobani had survived.

The streets breathed again, and hope sprouted among the ruins. The darkness of ISIS was defeated, and the courage of the angels of war prevailed. With this victory, the Kurds had not only saved a town but also strengthened the unity of a nation. The enemy, bewildered, fled while looking back, pursued by Kurdish fighters. Kobani had become a sacred symbol of freedom.

The Legendary City

The streets of Kobani were washed with blood, and its walls bore the marks of bullets. Every part of the land became either the grave of a fighter or the shelter of a child. But this was more than a city battle. It was an epic in which a people rewrote their destiny with their own hands.

The liberation of Kobani turned into a legend that would be remembered for centuries among the Kurds, celebrated in laments and songs. The YPJ fighters, delicate yet strong-willed, were remembered as the angels of war. Their sacrifice united a nation, and the shoulder-to-shoulder resistance of the Peshmerga, PKK, and YPG opened a golden page in Kurdish history. Kobani was no longer just a town; it became the sacred land of resistance, unity, and victory. And this epic would resonate forever in the hearts of the Kurdish people.

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Pîremêrd:

A Pioneer of Modern Kurdish Literature and Press History

Tevfik Mahmud Hamza—known by his pen name Pîremêrd—was a multifaceted intellectual who left a deep imprint on Kurdish literature, journalism, and education. Born in 1867 in Sulaymaniyah's Goyje neighborhood, he hailed from a prominent Kurdish family; his grandfather served as a vizier in the Baban Emirate, which maintained de facto autonomy until 1850 (Aşina, s. 15). The pen name 'Pîremêrd' ('old man') reflects his wise, seasoned persona.

The religious and intellectual background of his family facilitated Pîremêrd's early engagement with knowledge. In addition to the classical Islamic sciences, he also learned Arabic and Persian, reaching a level at which he could produce works in these languages.

After completing madrasa education, he held various posts within the Ottoman administration and lived in cultural centers such as Beirut, Damascus, and Baghdad, where he developed a keen interest in Kurdish folklore and poetry. Invited to Istanbul by Sultan Abdülhamid II in 1898, he later enrolled in the Law School but returned before graduating(Namo, s. 23-25).

These experiences exposed him to Ottoman modernization and nurtured his engagement with the press. He was influenced by Kurdish poets Nalî, Mawlawî, and Hacî Qadirî Koyî. In 1907, he joined the Kurdish Solidarity and Progress Society in Istanbul and served as chief writer for its newspaper (Kaya, s.78). Between 1909 and 1923, he served as a district governor in several provinces across Turkey and Kurdistan (Hakkari, Beytüşşebap, Adapazarı, Amasya gibi) working to address the educational and cultural needs of Kurdish communities(Malmisanij, s. 80).

His Significance in Kurdish Literature as a Poet and Writer

Pîremêrd is one of the pioneers of the modernization process in Kurdish literature. In his poems, he employed the forms and meters of classical Kurdish poetry, yet enriched the content with modern themes. By adopting a style close to the everyday language of the people, he succeeded in reaching broad audiences (Omarkhali, p. 341).

He stands out as one of the first to write children's poems in Kurdish literature. In addition, he wrote short stories inspired by Kurdish history and played a pioneering role in this field. He re-edited the famous epic Mem û Zin, bringing a modern interpretation to it. His poem Newroz, written in 1948, was set to music by Hasan Zirek and came to be regarded almost as a Kurdish national anthem (Aşina, pp. 152–153).

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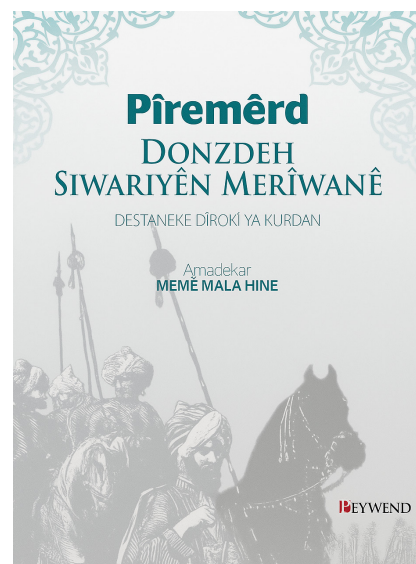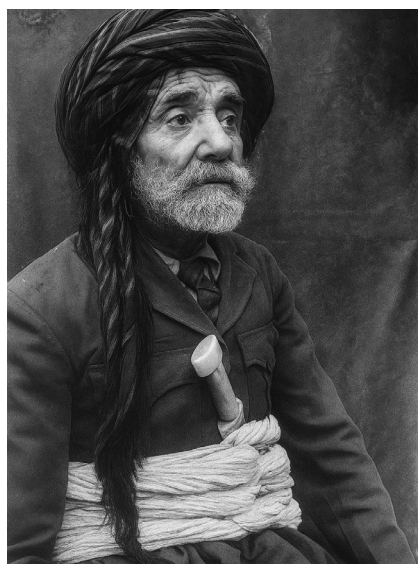
Significance for the Kurdish Press

Pîremêrd is one of the most significant figures in the history of Kurdish press. In addition to serving as chief editor and administrator of the Kurdish Association for Mutual Aid and Progress(Kürt Teavun ve Terakki Cemiyeti Gazetesi) newspaper, he contributed articles to many periodicals published in Kurdish in Istanbul during the Ottoman period.

In 1926, he founded the Kurdish-language newspaper Jîyan ("Life") in Sulaymaniyah, where he began his editorial work, and in 1932 he also assumed the role of director. Following the closure of Jîyan in 1939, he launched a new newspaper entitled Jîn, which continued publication until 1950 and became an important platform addressing the cultural, social, and political issues of Kurdish society (Kaya, p. 161). Mehmet Resul notes that Pîremêrd attempted to publish Jîyan in the Latin alphabet but was ultimately unsuccessful (Hawar, p. 38). During his journalistic career, he de-voted efforts to the standardization and wider dissemination of the Kurdish language. By collecting folk tales, proverbs, and folkloric elements and publishing them in his newspaper, he created a written archive of Kurdish cultural heritage. Furthermore, through the publication of short stories and essays in the magazine Gelawêj, he contributed to the development of Kurdish prose.

The newspaper Jîn, in addition to fostering the development of modern journalism among Kurds of the period, also played an influential role in shaping Kurdish national consciousness (Nezan, p. 34).

Contributions to Education and Science

Pîremêrd left a profound mark on the history of Kurdish scholarship, particularly through his contributions in the field of education. In 1926, he founded the Cemiyet-i Zanistî (Scientific Society) and served as its president (Malmisanij, 74). Within the framework of the society, he made great efforts to establish the Quta-bxaney Zanistî (Scientific School), an institution that aimed to provide education in Kurdish and to promote modern scientific methods.

His belief in educational reform was also reflected in his poetry and writings. He authored works that encouraged women's and girls' access to education, striving to raise social awareness on this issue. Pîremêrd's emphasis on education laid the groundwork for the spread of scientific thought in the modernization process of Kurdish society.

His character was shaped by his conviction in education and social development. Pîremêrd was particularly a reformist who underscored the importance of education for women and girls. By using a plain style in his poetry, he aimed to reach a broad audience, adopting a tone close to the language and culture of the people. Pîremêrd passed away in Sulaymaniyah on June 19, 1950, leaving behind a profound legacy in both literary and social domains.

Selected Works

Pîremêrd's literary production is quite extensive, encompassing various genres such as poetry, short stories, and historiography. His major works are listed below :

- Mawlawî kurd (ji hewramanî wergerandiye soranî), 1935
- Trajediya Mem û Zîn a Ehmedê Xanî, 1935
- Çîroka 12 suwariyan ji Merîwanê, 1935
- Xirmaî Kay Kon, Jiyan, 1936
- Galte û gep-Berhevka folklora kurdî, 1947
- Kemançejen (wergêra ji tirkî)
- Mewlana Xalid Neqşîbendî
- Besaranî (ji hewramanî wergêra soranî)
- Encamî piyawî bengkêş, tebax, 1941
- Zoremilî milşikanîle dûwaye, tebax, 1942
- Felesefey kiçe kurdek, tebax, 1942
- Mehmûd Axa, 1942

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REWSENBÎR

From a witness of the period, comprehensive information regarding the history of the Ayyubids:

The History of the Kurdish State

Muhammad ibn Ibrahim al-Khazrajī's work entitled "The History of the Kurdish State" (originally *Tārīkh al-Dawlat al-Akrād*) is highly significant for both historiography and Kurdish literature. Composed in Arabic roughly 700 years ago during the Ayyubid era, it is among the earliest extant works written on Kurdish history. Its author, Muhammad ibn Ibrahim ibn Muhammad ibn Abū al-Fawāris ʿAbd al-ʿAzīz al-Ansārī al-Khazrajī, lived during the time of Salah al-Din Ayyubi (1175–1193) and personally witnessed some of the important events of that period. The work narrates the events that took place in the Ayyubid State between 1175 and 1257. This sequence begins with the Isma'ili fedayeen's assassination attempt against Salah al-Din and ends with the events in Cairo in 1257 when the Mamluks seized the administration of the Ayyubids.

The author received information from his teachers, contemporaries, students and peers, and he reinforced it with his own views and observations. He arranged the events of that period year by year—sometimes in detail, sometimes in summary—and recorded each under the section for the relevant year.

Although the book is about the Kurdish Ayyubid State, it also addresses many events around the Ayyubid State. For example, at the outset it treats subjects such as the rivalry between Salah al-Din and the Zengid rulers who came after Nureddin Zengi. It also includes certain events concerning the Khwarazmshah state and their good and bad relations with the Kurds and the Mongols.

At the same time, the book contains information not only about natural disasters such as regional earthquakes, epidemics, famine, volcanic eruptions and the flooding of great rivers like the Nile, but also about social affairs, building activities, celebrations, festivities and holidays.

This book is among the most important sources for elucidating the history of the Ayyubid State in particular and Kurdish history in general.

This work was translated from Arabic into Kurdish (Kurmancî) by M. Emîn Narozî and was first published in 2015 by Azad Publishing House as an 856-page volume. It was also printed in 2025 by Avesta Publishing in a 472-page edition. The original manuscript copy is preserved at the Süleymaniye Library in Istanbul.

Although this book is an unparalleled source for researchers of Kurdish history, flaws such as the absence of its beginning and ending sections require further research and the discovery of complete copies of the work. In short, "The History of the Kurdish State" is not only a historical document but also an important monument to the Ayyubid period and the role of the Kurds in that period.

TARÎXA DEWLETA KURDAN
Mihemed ibn Îbrahîmê Xezrecî
Ji erebî: Emîn Narozi

Verger: Emîn Narozi
Weşanxaneya Avesta
2025
472 pel

REWSENBÎR

58 International Awards:

Through the Dust

Takes the Audience to the Era of Persecution and Massacres Against the Kurds

Derhêner: Şewket Emîn Korkî
Sal: 2006
105 deqe

Through the Dust (Derbas-bûyîna ji Xûbarê), released in 2006 and directed by Şewket Emîn Korkî, is a Kurdish film. The film addresses the chaos that emerged after the fall of Saddam Hussein's regime in 2003 and the challenges faced by Kurdish society during that period.

The story is told from the perspective of a Kurdish family, portraying the devastating effects of war, the tragedy of displacement, and the search for identity in a deeply engaging manner. This work is considered one of the major films that introduced Kurdish cinema to an international audience. Typically structured as a drama, the film uses strong visuals to highlight the psychological impact of war on individuals. With a total runtime of 105 minutes, the film is performed in Kurdish. Having won 58 international awards, it powerfully represents the resilience and culture of the Kurdish people.

While Passing Through the Dust significant cinematically, it has also faced some criticism. Its strongest aspect is the screenplay, which deeply explores the human consequences of war, complemented by performances that emotionally engage the audience. Scenes reflecting the characters' emotions leave a strong impression, and the visual narrative, depicting dusty and ruined landscapes, creates a compelling atmosphere. However, some technical shortcomings are noticeable. The editing occasionally slows the pace, which can momentarily disengage the viewer, and certain scenes progress too slowly. Additionally, the use of didactic storytelling in a few scenes undermines the natural flow of the film.

Cinematically, handheld camera techniques were heavily employed to convey the chaos of war, but this approach is not always effective and at times can tire the audience.

Despite these minor criticisms, the film deserves high praise overall. The 58 awards it has received from international institutions are evidence of its success. The film represents Kurdish cinema effectively on the global stage.

Passing Through the Dust is an important step for Kurdish cinema and a valuable work for understanding the societal impact of war. For audiences interested in the social consequences of conflict, the film provides an emotional experience while also highlighting the need for critical reflection.

Gulên sor yên nemir...

Berhevker: Nevzat Becirmanî

REWSENBÎR

Wê ji gulê sipî û sor pirr hez dikir. Jixwe ew hevala gulê sor bû û delala mêrê xwe, Rose bû. Mêrê wê di her salvegera roja evîndaran de roja wê bi milek gulê sor pîroz dikir. Heta sala ku mêrê wê wefat kiribû jî devê derîyê Rose bê gul nemabû.

Sala ku mêrê wê miribye jî gulên wê jê re hatine şandin û mîna salên berê qartek jî bi gulan ve hatibû zeliqandin. Nivîsa li ser qertê mîna hevoka her salî bû û wiha digot. "Ez îsal, ji sala çûyî bêhtir ji te hez dikim." Bi careke re wiha fikirîye û gotiye qey ev gul wê bibin gulê dawî. Belkî şandina van gulan ji berê ve hatibû eyar kirin. Baş e lê çawa wî dizanîbû ku ew ê bimirê. Jixwe wî jî plana kar hez dikir û gul jî dineqandin."

Wê gulên ber derî birine hundir û xistine guldanka tejî av. Guldank danîye ser qonsolê , cem wêneyê mêrê xwe. Wêneyê ku mêrê wê têde dibeşişî. Rose jî di paldank de rûniştiye û bi awayekî bêdeng li wêneyê ku mêrê wê tê de dibeşişî meyzandiye.

Ew yanî Rose bêdeng bû… wiha fikirîye… Saleke bê dawî derbas bû. Şaleke tejî kul û keder bi xemgînî derbas bû…Piştre kesekî li derîyê wê xistiye û mîna salên berê milek gul danîne ber derîyê wê. Dîsa li ser qertê wiha nivîsî bû. "Ez îsal, ji sala çûyî bêhtir ji te hez dikim. "Roja wê ya evîndaran pîroz dikir. Wê gul birine hundir û pakêt vekiriye . Bi awayekî matmayî çûye ber telefonê û telefon ji dikana gulan re vekiriye. Ma heqê we heye ku hûn, min xemgîn bikin? Kulîlkvan bersiv daye: "Ez dizanim ku te mêrê xwe sala çûyî winda kir û min dizanîbû ku te ji min re telefonê jî bikê. Mêrê te pereyên wan gulan dabûne min. Wî her dem wisa jî dikir eger ku ew li derveyî bajêr bane. Min gulên wî didanîne ber derîyê malê. Di hevnivîsa min de talimata wî heye. Ez ê her sal wan gula ji we re bişînim. Ew qerta bi gulan we jî, wî bidestê xwe nivîsî bû, Ez dixwazim hûn bizanibin." Rose bigirî ji kulîlkvan re sipasîyê xwe kirine û telefon girtiye. Rose bi dilekî xemgîn nameya di nav gulan de vekiriye. Namê bi "merheba delala min" dest pê dikir û Rose dewama name xwendiye: " Ev saleke ku em ji hev veqetîyane. Ez hêvî dikim ku ji bo te ne pir zor derbas bûbe. Ez bi tenêtî û jana te dihesim. Eger ku tu çûbûya û ez li dinyayê mabûma, gelo ezê çi bikişînim? Hez kirin wextê ku werê parvekirin tu kes ji tama wê têr nabe. Min hewqas ji te hez kiribû ku tu kes nikaribe bi peyvan wê tarîf bike. Tu hevaleke nûwaze buyî. Tu dost û evîndara min buyî. Tu evîna ber dilêmin buyî. Bes ev saleke ku em ji hev veqetîyane. Dev ji xwe bernede. Ez dixwazim ku tu her dem bextewar û dilşad be. Lewma ji vir şunde wê her sal dîsa gulên sipî û sor wê werîn ber derîyê te. Wextê ku te ew gul hildan û hemêz kirin, bi zanibe ku Xwedê Teala me dipîrozênê. Min her dem ji te hez dikir û ez ê ji te hez bikim jî. Divê tu bijî û jîyana xwe berdewam bike. Ji kerema xwe re tevî her tiştî dilşad be. Ne hesane ez dizanim. Lê ez bawer dikim ku tê rêyeke bextewarîyê bibîne. Gul heta ku tu derîyê xwe venekê wê werin ber derîyê te. Wî çaxî wê kulîlkvan penç cara werê ber derîyê te. Piştî cara penca we gula bîne navnîşana nû, ya ku min dabû kulîlkvan. Yanî wê wan gulan bîne ser gora te. Ew navnîşana ku ez û tu em ê bigihîn hev û heta sermedîyê bihevre bijîn"

Mamikên Kurdî

Wek stêrkan diçirûske
Deriyê wê wek brûsk e
Rondik davê wek nîsk e
Li ser dileqe brû û bisk e
Kî ker nebe, wê naske!.

(çav)

Ximav û xar
Lastîk û dar
Tilî lê hewar
Li kaxizê bar
Tîpên yar û har
Digirin rêz û tar!

(Qelem)

Pir pelên sîs
navê wê lênivs
Ji bo pênivîs
Dikeve kîs!

(Defter)

Hemî çêlek tên dotin, hemî gotin nayên gotin.

Gotinên Pêşîyan yên Kurdî

Dibistan
Destpêk bi navê Yezdan,
ev e diçim dibistan.

Divê êdî bixwînim,
bo rastiyê bibînim.

Da her tiştî bizanim,
heya ku pê bikanim.

Berî vêya gelê min,
nezan mabûn mêr û jin.

Daketibûn ber er,
reben bûbûn bêkêr.

şûn da,
hav bajar û gunda,

Herçî kurd e wê bixwîn,
da ku bibe xweyî şîn.

Welatê xwe bistîne,
neyaran jê derîne.

Em in xweyî war û şûn
doza me ye serxwe

Ji bo me ye hêla jo
hildin ala kesk û so

Serxwe nabe Kurdis
bê xwendin û dibistan
Osman Sebrî

REWSENBÎR

Hevdîtina Serok Barzanî û General Maz- lûm Kobonî
16.01.2025

Serok Mesûd Barzanî roja 16yê çileya paşî li Hewlêr'ê pêşwaziya fermandarê giştî yê Hêzên Sûriya Demokratîk (HSD) Mezlûm Ebdî kir. Di hevdîtinê de yekrêziya Kurdan û çarenûsa Rojavayê Kurdistan'ê hatin nîqaş kirin. Hevdem êrîşen Tirkiye'yê yên ser ben- dava Tişrîn'ê berdevam dike û di encamê de bi dehan xelkê sivîl jî hatin kuştin. Em jî ji Kobani'yê bi Lezgîn Ibrahim re him rewşa dawî ya li herêmê û him jî degvedanên vê hevdîtina li Hewlêrê gotûbêj dikin.

Bavê Teyar jiyana xwe ji dest da
19.01.2025

Şanogerê Kurd Cûma Xelîl Îbrahîm ku weke Bavê Teyar dihate naskirin, di êrîşa balefîrên Tirkiyê ya li ser Bendava Tişrînê de birîndar bûbû, roja 19.01.2025 jiyana xwe ji dest da.

Bavê Teyar, doh di bombebaranên Artêşa Tirkiyê yên li ser Bendava Tişrînê de bi gi- ranî birîndar bûbû, lê hewlên dermankiri- na wî ji ber giraniya birîna wî bêsûd man. Hat ragihandin ku wî çendek berê jiyana xwe ji dest da

Bi Abdullah Öcalan re hevpeyvîna 2.
22.01.2025

Heyeta Partiya DEMê cara 2em îro çû gre- va Îmraliyê û bi Öcalan re hevpeyvîn pêk anî. Di derbarê hevpeyvînê de, tu daxûyanî nehat.

Parlamenterê DEMê Sırrı Süreyya Önder û Pervin Buldan cara duyem çûn Îmraliyê. Önder û Buldan nêzîkê 4 seat li greva Îm- raliyê man. Piştî hevdîtinê heyat ji Îmraliyê veqetiyan û tu daxûyanî nedan.

Qeyûm tayînî Şaredariya Sêrtê hate kirin
29.01.2025

Danişîna doza Hevşaredara Sêrtê Sofya Ala- gaş, duh li 5'emîn Dadgeha Cezayên Giran a Amedê hat lidarxistin. Dadgehê, 6 sal û 3 meh cezayê hefsê da Sofya Alagaş. Wezare- ta Karên Hundir piştî cezayê Sofya Alagaşê, li Şaredariya Sêrtê qeyûm tayîn kir. Piştî tayîn- kirina qeyûm, polîsan saet di 06.00'ê de ava- hiya şaredariyê dorpêç kirin, ketin avahiya şaredariyê qedexe kirin. Lê belê hevşaredar û welatî piştî agahiya qeyûm li ber şareda- riyê kom bûn û biryar protersto kirin.

Mustafa Hîcrî cardin wek Serokê PDKI hate hilbijartin
07.02.2025

Partiya Demokrat ya Kurdistan – Iranê kongreya xwe ya Averte ya 17. roja 7 Siba- ta 2025'an pêk anî. Mustafa Hicrî ku berê jî sekreterê giştî yê partiyê bû, cardin wek serokê PDKI, hate hilbijartin. Hicrî dengê giştî endamên komîte yê girt.

Qeyûm tayînî Şaredariya Bajarê Mezin ya Wanê hate kirin
15. 02. 2025

Ji aliyê Wezareta Karê Hûndir ve qeyûm tayînî Şaredariya Bajarê Mezin a Wanê hat kirin.

Wezareta Karê Hundir ragihand ku li şûna Hevşaredarê Bajarê Mezin a Wanê Abdul- lah Zeydan, waliyê bajêr Ozan Balci wek qeyûm hatiye tayînkirin.

Şandeya Îmraliyê bi Serok Barzanî re civiya

16.02.2025

Şandeya DEM Partiyê ya Îmraliyê piştî ku di 28'ê Kanûna 2024 û 22'ê Çileya 2025'an de bi Rêberê PKKê Abdullah Ocalan re hevdîtin pêk anî serdanên xwe didomîne. Şandeya Îmraliyê ji bo hevdîtinan pêk bîne duh serdana Herêma Kurdistanê kir.

Di saet 10:00'an de şandeya Îmraliyê li navçeya Pîrman ya Hewlêrê bi serokê PDK'ê Mesûd Barzanî re civiya. Li gorî agahiyan civîna bi Barzanî re saetek 45 kêliyan dewam kiriye û dawî bûye.

Dewleta Tirk li Kobanê ji malbatek 9 kes kuşt

17.03.2025

Êrîşên Dewleta Tirk li ser Rojava berdewam in. Roja 17 Adara 2025'an êrîşê gundê Berxbotanê yê Kobanê kir. Di êrîşa nîvê şevê de ku bi SÎHA'yê hate kirin, dayik, bav û 7 zarok hatin qetilkirin.

Dewleta Tirk bi dema herêmî saet di 00:40'î de êrîş bir ser malekê û li gel 7 zarokan dayik û bavê wan qetil kir. Di êrîşê de 2 kes jî birîndar bûn.

Nêçîrvan Barzanî bi Mazlum Ebdî û Îlham Ehmed re hevdîtin pêk anî

24.04.025

Fermandarê Giştî yê HSD'ê Mazlum Ebdî û Hevseroka Daîreya Têkiliyên Karên Derve ya Rêveberiya Xweser Îlham Ehmed bi Serokê Herêma Federe ya Kurdistanê Nêçîrvan Barzanî re hevdîtin kirin.

Di hevdîtinê de li ser yekrêziya aliyên Kurdî ya li Rojava û yekitiya neteweyî ya Kurd nîqaş û axaftin hatin kirin.

Ebdî û Ehmed rojek berê jî li gel Wezîrê Karên Derve yê Fransayê Jean-Noel Barrot li Hewlêrê hevdîtin pêk anîbûn.

Mazlûm Ebdî û Colanî peyman îmze kirin

10.03.2025

Rêverbiriya xweser ya Rojava û Hikûmeta Şamê roja 10 Adarê bi navberiya Amerika, Fransa û hêzên qoalisyonê, li Şamê civinek pêk anîn.

Fermandarê Giştî yê Hêzên Sûriyeya Demokratîk (QSD) Mazlûm Ebdî û Serokê Heyet Tehrîr El Şam (HTŞ) Mihemed El-Colanî (Ehmed El-Şara) ku weke serokê desthilata demkî ya Sûriyeyê hatibû ragihandin, li hev civiyan.

Di encama civîna Ebdî û Colanî de li ser van mijaran lihevkirin:

1- Bêyî ku li ol û neteweya gelên Sûriyeyê bê nêrin, di nava hemû pêvajoyên siyasî û saziyên dewletê de bi awayek erkdarî û berpirsyariya wekhev temsîl bikin û mafên wan bên misogerkirin.

2- Civaka Kurd, civakeke xwecihî ya dewleta Sûriyê ye û dewleta Sûriyeyê hemwelatîbûn û hemû mafên destûra bingehîn misoger dike.

3- Li seranserê Sûriyeyê agirbest bê ragihandin.

4- Hemû saziyên sivîl û leşkerî yên Bakur û Rojhilatê Sûriyeyê, deriyên sînor, balafirgeh, qadên petrol û gaza xwezayî entegreyî rêveberiya dewleta Sûriyeyê bê kirin.

5- Sûriyeyên ku ji cih û warê xwe hatine derxistin, wê vegerin gund û bajarên xwe û ji hêla dewleta Sûriyeyê ve bên parastin.

6- Têkoşîna dewleta Sûriyeyê ya li dijî bermahiyên Esed û hemû metirsiyên li ser ewlekarî û yekîtiya wê were destekkirin.

7- Em hemû gotinên nefretê û hewlên belavkirina fitne û bangên ku dubendiyê dixin navbera hemû pêkhateyên civaka Sûriyeyê red dikin.

8- Komîteyên Rêveber ji bo pêkanîna peymanê herî dereng heta dawiya salê xebatên xwe bidomînin.

REWSENBÎR

Şandeya DBP û DEM Partiyê çûn Rojava
24.04.2025

Şandeya ji Hevserokê Partiya Herêmên Demokratîk (BDP) Keskîn Bayindir, endamê MYK a Partiya Wekhevî û Demoratîk a Gelan (DEM Partî) Serhat Eren, Parlementera DEM Partî Salîha Aydenîz, Gulcan Kaçmaz û Mehmet Kamaç pêk tê, serdana Rojava kirin.

Şandeya ku di deriyê Pêşxabûr re derbasî Bakur û Rojhilatê Sûriyeyê bû, wê rêzehevdîtinan bike û tevlî Konferansa Neteweyî bibe.

Li Rojava rojek dîrokî; Konferansa Neteweyî pêk hat
26.04.2025

Bi serperiştiya ENKS û PYNKyê bi beşdariya 400 delegeyan Konferansa Yekrêzî û Yekhelwesta Kurdî ya Rojavayê Kurdistanê li bajarê Qamişloyê dest pê kir.

Nûnerê Serok Mesûd Barzanî û Fermandarê HSDyê Mezlûm Ebdî bi hev re derbasî salona konferansê bûn.
Li salona konferansê Alaya Kurdistanê, Alaya Sûriyeyê hatine danîn.
Şandeyên Yekîtiya Niştimanî ya Kurdistanê (YNK) Partiya Demokrata Kurdistanê (PDK) DEM Partî û Nûnerê Serok Mesûd Barzanî yê Rojavayê Kurdistanê Dr. Hemîd Derbendî ji bo piştgirî û tevlîbûna konferansê hazir bûn.
Armanca Konferansa Neteweyî ya Rojavayê Kurdistanê bihêzkirina yekîtiyê û çareserkirina nakokiyên navxweyî yên derbarê danûstandinên bi Şamê re ye ku demeke dirêj e berdewam dikin.

Encûmena Niştimanî ya Kurd a Sûriyeyê (ENKS) û Yekîtiya Partiyên Neteweyî (PYNK) serkêşiya konferansê dikin.
Konferans bi sirûda Ey Reqîb dest pê kir.

Dihok bû şampiyonê Kluban ya Kendavê
15.04.2025

Tîma futbolê ya Dihokê li hemberî tîma futbolê ya Qadisiyeyê ya Kuweytê 2-1 bi ser ket û bû Şampiyonê Kluban a Kendavê. Maça pêşî li Kuweytê hatibûn listnin û maç 0-0 bi dawî bûbû.
Dihok û Qadisiye îro di gava duyem a fînalê de li stadyuma Dihokê hatin pêşberî hev. Nîveka yekem bê gol bi dawî bû.
Dihoka ku bêhtir kotrola lîstikê di destê wê de bû, maçê 2-1 qezenç kir û bû şampiyonê Kluban ya Kendabê.

Nêçîrvan Barzanî tevlî merasîma veşartina termê Papa Francis bû
26.04.2025

Li ser navê Herêma Kurdistanê û Îraqê Serokê Herêma Kurdistanê Nêçîrvan Barzanî beşdarî merasîma cenazeyê Papa Francis bû. Di merasîma ku li Romayê pêk hat û nêzikî 400 hezar kes beşdar bûn de, gelek serokdewlet, serokwezîr, şah û şajin amade bûn.
Li ser daxwaza Papa Francis, cenazeyê wî ji Bazîlîkaya St. Petrusê ya ku şeş kîlometreyan ji Romayê dûre, li Dêra St. Mary Majorê hat veşartin.

Sendîkaya Rojnamegeran a Ewropayê dê li Başûrê Kurdistanê navendekê veke
27.04.2025

Sendîkaya Rojnamegeran a Yekîtiya Ewropayê dê bi hevahengiya Rêxistina Nûçegihanan li Herêma Kurdistanê navendeke çavdêriyê veke. Armanca navendê çavdêrîkirina azadiya derbirînê û azadiya karê rojnamegeriyê ye.
Serokê Rêxistina Nûçegihanan Hozan Qadir got:
"Li ser banga rêxistina me, şandeyeke Sendîkaya Rojnamegeran a Yekîtiya Ewropayê hat Herêma Kurdistanê û bi armanca agahdariya ji rewşa azadiya derbirînê û azadiya karê rojnamegeriyê veke."

REWSENBÎR

Li Lozanê Enstîtuya Kurdî vebû
04.05.2025

Enstîtuya Kurdî ya Lozanê roja 4 Gulana 2025'an bi resepsiyona ragihandinê ve damezirandina xwe îlan kirin.

Gelek nivîskar, akademisyen, nûnerên siyasî û nûnerên saziyên Diyasporayê beşdarê resepsiyonê bûn. Deklarasyona Enstîtuya Kurdî ya Lozanê dê bi Kurdî û Fransî hate xwendin. Amanca esasî ya Enstîtuya Lozanê, parastina mafê çarenûsê yê neteweya Kurd ji alîyên dîrokî, huqûqî û siyasî ve û di astên sazûmanî û şêwazên meşrû de amadekirina asta hizrî ye.

PKK´ê di qongreya 12. de xwe fesih kir
09.05.2025

PKKê daxûnad ku, Kongreya 12emîn li ser "Banga Aştî û Civaka Demokratîk" a Rêberê PKKê Abdullah Ocalan hate lidarxistin.

Di daxûniyê de hate gotin ku Kongreya 12emîn roja 5-7ê Gulanê hatiye lidarxistin û wiha hate gotin: "Li ser vî bingehî Kongreya PKK'ê ya 12'emîn, ji bo pêvajoya pratîkbûnê ji aliyê Rêber Apo ve bê meşandin û birêvebirin biryarên fesihkirina avahiya rêxistinî ya PKKê û bidawîkirina rêbaza têkoşîna çekdarî girtiye û xebatên li ser navê PKK'ê daye meşandin bi dawî kiriye."

Şêx Seîd di 100. salvegera şehadeta xwe de hate bibîranîn
29.06.2025

Komelaya Mala Kurdan şaxa Lozanê, di 100. salvegera şehadeta Şêx Seîd de, li bajarê Lozan ya Swizlandê bi konferansek bibîr anî.

Konferans roja 29 Hezîranê bi beşdarbrûna Şêz Murşîd Xeznevî û newîyê Şêx Seîd Abdullilah Fırat ve pêk hat.

Rayederên Komelaya Mala Kurdan di qonferansê de, destnîşan kiririn ku, " Sed sal di ser de derbas bûye, lê hêj jî, cihê gorên mezinên me ne diyar in. Divê demildest arşîv vebîn, cihê gor Şêx Seîd, Seidê Nursî û Seyîd Riza were diyarkirin."

Cenazeyê Eyşe Şan'ê piştî 29 salan anîn Amedê
18.06.2025

Cenazeyê efsaneya muzîka Kurdî, Eyşe Şanê, piştî 29 salan ji wefata wê, anîn Amedê, bajarê ku lê ji dayik bûye.

Cenazeyê hunermenda ku di sala 1996an de li Îzmîrê jiyana xwe ji dest dabû, piştî salan li gorî wesiyeta hate veşartin.

Ji bo Ayşe Şanê saet di 08:00ên sibê li Balafirgeha Amedê merasîmek hate lidarxistin.

Piştî merasîmê cenaze saet di 10:00an de dê li Goristana Yenîkoyê hate veşartin.

Şêx Seîd li Almanyayê hate bibîranîn
27.06.2025

Li Almanyayê bi wesîleya salvegera 100. ya serhildana Şêx Seîd û darvekirina wî û hevalên wî, Însiyatîfa Meleyên Kurdistanê li ser girîngiya yekîtiya netewî panelek lidarxistin.

Panel roja 27 Hezîrana 2025'an li bajarê Marburgê bi beşdarbûna Şêx Mursîd Xiznevî hate lidarxistin.

Şêx Murşid Xiznewî di panêle de diyar kir azadiya gelê Kurd tenê bi yekîtiya netewî dikare pêk were.

Şêx Xiznewî diyar kir Şêx Seîd li pey heq û heqîqetê bû da zanîn ew ne tenê rêberekî olî bû di heman demê de rêberekî siyasî bû.

Xiznewî anî ziman sedema sereke ya têkçûna serhildanên Kurdan ji ber nebûna yekîtiya netewî bû û got,

"Li cihê ku yekîtî lê nebe, xiyanet, şikestin û têkçûn pêk tê. Eger em dildarê Kurdistanê bin, erka me ya sereke avakirina yekîtiya netewî ye."

Her wiha Xiznewî destnîşan kir di mijara Kurdistanê de divê di çarçoveya partiyan bê derketin û got, "Kurdistan ne ya partiyan e, Kurdistan ya gel e. Divê em nêrînên siyasî li aliyekê bihêlin û bi hevre xwedî li welatê xwe derkevin.

REWŞENBÎR

Komeleya Mala Kurdan berfirehtir dibe

Mala Kurdan 3 şaxê nû vekir. Li Qamişlo, Holanda û Aarau wek fermî dest bi xebatên xwe kirin.

Piştî li Bajarê Lozanê li bajarê Aarau yê Isviçreyê jî şaxa xwe vekir. Şêx Murşid Xiznewî jî beşdarê merasîa vekirinê bû.

Li Rojava jî piştî Heseke şaxek din jî, li bajarê Qamişlo hate vekirin.

Her wiha şaxek nû jî li Holanda li bajarê Rotterdamê vebû û dest bi çalakiyên perwerde û çandî kirin.

Li Almanya Zanîngeha bi Perwerdehiya Kurdî

Li bajarê Dresden ê Almanyayê, yekem zanîngeha ku sîstema wê ya perwerdehiyê bi zimanê Kurdî ye, dê were avakirin.

Li vê zanîngehê ku yekem car li Almanyayê perwerdehiya bi Kurdî dide, xwendekarên Kurd, Alman û biyanî dê karibin di beşên Kurdolojî, wêje û endazyariyê de bi zimanên Kurdî, Îngilîzî û Almanî perwerdehiyê bibînin.

Vekirina Zaningeh ji hêla Deutsches Kurdisches Forum e. V. ve tê organize kirin.

Li Bakûr Muzeya Qazî Mihemed hate vekirin
13.07.2025

Li navçeya Dîgorê ya Qersa Bakurê Kurdistanê, Mala Muze û Çanda Qazî Mihemed hat vekirin.

Rewşenbîr û siyasetmedarê Kurd Mahmut Alinak bi îmkanên xwe yên şexsî li gundê Mewrekê yê navçeya Dîgorê ya Qersê ji bo bîranîna damezirînerê Komara Kurdistanê Qazî Mihemed, Mala Muze û Çandê ya Qazî Mihemed vekir. Nûnerên partiyên siyasî, dezgehên sivîl û gelek kesayet beşdarî vekirina muzeye bûn

Bi peymaneke ku di navbera Navenda Çand û Hunerê ya Kurdistanê û Weqfa Îsmaîl Beşîkçî de hatiye îmzekirin ve arşîva pirtûkxaneya weqfê dê bibe dîjîtal.

Bi hezaran pirtûk, kovar, rojname û belgeyên li ser Kurd û Kurdistanê, ku ji salên 1950î ve ji aliyê civaknas Îsmaîl Beşîkçî ve hatine komkirin, dê bi alîkariya teknîkî ya Navenda Çand û Hunerê ya Kurdistanê derbasî qada dîjîtal bibin. Bi saya vê peymanê, berhemên Pirtûkxaneya Weqfa Îsmaîl Beşîkçî dê li ser plat**formên dîjîtal ji bo herkesî re vekirî bin.**

Kampanyaya 'Pirtûka bi Tirkî bîne, pirtûka bi Kurdî bistîne'
03.04.2025

Weşanxaneya Liverte ji bo xwendina bi Kurdî zêdetir bike dest bi qampanyaya, "Pirtûkeke Tirkî bîne pirtûkeke Kurdî bistîne" kir. Di çarçoveya vê qampanyayê de xwendekar dema pirtûkek bi Tirkî binin wê karibin pirtûkek bi Kurdî belaş bistinin.

Xwediyê Pirtûkxaneya Liberte yê Şivan Zeren diyar kir ku ji bo têkoşîna li dijî zextên ser zimanê Kurdî ew ê kampanyaya dest pê kiriye û ji bo zarokan 5 hezar û ji bo mezinan jî 10 hezar pirtûk amade kirine."

Fîlma "Em Hatin Xapandin" li Turkiyê qedeqe bû
06.03.2025

Fîlmê Derhêner Kazim Oz ya bi navê "Em Hatin Xapandin" ji alîyê Wezareta Çand û Turîzmê ya Tirkîyê ve hate qedexe kirin.

Fîlma "Em Hatin Xapandin" bi zarava Zazakî, Kurmancî û bi zimanê Tirkî li bajarê Dersimê di nav salekê de hatîye kişandin. Fîlmekî komedî ye û mijara jî li ser hilbijartina şaredarîyê ye. Bi tevahî behsa dek û dolabên namzedê şaredar dike û piştî hilbijartinê jî jîyana şaredar bi awayekî komîk tê vegotin.

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Lazim ji bo te îttîfaq
Te'sis nekin em yek
wîfaq Mehwîyyet e bîl-îttîfaq
Aqilê xwe berhev kin hemî
Wext, zeman pir nazik e
Bêîttîfaq tehlûke
Xelqan hemî digel me rik e
Mehwîyyeta me bêşik e
Aqilê xwe berhev kin hemî
Şexsiyetê bavêne der
Yek şexsî şol nayête ser
Yek bin, nemînit bêeser
Şola umîda me li ser
Aqilê xwe berhevkin hemî
Abdurrahim Rehmî