

The Myth Of The Moderate Kurdish Rebel

by

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on

[Voltaire Network](#)



In this third and final part of her inquiry into the claim to create a Kurdish state outside the historic Kurdish territories and to the detriment of the Arab and Christian populations, Sarah Abed draws a terrible observation. This article may seem to be partial to some of our readers. Yet all reported items are accurate and can be easily verified.

Kurds and Assyrians: a tumultuous past and present

Much of what the Kurds claim as their own unique culture is actually borrowed from older cultures, such as the Assyrians, Armenians and Suryoye. In fact, much if not all of the land in Eastern Turkey that the Kurds claim as their own once belonged to the Armenians. It is hardly surprising, then, that the Kurds assisted in the Turkish genocide of Assyrians (1) and the 1915 genocide of Armenians (2).



A group of men excavate the remains of victims of the Armenian genocide in modern day, Deir ez-Zor, Syria, 1938.

Also known as "Shato du Seyfo," or the "Year of the Sword," this genocide targeted Christians in the Ottoman Empire during World War I, mainly in 1915 (3). The size of the Assyrian population was reduced by as much as 75 percent as a result.

On the Nineveh plains of northern Iraq, the Kurds dwell in cities such as "Dohuk" (formerly known by the Assyrian name of Nohadra). But these cities are "theirs" only in that they have established a relatively recent presence there.

Employing the criteria of cultural identity and thousands of years of historical authenticity, these lands are, and have been, uniquely Assyrian. The Kurds were essentially "given" these lands in the early 1970s as a means of drawing their eyes away from the oil-rich lands in and around the Iraqi city of Kirkuk. To this end, there were large migrations of Kurds into Dohuk which displaced, often forcibly, Assyrians who had far greater legal and historical claims to these lands.

This is a tactic commonly employed by the Kurds when attempting to ascribe validation to their "sacred quest" of establishing a Kurdish state – something which has never existed at any point in recorded history. By defining "Kurdistan" as any place where Kurds happen to dwell at any given point, they seem to be going by the maxim "possession is nine-tenths of the law" – which may work well in determining criminal liability, but not so well in determining one's homeland.

In the early 1970s, the Kurds of Nineveh began to fall into what would become a familiar pattern of being used as a pawn of U.S. interests. In this instance, they betrayed their host country when the U.S. – through its puppet, the Shah of Iran – began arming them and encouraging them to rise up against the government.

The Iraqi government cracked down, which resulted in many Kurds being forced out of the lands they had only recently acquired. Iraq and Iran came to a diplomatic resolution and the Kurds were left holding the proverbial bag in what would also become a recurring scenario. Nearly the exact same

phenomenon occurred in the 1980s and 1990s when, during the first Gulf War, a no-fly zone was established that granted the Kurds a tangible measure of international support and protection.



Kurdish guerrillas of the Kurdistan Democratic Party, guard the entrance of Irbil, Iraq, Sept. 1, 1996, after they seized the main Kurdish city from the rival Patriotic Union of Kurdistan on, Aug. 31, 1996. Iraqi President Saddam Hussein's forces stormed Irbil to dislodge one Kurdish group, the Patriotic Union of Kurdistan, and allow its rival, the KDP, to move in. Internal quarrels have long plagued the estimated 20 million Kurds who live in the mountainous region where the borders of Syria, Turkey, Iraq, Iran, Armenia and Azerbaijan converge.

"Despite the oppression the Kurds have suffered at the hands of the Turks, they have not learned to be tolerant. In the Kurdish autonomous of North Iraq, The Kurdish Regional Government (KRG) are acting in the same way as the Turkish government has for 90 years against Kurds and Assyrians. Reports of systematic abuses against Assyrians within the Kurdish autonomy in Iraq are constantly increasing in number. There is organized harassment, sanctioned by the Kurdish authorities. The aim is obviously the same as that of the Turks, to assimilate or expel the Assyrian indigenous people who have lived in these parts of the country for more than 7,000 years." Augin Haninke wrote in her article *The Kurds: Victims and Oppressors with Assyrian* (4)

[Assyrian Leader David Jindo Assassinated by Kurdish YPG Forces](#)

As explained in the video above, Kurdish security forces in Syria tortured and murdered Assyrian military commander David Jindo after a false invitation under the pretense of cooperation. This was a move reminiscent of Kurdish leader Simko Shikak's 1918 assassination of Assyrian Patriarch Mar Shimun XXI Benyamin, which took place when he invited the patriarch into his home.

The Kurdistan Regional Government (KRG) of northern Iraq claims that it is \$25 billion dollars in debt, despite having negotiated its own oil deals and received significant amounts of foreign aid (5). One has to question how much corruption exists within the Kurdish administration for it to be in the financial situation it claims to be in. This has resulted in circumstances where small charity groups are left to facilitate and distribute aid to the Assyrians and Yazidis, who are supposed to be under the governorship of the KRG.



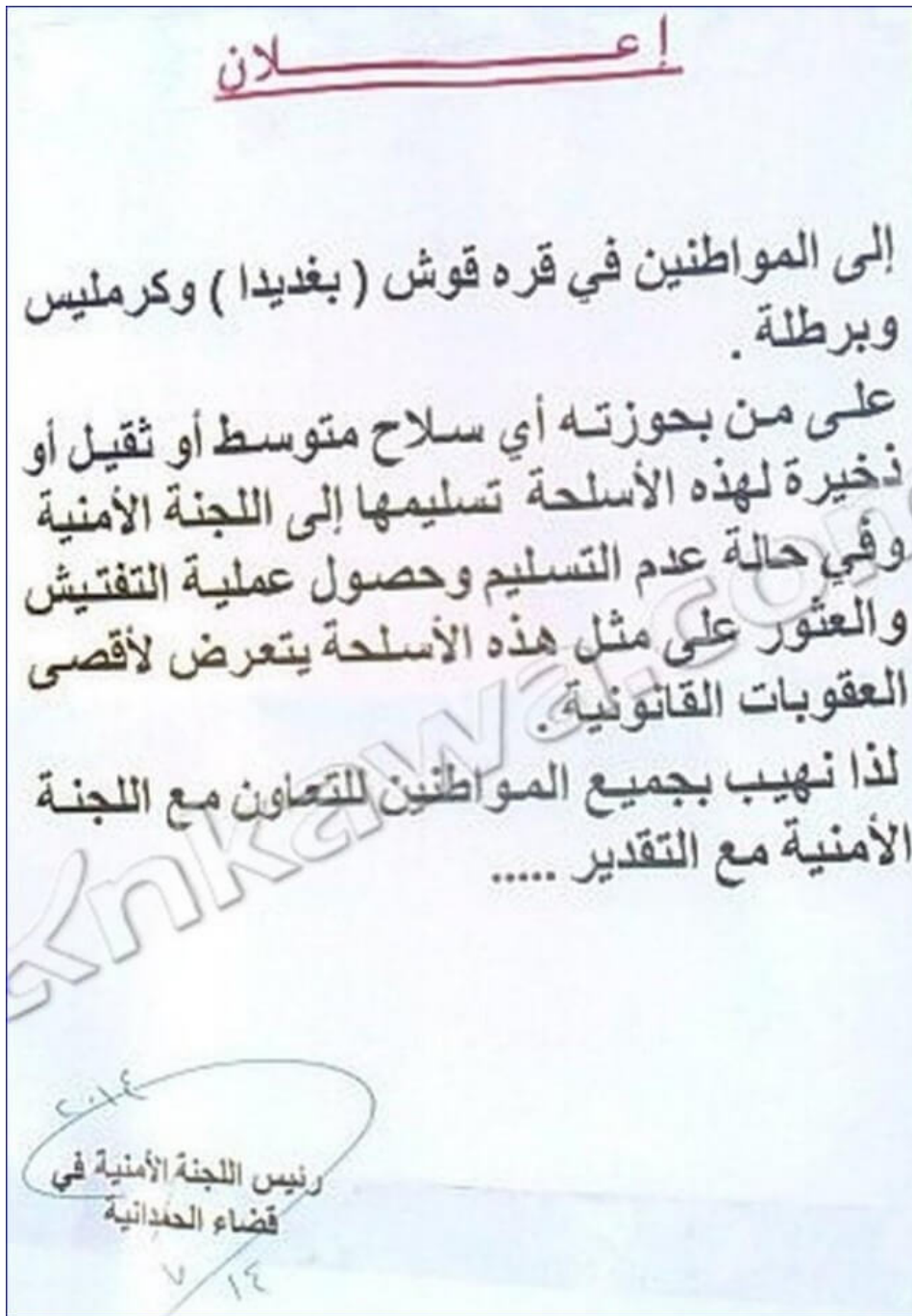
Sporting a revised version of the phrase "Mesopotamia: The Cradle of Civilization," this sign is located near the Assyrian heritage site of Khinis in Dohuk Province. Such sites are typically unguarded and are often vandalized.

In 2011, imams in Dohuk encouraged Sunni Kurds to destroy Christian churches and businesses. In response, shops were attacked and clubs were besieged by mobs of people numbering in the hundreds. Hotels and restaurants were attacked with small arms fire (6).

In recent years, Kurds have continued acting disingenuously towards Christian minorities, including Assyrians, and even Yazidis. Their abuses have gone far beyond historical revisionism – an example of which can be seen in the picture below. This was also seen when they took refuge in northern Syria in the early 19th century and proceeded to drive Arabs and Armenians out of numerous towns.

Modern day horrors as Kurds allow Daesh to murder Assyrians

In July 2014, as Daesh began its incursion into Iraqi territory, the Kurdistan Democratic Party (KDP) began its systematic disarmament of Assyrians and several other ethnic groups so that it could use their weapons in its own struggle.



A disarmament order that was circulated by the KRG in Assyrian towns on the Nineveh plains.

Notices were circulated threatening severe punishment for noncompliance. Assurances were given that the Peshmerga would provide some degree of protection.

But as Daesh advanced, the Peshmerga took the weapons and fled, following the same example as the Iraqi Army.

This left the Assyrians and Yazidis with no means to resist or defend themselves against Daesh. Reports even surfaced of these same Peshmerga gunning down Yazidis who tried to prevent them from fleeing with all the weapons.

Haydar Shesho, a Yazidi commander who managed to procure weapons from the Iraqi government, was then arrested by KDP authorities for organizing an "illegal" militia.

This scene was repeated elsewhere throughout the country, as 150,000 Assyrians were forced to flee



the Nineveh plains, their ancestral land.

These actions can only be seen as a deliberate ploy by the Kurdish leadership to allow foreign forces to violently cleanse these areas of all non-Kurdish residents and then, with the help of their U.S. allies, retake and "liberate their lands."

[Assyrians Demand International Support to End Kurdish Land Theft & Occupation of Assyrian Lands](#)

On April 13, 2016, Kurdish security forces blocked hundreds of Assyrians from participating in a protest outside of the Kurdistan Regional Government Parliament building. The protest was planned in response to the ongoing confiscation of Assyrian land by Kurds in northern Iraq.

Many testimonies have surfaced, such as a statement given to the UK Parliament by Yazidi ex-captive Salwa Khalaf Rasho, in which it is said that the Peshmerga, eager to flee first ahead of Yazidi civilians, has refused requests to stay and protect Yazidis or at least leave them their weapons. They had even reassured the Yazidis that they should return to their homes, where they would be defended.

Some Peshmerga ultimately started firing on Yazidis when their protests grew forceful – killing some of them – in order to clear the way for their convoy of vehicles to pass unhindered. Yazda, an organization that campaigns for Yazidi genocide recognition, wrote in its last report in January 2016: "Had they (Yazidis) been defended for one day, they could have been evacuated safely and the massacres and enslavement crisis could have been averted."

The following is an excerpt from Rasho's testimony to the UK Parliament in which she pleaded for help after escaping eight months of Daesh slavery, rape and multiple attempted suicides (7).

"My name is Salwa Khalaf Rasho. I was born in 1998 and was in the ninth grade. I was leading a simple and modest life with my family until the day when Daesh attacked Shengal on August 3, 2014. I liked my city, Shengal, very much. I grew up under the principle of coexistence with all societies within the community, regardless of one's religion or sect, because the values of my religion do not allow to hate others and discriminate against them.

Therefore, Shengal was well known as the city of tolerance and ethnic diversity. What happened was shocking and unexpected, because we saw Daesh as our brothers. With this, I mean the Arab tribes of the villages that belong to Shengal. Suddenly, they became monsters and wolves. They collaborated with Daesh when Yazidi women and children were enslaved and men were killed.

There were about 9,000 Peshmerga in my city who were armed with various types of weapons. They said to us, 'We will protect and defend Shengal, and Daesh will only enter Shengal over our dead bodies. We will defend Shengal until the last bullet.'"

Unfortunately, they ran away without any resistance and without warning or giving notice to the civilians so we could escape from falling into the arms of Daesh monsters. They left us women and children to our cold-blooded fate. I and the people with me tried to flee into the mountains like the others." Watch: How Kurds disarmed Assyrian Christians and abandoned them to Daesh:

A history of human rights abuses

In light of these horrors, it should easily be understood why the Kurds would have a vested interest in claiming Arab, Assyrian or Armenian history as their own. Failing in that endeavor, they often resort to destroying any relevant history altogether. In this aspect, they operate in a similar manner to Daesh.

Every time the Kurds failed in an attack against Turkey, they would migrate to Syria and try to claim Syrian land as their own. For instance, they tried to claim the Syrian city of Ayn al Arab, naming it "Kobani." The origin of the name is the word "company," a reference to a German railway company that built the Konya-Baghdad railway. The Kurds also claimed Al Qamishli, another Syrian city,



as their illegal capital and renamed it Qamishlo (8).

It's worth mentioning that the Kurds are not even a majority in the land they claim as theirs in northeast Syria. For example, in the governorate of Al Hasakah, they amount to about 30 to 40 percent of the population. That number has decreased since the outbreak of the current Syrian conflict, as many Kurds have left for European countries.

Most of them have fled to Germany, where their numbers are about 1.2 million, a little less than the number of Kurds living in Syria. However, they do not seem concerned about seeking autonomy there. They only seek it in the Middle Eastern countries that have provided them with refuge all of these years – these are the countries they want to stab in the back instead of thanking them for their hospitality.

Amnesty International's many refutable allegations against the Syrian government and the Syrian Arab Army cannot be taken at face value in the absence of other corroborating reports (9). In some cases, however, they do report truthfully, such as when they released a report in 2015 accusing the YPG, the militia of Syria's Kurdish population, of a range of human rights abuses (10).

"These abuses include forced displacement, demolition of homes, and the seizure and destruction of property," the group wrote. "In some cases, entire villages have been demolished, apparently in retaliation for the perceived support of their Arab or Turkmen residents for the group that calls itself the Islamic State (IS) or other non-state armed groups." Amnesty International has also documented the use of child soldiers, according to Lama Fakih, a senior crisis advisor for the group.

The Kurds claim that their "Kurdistan" is "multicultural and multireligious," which is disingenuous when you consider that those additional cultures consist of people now dwelling amongst a Kurdish majority in lands the Kurds took by force. These people will be faced with the prospect of casting meaningless votes on Kurdish independence since, even if they all voted "no," they would nonetheless be outvoted by the Kurdish "yes" majority and as a result would still find themselves subject to a Kurdish government and agenda.

Why are they stateless?

The Sykes-Picot agreement, officially known as the Asia Minor Agreement, was a secret 1916 agreement between the United Kingdom and France, to which the Russian Empire assented (11). It set the borders for countries like Syria, Iraq, and Jordan, but the Kurds held little or no influence. The main purpose of the agreement for the French and British was to bolster their own influence and power in the region. The Kurds have made the argument that they were promised land at the time, but were then cut out of the deal at the last minute.

Kurdish history in the 20th century is marked by a rising sense of Kurdish nationhood focused on the goal of establishing an independent Kurdistan in accordance with the Treaty of Sèvres of 1920. Countries like Armenia, Iraq and Syria were able to achieve statehood, but the prospective Kurdistan was in the way of the newly founded state of Turkey, established by Mustafa Kemal Atatürk. The state of Kurdistan has simply never existed.



Kurds leave Kirkuk, Iraq for Erbil on March 28, 1991 after the Iraqi army bombarded the area, to reclaim it from Kurdish rebels.

The only areas in the Middle East where the Kurds were able to establish some semblance of legal autonomy are the Kurdish Regional Government (KRG) in Iraq – where minorities are well-protected under new laws – and Israel (12).

As a result of the disparity between areas of Kurdish settlement and the political and administrative boundaries of the region, a general agreement among Kurds could not be reached regarding borders. However, the Treaty of Sèvres was not implemented and was superseded by the Treaty of Lausanne. The current Iraq-Turkey border was agreed upon in July 1926. While Article 63 of the Treaty of Sèvres explicitly granted full safeguards and protections to the Assyro-Chaldean minority, this reference was dropped in the Treaty of Lausanne.

It's worth noting that the Iraqi Kurds are situated on the country's oil-rich fields (13). Syria's Hasakah province – which the Kurds are illegally claiming as their territory and which includes their self-appointed capital, Al Qamishli – also contains some of Syria's most valuable oil fields. Therefore, it is no coincidence that the U.S. is putting its money on the Kurds.

Unethical and violent treatment of minorities, particularly Christians

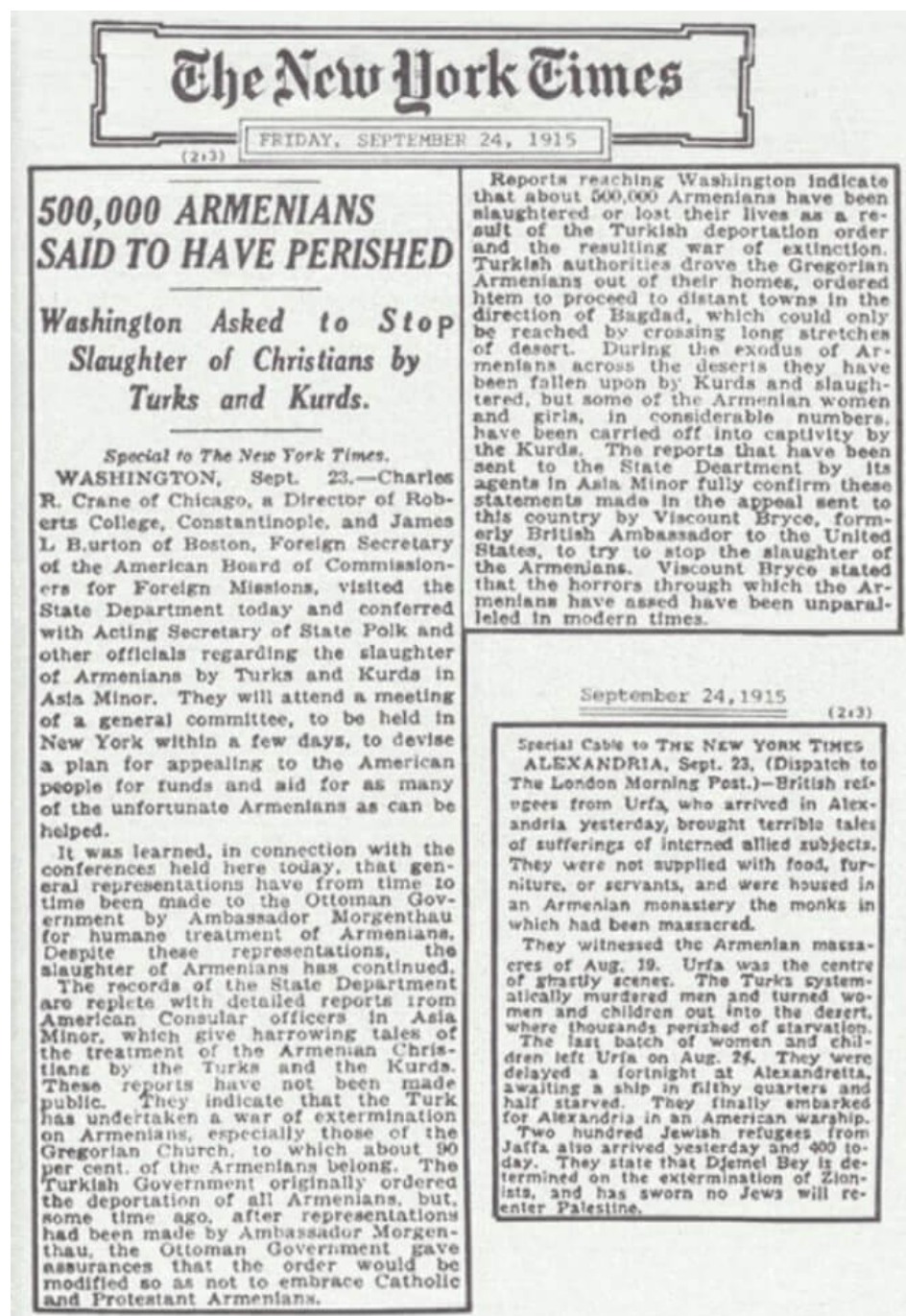
According to Rûdaw, in an article written in 2014, "Last year Ahmed Turk, a Kurdish politician in Turkey, declared that the Kurds have their share of 'guilt in the genocide, too,' and apologized to the Armenians. 'Our fathers and grandfathers were used against Assyrians and Yazidis, as well as against Armenians. They persecuted these people; their hands are stained with blood. We as the descendants apologize,' Turk said." (14).

The Kurds have a centuries-long history of persecuting minority groups, having committed genocide against them with alarming frequency. Historical accounts of acts of genocide by the Kurds from 1261 through 1999 are documented in *Genocides Against the Assyrian Nation*.

In A.D. 1261, in what was referred to as "the coming of the Kurds," thousands of Assyrians fled the Nineveh plains villages of Bartillah, Bakhdida (Qaraqosh), Badna, Basihra and Karmilis, moving toward the citadel of Arbil to escape a substantial Kurdish emigration. King Salih Isma'il had ordered



a great number of Kurds to move from the mountains of Turkey to the Nineveh plains. Assyrian villages on the plains were looted and the thousands of Assyrians who were not able to escape to Arbil were butchered by the Kurdish newcomers. A monastery for nuns in Bakhdida was invaded and its inhabitants brutally massacred. A New York Times article from 1915 addressing the mass slaughter of Christians at the hands of Turks and Kurds.



A New York Times article from 1915 addressing the mass slaughter of Christians at the hands of Turks and Kurds.

Kurdish tribes in Turkey, Syria and Iran conducted regular raids and even paramilitary assaults against their Christian neighbors during World War I. The Kurds, acting in accordance with a long-standing tradition of a perceived Kurdish right to pillage Christian villages, were responsible for many atrocities that were committed against Assyrian Christians. A Kurdish chieftain assassinated the patriarch of the Church of the East at a negotiation dinner in 1918, the aftermath of which led to the further decimation of the Christian population.

Kurdish complicity in Armenian genocide



The Armenian genocide was carried out during and after World War I and implemented in two phases: the wholesale killing of the able-bodied male population through massacres and subjection of army conscripts to forced labor, followed by the deportation of women, children, the elderly, and the infirm on death marches leading to the Syrian desert (15). Driven forward by military escorts, the deportees were deprived of food and water and subjected to periodic robbery, rape and massacre.

Other indigenous and Christian ethnic groups, such as the Assyrians and the Ottoman Greeks, were similarly targeted for extermination by the Ottoman government in the Assyrian genocide and the Greek genocide, and their treatment is considered by some historians to be part of the same genocidal policy that targeted the Armenians. Most Armenian diaspora communities around the world came into being as a direct result of the genocide.

In the eastern provinces, the Armenians were subject to the whims of their Turkish and Kurdish neighbors, who would regularly overtax them, subject them to brigandage and kidnapping, force them to convert to Islam, and otherwise exploit them without interference from central or local authorities.

Egged on by their Ottoman rulers, Kurdish tribal chieftains raped, murdered and pillaged their way through the southeastern provinces where for centuries they had co-existed, if uneasily, with the Armenians and other non-Muslims. Henry Morgenthau (16), who served as U.S. Ambassador in Constantinople at the height of the bloodshed, described the Kurds' complicity in his chilling 1918 memoir *Ambassador Morgenthau's Story*:

"The Kurds would sweep down from their mountain homes. Rushing up to the young girls, they would lift their veils and carry the pretty ones off to the hills. They would steal such children as pleased their fancy and mercilessly rob all the rest of the throng...While they were committing these depredations, the Kurds would freely massacre, and the screams of women and old men would add to the general horror." (17).

Discrimination against Feyli Kurds in Iraq

It is important to reiterate that there are many Kurds to whom some of the characterizations presented in this analysis cannot and should not be applied. There are Kurds who have assimilated into their current cultural societies and reject the ideals of the separatist Kurds. Their concerns are mostly political in nature and specific to the nations in which they reside.

They are not interested in establishing a united Kurdish country in the four countries they occupy, through Balkanization, land theft, genocide or any of the other violations against humanity that have been addressed here. In fact, these Kurds have faced discrimination from the Kurdish community as a result of their unwillingness to support the establishment of a Kurdish state.

The Feyli Kurds in northern Iraq are a prime example. Many of them expressed opposition to a referendum on independence announced by the Kurdistan Regional Government (KRG) on June 7, 2017, as they feared it could lead to an escalation of the area's ongoing crisis.

Iraqi Prime Minister Haider al-Abadi laid out the Iraqi government's official position on June 18 (18), stating, "The Kurdistan Regional referendum on secession is illegal, and the federal government will not support it, fund it or participate in it."

The United States (19) and Iraq's neighbors, including Turkey, Iran (20) and Syria, oppose the country's territorial division (21).

Fouad Ali Akbar, a Feyli member of the Baghdad provincial council, told Al-Monitor, "They are Shiite Kurds...neither Shiites nor Kurds have done Feylis justice. Most Feylis are moderate and culturally diverse, and this has prevented them from earning the trust of Kurds and Shiites, who, for ethnic and sectarian reasons, have not wanted them to have a stable identity with normal rights like other Iraqi citizens."

Feyli activist Hassan Abdali said, "We, the Feyli Kurds, consider ourselves original Iraqis. We have deep historical and social roots in Iraq. We defended the country and its people in all the Iraqi liberation movements, in the Iraqi revolt against the British, and we took part in Kurdish movements and Shiite revolutions and also in the fight against the Islamic State (IS). And we faced persecution from Arab and Kurdish nationalist movements." (22)

Ali Akbar also told Al-Monitor, "The majority of Feylis are voicing concerns about the potential displacement, killing, confiscation of funds and systematic looting that they might face in the event of the declaration of independence of Kurdistan as a result of the threats they receive whenever a dispute between the central government and the KRG erupts."

Sarwa Abdel Wahid, head of a KRG parliamentary bloc in Gorran (an Iraqi Kurdish political party), said at a joint press conference with Feyli representatives, including legislators, "The referendum to be held in September in Kurdistan is a partisan referendum that does not represent the ambition of all the Kurdish people, as it has failed to go through the legitimate national institutions."

Kurdish racism against Arabs - especially Syrians

Finnish investigative journalist Bruno Jantti described his experience working in Iraqi Kurdistan while investigating Daesh:

"When working in Iraqi Kurdistan, I was struck by the prevalence of regressive attitudes, including racism and sexism. I returned recently from Iraqi Kurdistan where I spent a couple of weeks investigating the Islamic State (IS) group. Working mostly in the vicinity of Sulaymaniyah and Dohuk, I could not help but notice a great many societal and cultural characteristics that somewhat surprised me.

Considering what is happening right next door in Syria, the level of anti-Syrian racism did catch me off guard. I came across such prejudice almost daily. A taxi driver quipped in Sulaymaniyah: 'These Syrians are ruining our country.' Another taxi driver was quite upset at Syrian kids who were washing car windows and selling tack. 'These are dirty kids,' he said. It was all but unusual that internally displaced persons of Iraqi or Syrian Arab descent who had fled to Iraqi Kurdistan were discussed using such language.

It wasn't just taxi drivers. In the Sulaymaniyah governorate building, an officer deemed it appropriate to prep us for our interviews in refugee camps in the area. She told me, verbatim, that Syrian refugees 'complain about everything.' In another city, a police chief was astonished and disappointed that my colleagues and myself were applying for a permit to work in a camp inhabiting Syrian refugees. The police chief stated: 'But these are Syrian refugees!' There was no shortage of contempt in his voice.

I had been fully aware that Kurdish nationalism flirts with highly questionable portrayals of Arabs, Persians and Turkish people. In Iraqi Kurdistan, I was surprised at how prevalent some of those attitudes seemed to be." (23)

A Well-Curated Myth

The Kurds have gained popularity through effectively marketing themselves to Western audiences as revolutionary, feminist, Marxist "freedom fighters" (24) who have a burning desire to create their version of a utopia where peace for all will reign — an image that Stephen Gowans recently critiqued in "The Myth of the Kurdish YPG's Moral Excellence." (25).



U.S.-backed, Kurdish-led Syria Democratic Forces raise their flag in the center of the town of Manbij after battling ISIS in Aleppo province, Syria

What they actually seek to create is an illegal autonomous state carved out of existing sovereign countries. The freedom they seek is to be brought about by means of slaughtering natives in the countries that they want to Balkanize and divide on sectarian lines (26). They have set about vacating areas of indigenous people, utilizing fear and forceful tactics that are supported by their sponsors but that are in violation of globally accepted human rights. To agree with their cause is to agree with genocidal actions that, in essence, tear people away from their homes and lands while fitting conveniently into the imperial views of Western nations.

Up until recently, Kurds with separatist ambitions were seen in a positive light. But their hidden agenda has now been exposed and their true intentions revealed. Their past and present alliance with Israel and the United States is indicative of these intentions. This can not be dismissed or underappreciated, as it is the hidden foundation on which they have built their mission. The Greater Israel project is in full swing and needs to be halted before it makes any further headway (27).

To support the Kurds' demands for autonomy, and the establishment of a federation at the expense of others in the region, is illegal, profoundly illogical, and a violation of human rights for all of the reasons that have been discussed here. And it bears remembering as well that one of the top leaders of Daesh was a Kurd (28). If the Kurds truly want to live in peace and coexist with others, they must end the excessive historical revisionism in which they incessantly partake; they must forgo alliances that threaten the stability of the countries in which they currently reside; and they must work together and unite with their brethren who share the same geographical land. Only then will the Kurds truly have friends other than the mountains.

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