

Forum:	Security Council
Issue:	The question of the Kurds
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Description of the issue:

Who are the Kurds?

The Kurds are an ethnic group inhabiting an area in the middle east, which in parts consists of: Turkey (Northern Kurdistan), Iraq (Southern and Iraqi Kurdistan), Iran (Eastern or Iranian Kurdistan), Syria (Western Kurdistan or Rojava) and Armenia. The culture of the Kurds differs from those Nations but it is most closely related to the Iranian culture. The Kurds are the fourth biggest ethnic group in the middle east but they have never established their own nation.

The population of the Kurds is estimated to consist of around 30-32 million individuals. There is no distinct telling of how many percent of Kurds live in which nation of the middle east.

The Kurds influence many developments in the countries they inhabit and also contributed to the conflict in Syria and Iraq, where they have actively fought the terror organization IS (Islamic State).

In different time periods over the last 100 years, the Kurds have had several different alliances, governments, unions and parties even though they never had their own nation. The most important ones are the following:

The Kurdistan Democratic Party (KDP), Kurdistan Worker Party (PKK), Kurdistan Regional Government (KRG) and The Patriotic Union of Kurdistan (PUK).



Background information:

Why don't the Kurds have their own nation?

In the early 20th century the Kurds began to unite and considered forming a homeland which often is referred to as Kurdistan. Due to many factors, this homeland forming was never achieved and therefore the Kurds still live in the region of where Kurdistan would have been located but without an own nation.

Historical background:

Sykes-Picot agreement/Asia minor agreement, 1919

Signed on 16th May 1919, this agreement distributed the controls and influences of the UK and France in Southwestern Asia. Its consequences are still seen today in the conflict with terrorism but also with territorial issues in the region. (view image 2)

Treaty of Sévres, 1920

The Treaty of Sévres was established after World War 1 by the British Empire, France, Italy and Japan (principal allied powers) and Armenia, Belgium, Greece, the Hedjaz (region in now West Saudi Arabia), Poland, Portugal, Romania, the Serb-Croat-Slovene State, Czecho-Slovakia and Turkey but also several other nations contributing to smaller parts of the treaty. The treaty was broached the issue of partitioning the Ottoman Empire between the Allies.

Article 62, 63 and 64 are about Kurdistan. They state that ``A Commission sitting at Constantinople [...] shall draft within six months from the coming into force of the present Treaty a scheme of local autonomy for the predominantly Kurdish areas lying east of the Euphrates, south of the southern boundary of Armenia as it may be hereafter determined, and north of the frontier of Turkey with Syria and Mesopotamia.[...] The scheme shall contain full safeguards for the protection of the Assyro-Chaldeans and other racial or religious minorities within these areas [...].

If within one year from the coming into force of the present Treaty the Kurdish peoples within the areas defined in Article 62 shall address themselves to the Council of the League of Nations in such a manner as to show that a majority of the population of these areas desires independence from Turkey, and if the Council then considers that these peoples are capable of such independence and recommends that it should be granted to them, Turkey hereby agrees to execute such a recommendation, and to renounce all rights and title over these areas. [...] If and when such renunciation takes place, no objection will be raised by the Principal Allied Powers to the voluntary adhesion to such an independent Kurdish State of the Kurds inhabiting that part of Kurdistan [...].“

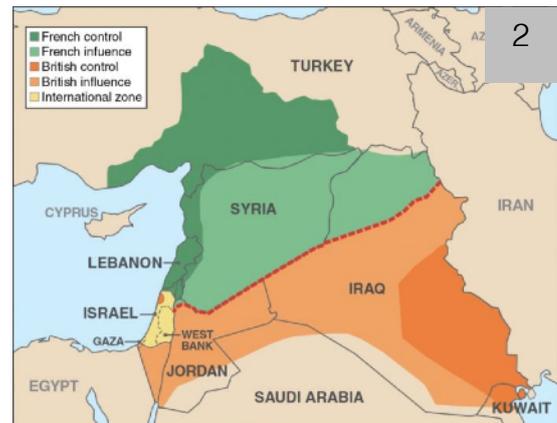
The Kurds thereby have been granted a set time of independence/autonomy in order to build up their minority group to a majority of the population in Turkey which then will call for a vote of independence and if so, this vote shall be granted.

Due to the fact that the area that the Kurds would have been given was going to be under the control of the British Empire, the group of Kurds split. On the one hand, it was a way of being independent, but many Kurdish nationalists did not agree with the idea of following the Christian colonization of the British and therefore fought on together with the Turkish national movement. Others worried that once the British were in charge they would only support Armenians. Many regretted their decision of fighting alongside Turkey because they realized that Turkey would be less religious than anticipated. Some Kurds chose to identify themselves with the new state that was formed.

The Treaty of Lausanne, 1923

Any hopes of forming an own independent state for the Kurds were destroyed by the treaty of Lausanne. This treaty explained the boundaries and formation of Turkish borders and land distribution. No arrangement for the Kurdish minority was made and therefore those citizens remained in their respective countries but without their own nation.

The treaty of Lausanne was signed on July 24th, 1923 in Lausanne (Switzerland). It officially found a solution for the conflict between the Ottoman Empire and The U.K, France, Italy, Japan, Greece and Romania. It was the second attempt of establishing peace between those nations, due to the





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failure of the Treaty of Sévres. The major points of the Treaty of Lausanne were establishing Turkey's borders and recognizing its sovereignty, protection of the Greek orthodox minority in Turkey and the statement of Turkey that Cyprus officially no longer belonged to them. There was no solution for the Kurds in this Treaty.

Iraq 1925 (League of Nations):

The League of Nations presented its full report on July 17th, 1925. It included that Mosul was part of Iraq, and also stated other recommendations. This decision was a success for the League but a disaster for the Kurds who lived in Mosul, due to the missing alliance with Iraq.

Over the next 80 years every move of building up an own independent nation was ignored or destroyed.

Genocide in Iraq, 1963-1988:

Around 1 million individuals of the Kurdish population have disappeared since the 1960's. The beginnings of the genocide started in 1963 with the Arabization of villages near Kirkuk (northern Iraq). In the 1970's and 1980's the *Feyli Kurds* were deported by the Iraqi forces to the border and they were detracted from their Iraqi citizenship and many disappeared forever. An estimated 8.000 male *Barzani Kurds* were murdered in 1983. From 1984 to 1988 there were 13 major chemical bombardments of Kurdish cities and villages. About 4,500 villages were completely destroyed during the reign of Saddam Hussein over Iraq (1976-2003).

Kurdish uprising in 1991:

After the gulf war, the Kurds in Iraq began an uprising against the Shia dominated south of Iraq. During this fight, while there were complications between the United States and Hussein's regime, it was thought to be the perfect time. Civilians went on the streets to fight, to free prisoners (from the genocide) and to slowly take over control. But things fell apart and due to many factors, the uprising was a crucial disaster in which many Kurds died. Hussein was still reigning over Iraq.

Brakuji, 1990's:

In the 1970's, the PUK split from the KDP and both factions wanted the leading position in the civil war in the 90's. They fought, and that fight was known as "Brakuji" which means fratricide/killing of brothers. During this phase the cooperations and alliances that built up over years were severely disrupted and caused the process of establishing an own nation to slow down and to slowly deace. It broke the Kurdish individuals apart.

There was a second conflict between the KDP and PKK, which had a very calm time period during the 2000's but then fractured and is still not brought together again, even in the fight against IS.

Kurdish cooperations and conflicts:

The different Kurdish parties and organizations have always had a complicated relationship with each other. Whereas the situation has been good for quite some years, since the *Brakuji* the alliances were harder to keep and establish.

Referendum Iraq, 2007:

The Kurdish Regional Government (KRG) and the Iraq government were meant to decide upon the „Kirkuk status referendum“ in 2007, which broached the issue about the region of Kirkuk and to whom it belongs. The referendum was never made, it was postponed three times and was never held due to severe dangers and a non-secure situation in Iraq.



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Article 140 of the Iraq constitution states that before such referendum is taken, there must be a sufficient Kurdish population in order for it to be considered Kurdish.

The Kurdish fight against terrorism:

During the war against the IS, the Kurds took over Kirkuk without any opposition. During this war the Kurds fought *against* the IS, alongside with the United States and other Nations that are part of this war. The Kurds have amongst others helped the U.S. to find Bin Laden.

As a result of fighting Anti-IS the Kurdish politics have opened some new opportunities to possibly get a part of the middle east region as their own and to make it Kurdistan. There are many factors deciding this and those imply the Kurdish cooperation between their different parties and opinions.

Glossary:

The Kurdistan Democratic Party (KDP):

The KDP is one of the main Kurdish parties in Iraqi Kurdistan. Its lead sentence is to combine "democratic values and social justice to form a system whereby everyone in Kurdistan can live on an equal basis with great emphasis given to rights of individuals and freedom of expression."

Kurdistan Worker Party (PKK):

The PKK is a left wing party of the Kurds. Its aims are the national autonomy.

Kurdistan Regional Government (KRG):

The KRG is the official ruling government of the Northern region of Iraq.

The Patriotic Union of Kurdistan (PUK):

The PUK is the social democratic party in Iraqi Kurdistan. Its aims are the self-determination, human rights, and democracy and peace for the Kurdish people of Kurdistan and Iraq.

How to prepare as a delegate:

First of all remember that this is not all the information you will need. This research report is written with a special focus on Iraq, since it gives an overview on the major massacres, wars and coalitions with other nations. Please notice that not only Iraq is part of the Kurdish region but also other Middle East nations. I urge you to research more about the issue and especially on your nation's opinion. In order to do this I have listed some good resources to inform yourself about the issue and to read into it. **So, please:**

- Inform yourself about what your nation's opinion is on this issue
- Think about what your country can do to improve the situation
- Be sure who your allies and enemies in the Security Council are
- Make some amendments so that you are ready to debate!
- And last but not least: Write your **position paper** and send it to me!

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UN resolutions:

[A/RES/46/134](#) (Situation on the human rights in Iraq)
[S/RES/687](#) (1991) (about Iraq and its weapons and boundaries)
[Resolution 688](#) (1991)

Useful links:

<http://www.bbc.com/news/world-middle-east-25299553> (Sykes-Picot agreement additional information)
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Uv5-q_9fpro (description video on who the Kurds are)
<https://www.hrw.org/reports/1993/iraqanfal/> (genocide 1963-1988)
<http://ejil.org/pdfs/2/1/1160.pdf> (Kurdish crisis in the aftermath after the second gulf war)
http://www.un.org/en/sc/repertoire/89-92/CHAPTER%208/GENERAL%20ISSUES/Item%2028_SC%20respons%20in%20maint%20IPS.pdf (Security Council responsibility on the issue)

Sources:

<http://www.bbc.com/news/world-middle-east-29702440> (basic information on the Kurds)
<http://treaties.fco.gov.uk/docs/pdf/1920/TS0011.pdf> (Treaty of Sévres)
<http://treaties.fco.gov.uk/docs/pdf/1923/TS0016-1.pdf> (Treaty of Lausanne)
<http://foreignpolicy.com/2015/08/10/sykes-picot-treaty-of-sevres-modern-turkey-middle-east-borders-turkey/> (Sykes-picot treaty)
<http://ejil.org/pdfs/2/1/1160.pdf> (background information on the Kurds)
<https://www.globalpolicy.org/component/content/article/169/36383.html> (1918-1925)
<http://studies.aljazeera.net/en/reports/2015/03/20153884927156246.html> (Brakuji)
<http://uk.gov.krd/genocide/pages/page.aspx?lngnr=12&pnr=37> (genocide 1963-1988)
http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/middle_east/2888989.stm (1991 uprising)
http://www.nytimes.com/2014/12/17/opinion/a-dangerous-rivalry-for-the-kurds.html?_r=0 (Brakuji, Kurdish rivalries of the parties)

Picture sources:

1 - <http://www.bbc.com/news/world-middle-east-29702440>
2- <http://www.independent.ae/2054/100-years-sykes-picot-agreement-legacy-bloodshed/>

Kind regards,

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