

AFRIN TIMES

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VOICE OF CULTURE, IDENTITY & FREEDOM

Payîz 26 | 01

HER LEGACY, OUR INSPIRATION

Remembering
Leila Bedirxhan,
the Kurdish dancer
who moved a nation.

AFRIN: HEART OF KURDISTAN

History, people
and resilience.

CULTURE & HERITAGE

Stories, art and
traditions that
shape our identity.

VOICES OF AFRIN

Interviews, opinions
and perspectives
from our community.



PREMIERE
ISSUE

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About Us

Afrin Times is an independent research center dedicated to exploring the history and present of the Kurdish people. It highlights their intellectual, cultural, and civilizational contributions, while documenting their heritage and role in promoting coexistence and peace.

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Vision

To produce solid academic knowledge on Kurdish history, heritage, culture, and contemporary issues, and to publish research that documents their intellectual, political, and social contributions while promoting values of peace and coexistence.

Mission

To become a trusted academic reference in Kurdish studies and a knowledge platform that fosters an objective understanding of the Kurdish role—historically and in the present—as an essential and active part of the region's civilization.

Values

- Academic independence
- Objectivity and neutrality
- Accuracy and documentation
- Openness and dialogue
- Respect for cultural diversity
- Commitment to the values of peace and human dignity

Strategic Objectives

- Documenting Kurdish history across its various periods using diverse academic sources.
- Highlighting the civilizational and intellectual role of the Kurdish people in the region.
- Studying contemporary issues related to Kurdish society in their political, social, and cultural dimensions.
- Establishing a digital archive for documents, studies, and manuscripts related to the Kurdish people.
- Building research partnerships with academic institutions and regional and international research centers.
- Organizing academic conferences, seminars, and workshops.



Bibliographical Information

By Adhem Sheho

Title: Declamatorium: A Selection of Serious and Humorous Poems for Recitation in Public and Private Gatherings

Editor: Ernst Littfaß (also spelled Littfas)

Publisher: L. W. Krause, Berlin

First edition: 1841

Your copy: Third booklet, third edition

The work was published in several booklets and went through several editions.



Historical Background

During the first half of the 19th century, reciting poems and ballads was an important part of social and cultural life. Literary works were performed in salons, clubs, schools, and family gatherings. The Declamatorium was intended as a practical collection for people who wanted to give such public or private recitations. The collection includes works by well-known German poets such as:

- * Friedrich Schiller
- * Johann Wolfgang von Goethe
- * Ludwig Uhland
- * Adelbert von Chamisso
- * Friedrich Rückert
- * Ernst Moritz Arndt

It also contains poems by authors who are much less well known today. The purpose was to provide suitable texts for a variety of occasions – from solemn and patriotic events to humorous or reflective gatherings.



Who Was Ernst Littfaß?

Ernst Theodor Amandus Littfaß (1816–1874) was a Berlin printer, publisher, and entrepreneur. He later became famous as the inventor of the Litfaßsäule, the advertising column that became a familiar part of the streetscape in many European cities from 1855 onward.

As early as the 1840s, however, Littfaß was involved in publishing various literary works, including the *Declamatorium*.

Scholarly and Historical Value

Today, the different booklets of the *Declamatorium* are valuable sources for the study of literary, theatrical, and cultural history. They provide insight into:

- * which poems were particularly popular among the educated and middle-class public,
- * how the culture of public recitation developed during the 19th century,
- * and which moral, patriotic, and aesthetic values were communicated at the time.

A Remarkable Poem about Revendus Bey

From a cultural and historical perspective, one page of the collection is particularly interesting. It contains a poem about a Kurdish ruler named Revendus Bey (Rewenduz Bey).

The text, presented here in modernized transcription, reads:

Revendus Bey
(Ludwig Kossarski)

Like an oak suddenly falling, struck down by the power of lightning,
so the Kurdish hero fell, mortally wounded, still fighting.
Yet victory was soon won by the Kurdish chiefs,
who were never discouraged by the fate of their prince.

From the battlefield, where the Prince of Kurdistan lay bleeding,
the brave warriors marched away, their chiefs leading them.



Historical Context

This poem appeared in the *Declamatorium* in 1841 and was written by Ludwig Kossarski. What makes it particularly noteworthy is that a German literary publication from the early 19th century already presented a Kurdish ruler as a heroic figure.

The “Revendus Bey” mentioned in the title was most likely Rewenduz Bey (Rawanduz Bey). The name was spelled in different ways in German sources of the 19th century.

It may refer to the famous Kurdish ruler Muhammad Pasha of Soran, also known as Mirê Kor, whose political center was Rawanduz (Rewandiz) and whose power attracted considerable interest in Europe.

Why the Poem Matters

The poem presents the Kurds as:

- * brave warriors,
- * loyal followers of their ruler,
- * a people who remain determined even after the death of their prince,
- * and a people with their own rulers and their own land, explicitly referred to as “Kurdistan.”

The phrase “the Prince of Kurdistan” is especially striking. It shows that the term Kurdistan was already being used naturally in German-language literature in 1841.

Importance for Research

For research into the history of Kurdistan, this source is particularly valuable because it provides evidence of:

- * how Kurds were perceived in 19th-century German literature,
- * the use of the term Kurdistan in a Berlin publication from 1841,
- * and the romantic portrayal of a Kurdish ruler as a heroic and almost legendary figure.

The source could be very useful for an article in *Afrin Times* or for a scholarly study of the representation of Kurds in German-language literature during the 19th century.

If additional pages of the poem are available, the complete text could be transcribed, annotated, and placed within its broader historical context.

The poem continues with the search for a new ruler:

They sought a prince who would equal
the dead man in fame,
who would become a father to the
people and a protector of the mighty
realm.

The warriors stood in serious
discussion, calling out names,
some loudly, others quietly.

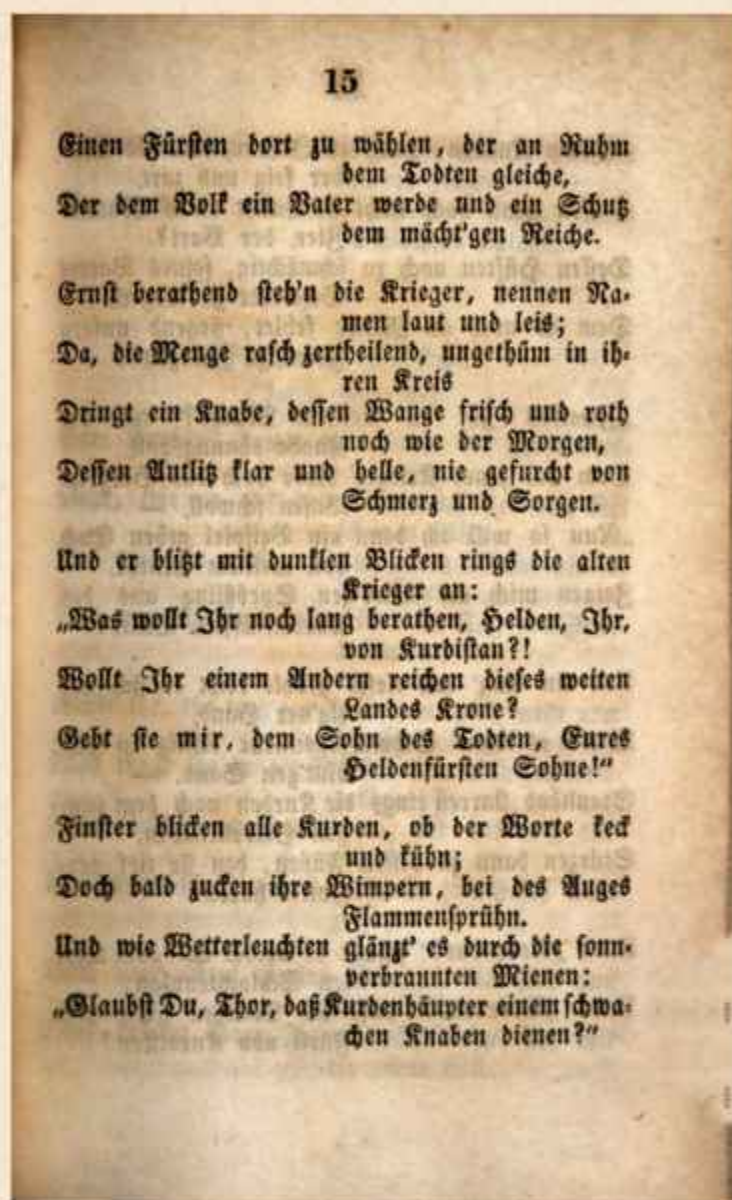
Suddenly, a boy pushed his way
through the crowd. His cheeks were
still fresh and red like the morning,
his face clear and bright, untouched by
pain or worry.

He looked around at the older warriors
with dark eyes and said:

"Why do you continue to deliberate,
heroes of Kurdistan?
Do you intend to give another man the
crown of this vast land?
Give it to me – the son of the dead
man,
the son of your heroic prince!"

The Kurds initially look at him sternly because of his bold and confident words. But they soon begin to notice the determination and fire in his eyes.

"Do you really believe, fool, that Kurdish chiefs would serve a weak boy?"



Historical Interpretation

This page is remarkable for several reasons.

Kurdistan as a Political and Geographical Space

The expression "heroes of Kurdistan" assumes that Kurdistan was understood as a recognizable geographical and political space.

Kurdish Political Autonomy

The poem describes the selection of a new ruler following the death of the previous prince. The warriors and chiefs gather to discuss the succession, suggesting an independent political structure within the world portrayed by the poem.

Legitimacy Through Descent

The young boy bases his claim on his ancestry:

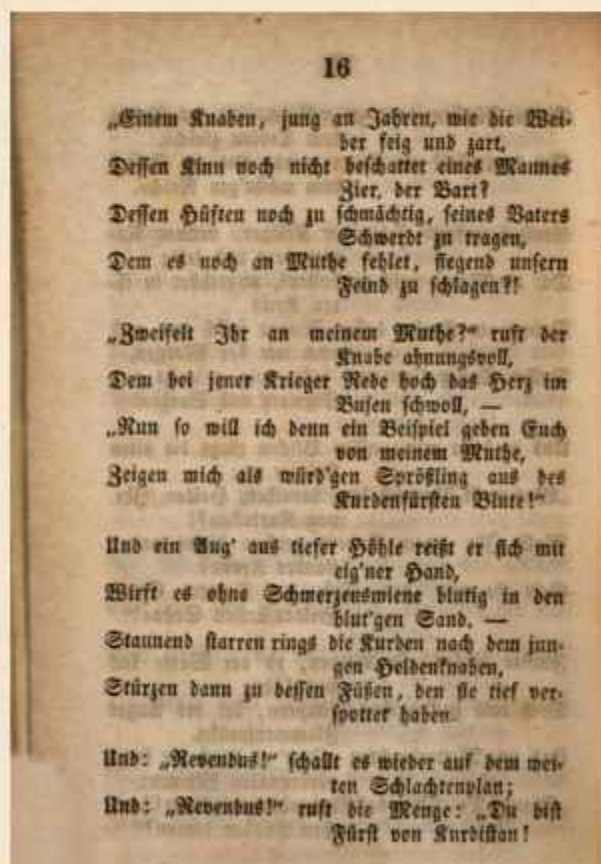
"Give it to me, the son of the dead man,
the son of your heroic prince!"

His claim to inherit the position is therefore placed directly against the judgment of the assembled warriors.

The Young Ruler Is Put to the Test

The experienced warriors initially reject him because they doubt his strength and courage. On the following page, page 16, he responds to their doubts with an extreme act of bravery.

After this act, the warriors finally recognize him as the "Prince of Kurdistan."



Scholarly Significance

Pages 15 and 16 form a complete dramatic scene and represent a rare German-language literary source from 1841 in which the name Kurdistan is used repeatedly, a Prince of Kurdistan is explicitly described, and Kurdish warriors are presented as a distinct community with their own leadership.

For a scholarly publication, it would be worthwhile to transcribe the entire poem and provide historical and literary annotations.

A possible title could be:

“Revendus Bey: Kurdistan in 19th-Century German Literature”

Such a study could serve as evidence of the early European perception of Kurdistan and the Kurds.

Revendus Bey: Continuation

The poem continues:

“A boy so young in years, as timid and delicate as a woman,
whose chin is not yet covered by a man’s beard?

His hips are still too weak to carry his father’s sword,
and he lacks the courage to defeat our enemies in battle?”

“Do you doubt my courage?” the boy cries, deeply moved. The warriors’ words have made his heart burn within him.

“Then I shall give you proof of my courage.

I will show that I am a worthy descendant of the blood of a Kurdish prince!”

With his own hand, he tears out one of his eyes from its socket and throws it, still bloody, onto the blood-soaked sand without showing any sign of pain.

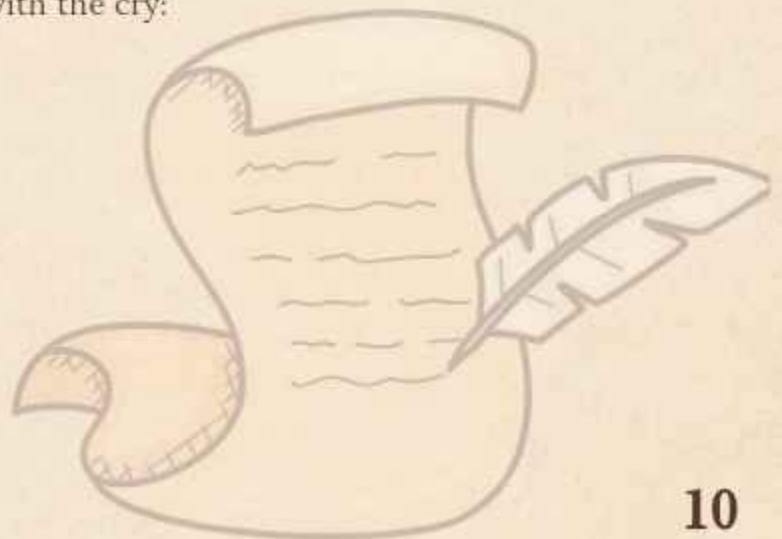
The Kurds stare in astonishment at the young hero. Then they fall at his feet, the very boy they had just mocked.

And once again the battlefield echoes with the cry:

“Revendus!”

And the crowd cries:

“You are the Prince of Kurdistan!”



Historical and Literary Significance

This passage is extraordinary because it uses the expression “Prince of Kurdistan” as early as 1841.

The poem tells the story of a young successor whose courage is initially questioned. In order to prove himself, he performs an extreme act of self-mutilation. In the context of 19th-century Romantic literature, such a dramatic act can be understood as a literary symbol of absolute courage, loyalty, and willingness to sacrifice oneself. It is important, however, to emphasize that this is a literary depiction rather than a historically verified event.

Two aspects are particularly significant: the term Kurdistan is used as a familiar geographical and political designation, and the ruler is explicitly described as the “Prince of Kurdistan,” suggesting that German authors of the first half of the 19th century were already familiar with Kurdistan as a distinct historical region.

Importance for Research

These pages are valuable sources for studying the European perception of the Kurds. They show that German authors could portray the Kurds as a distinct people, Kurdish rulers could appear in European literature as heroic figures, and the name Kurdistan was already established in German-language writing by 1841.

This material could form the basis of a scholarly study under the title:

“Kurdistan in 19th-Century German Literature: The Poem ‘Revendus Bey’ (1841) as a Historical Source.”

Such a study could reproduce the poem in full, explain its historical background, and examine what it tells us about European perceptions of the Kurds during the 19th century.



Kurdistan in 19th-Century German Literature

The Poem “Revendus Bey” (1841) as a Historical Source By Akram Naasan

The history of the Kurds has often been reconstructed through Ottoman and Persian sources, as well as through European travel accounts. Less well known, however, is the fact that Kurdistan also appeared in German literature during the 19th century as a distinct historical and political space.

A remarkable example can be found in the poetry collection *Declamatorium*, published in Berlin in 1841.

The full title of the work was *Declamatorium: A Selection of Serious and Humorous Poems for Recitation in Public and Private Gatherings*. It was edited by Ernst Theodor Amandus Littfaß, who later became famous as the inventor of the *Litfaßsäule*, the advertising column that became a characteristic feature of European cities.

Among the many poems in the collection is a largely forgotten work by the poet Ludwig Kossarski entitled “Revendus Bey.”

A Prince of Kurdistan

The poem tells the story of the death of a Kurdish prince and the search for his successor. The Kurdish warriors gather to choose a new ruler:

“They sought a prince who would equal the dead man in fame,
who would become a father to the people and a protector of the mighty realm.”

While the warriors are discussing the succession, the young son of the dead prince steps forward and boldly demands his father's crown:

“Why do you continue to deliberate, heroes of Kurdistan?
Do you intend to give another man the crown of this vast land?
Give it to me, the son of the dead man,
the son of your heroic prince!”

The older warriors initially doubt him. They consider him too young and too weak to rule. The boy responds not with further arguments, but with an extraordinary act. In order to prove his courage, he tears out one of his own eyes and throws it onto the battlefield. This shocking episode should be understood as a literary motif. In the context of Romantic literature, extreme acts of sacrifice were often used to symbolize extraordinary courage and devotion. It should not be treated as historical evidence that such an event actually occurred.

Only after this act do the warriors recognize him:

“Revendus! ... You are the Prince of Kurdistan!”

The Meaning of the Term “Kurdistan”

From a modern perspective, one of the most striking aspects of the poem is the repeated and completely natural use of the word Kurdistan.

The poet refers to the “heroes of Kurdistan,” the “Prince of Kurdistan,” and the crown of a vast land.

The term is not explained or introduced as something unfamiliar. Instead, it is used as though its meaning were already understood by the intended German readership. This suggests that Kurdistan was recognized in German literary culture as a known geographical and political concept by 1841.

Literature as a Reflection of Its Time

Of course, *Revendus Bey* is not a historical chronicle. It is a Romantic heroic poem, and its events should therefore not automatically be treated as factual historical events.

Nevertheless, literary works can be important cultural sources because they reflect the knowledge, interests, assumptions, and images of the period in which they were produced.

The fact that a Berlin publisher included a poem about a Kurdish prince in a popular collection in 1841 demonstrates that Kurdish history and the idea of Kurdistan had already entered the European literary imagination.

Conclusion

The poem “*Revendus Bey*” can be regarded as one of the lesser-known German-language literary testimonies concerning the Kurds in the 19th century.

It presents Kurdistan as the homeland of a distinct people with its own rulers, traditions, political structures, and history.

For the study of the history of Kurdology and the European perception of the Kurds, the poem therefore deserves closer attention. It provides a fascinating glimpse into how Kurdistan was represented in German literature more than 180 years ago.

Historical Note and Necessary Caution

It is important to distinguish between the literary representation in the poem and established historical fact.

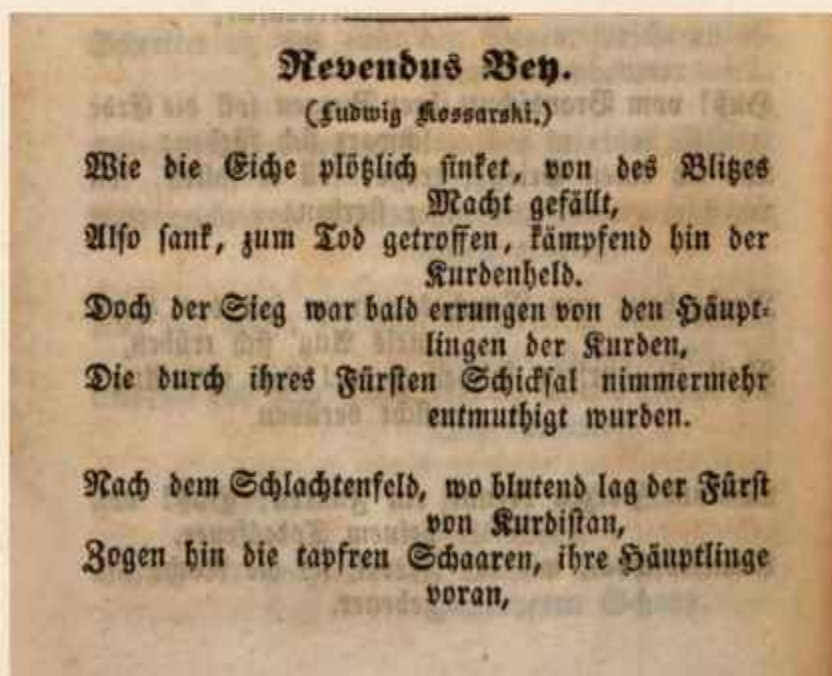
The poem uses the name "Revendus Bey," but the text alone does not allow us to identify the historical person with complete certainty.

It is possible that the poem refers to a Kurdish ruler whose name appeared in different forms in German-language sources of the 19th century. It is also possible that Kossarski drew on contemporary travel accounts, reports, or other literary material and transformed historical information into a Romantic heroic narrative.

For that reason, a scholarly publication should clearly distinguish between what the poem actually says and what can be independently established from historical sources.

Even with this qualification, the poem remains a rare and valuable document for understanding how the Kurds and Kurdistan were represented in German-language culture during the 19th century.

For AFRIN TIMES, the article could be strengthened further by including high-quality facsimiles of the original pages from the 1841 edition. This would allow readers to see the historical source itself alongside the modern transcription and interpretation.



The Town of Rawanduz

Rawanduz lies at the foot of the majestic mountains of Handrên, Zozik, Helgurd, Korek, and Benê Herir, shining like a diamond among deep gorges and valleys. This historic town is not merely a geographical location or a natural and military fortress; it is also a symbol of Kurdish pride, art, resistance, and the magnificent nature of Kurdistan.

Ahmad Qadir Hamadamin

Ahmad Qadir Hamadamin, known as Ahmad Qadiraso Rustayi, was born in 1975 in Rust village, Choman District. He graduated from the Teachers' Institute in Erbil in 1998 and later earned a Bachelor's degree in Law and Politics from Salahaddin University.

He began his public career as an officer in the Soran Security Directorate before moving into local administration. From 2007, he served as director of several sub-districts, including Haji Omaran, Sidakan, and Khalifan. In 2016, he was appointed Mayor (Qaimaqam) of Choman District, and since June 2020, he has served as Mayor of Rawanduz District.

His professional experience focuses on public administration, law, local governance, and community service.



Administrative Structure and Population

The Rawanduz district encompasses a large area. Its population, including the surrounding subdistricts and villages, is estimated at around 30,000 people. The town itself, the subdistrict of Wertê, and dozens of beautiful villages are situated in a landscape characterized by a pleasant climate and diverse natural scenery.

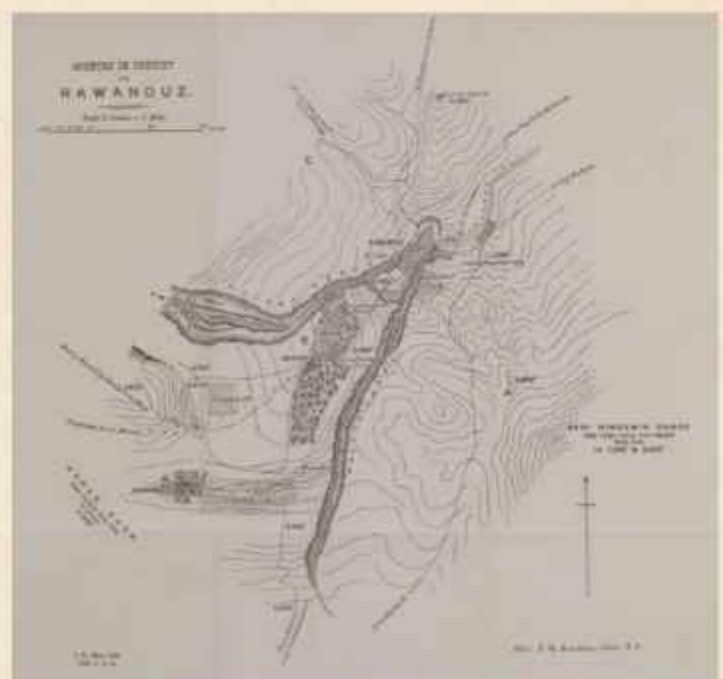
The Principality of Soran and the Golden Era of the Great Emir

Historically, Rawanduz was the distinguished capital of the Principality of Soran and the center of political decision-making and administration in the region. The town experienced its greatest period of prosperity under one of the most renowned historical figures of Kurdistan: Mir Muhammad, known as Mirê Mezin ("the Great Emir") or Mirê Kor, who ruled from 1813 to 1836.



Weapons Production and Military Industry:

With the assistance of skilled engineers and weapons craftsmen, including Vesta Receb, the Emir established workshops for weapons production and metalworking and succeeded in producing his own military cannons. At that time, many countries around the world were not yet capable of manufacturing cannons themselves.



Economic Independence:

Mirê Mezin introduced his own currency for the principality, established fortresses and military storehouses, and extended his authority as far as the regions of Baghdad and Sinê in Eastern Kurdistan.

Historical Conflicts and Decline

Following the alliance between the Ottoman Empire and Iran in 1836, the Principality of Soran was defeated and dismantled, and Rawanduz lost its independence.



During the First World War, the region also faced a devastating attack by the army of Tsarist Russia. The town was burned and looted. Rawanduz resisted the occupying forces of the Ottomans, British, and Russians and experienced a turbulent history marked by conflict and resistance. Places such as Sheikh Balak and the Ali Beg Gorge remain witnesses to this period and to the tireless resistance of the local population.

Breathtaking Nature and Tourist Attractions

The combination of Rawanduz's glorious history with its spectacular gorges and unique natural environment makes it one of the most remarkable places in Kurdistan and an important name in Kurdish history and civilization.

Among the best-known natural and tourist attractions are:

Ali Beg Gorge

Bekhal

Rawanduz Canyon

Xerand Valley

Akoyan Valley

Wertê

Xaneqa Valley

Historical sites include:

Içkale Fortress



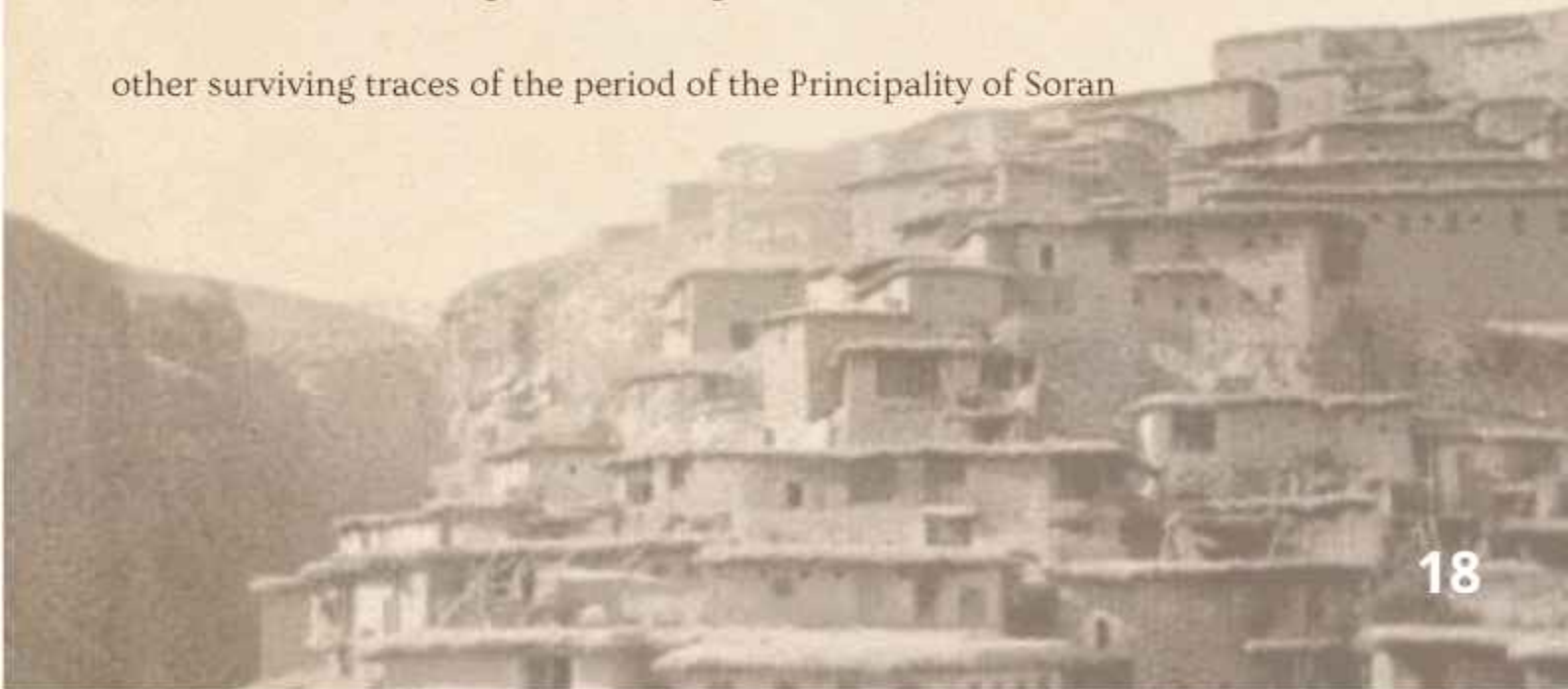
the remarkable fortress and rock formations of Akoyan

Şuşê

the Bersirîn Bridge

remains of ancient weapons workshops

other surviving traces of the period of the Principality of Soran



An Ancient History

Rawanduz has existed for several millennia and is connected to an ancient historical civilization. The existence of Shanidar Cave demonstrates the extraordinarily ancient human history of the region. The Keleşin and Topzawa stelae also bear witness to an even older history of knowledge, writing, and culture.

During the period of the Urartians, Rawanduz held an important position, and a sanctuary dedicated to the god Haldi (Xaldi) is believed to have existed there.

Education and Cultural Life

Rawanduz also played an important role in education and scholarship. Dozens of madrasas and mosques existed in the region, providing education, particularly the mosque and madrasa associated with Mirê Mezin.

During the Ottoman period, Rawanduz once again developed into an active and prominent administrative center. The first Rüşdiye school was opened in 1868 and continued to operate until the beginning of the First World War.

The arrival of the printing press of Huznî Mukriyanî in 1925, together with the publication of several Kurdish books and the magazine Zêrî Kermanjî, turned Rawanduz into an important center and pioneer of Kurdish culture, journalism, and the Kurdish national movement.

The presence of the Hîwa Party also helped establish a strong foundation for Kurdish nationalism. As a result, Rawanduz left a visible mark on many areas of Kurdish society and culture throughout the twentieth century.



Music and Kurdish Culture

Rawanduz also played an important and productive role in revolutions, uprisings, and movements for the Kurdish cause.

The Mirê Mezin Music Group brought about an important development in authentic Kurdish music and singing. It became an artistic school in its own right and helped make the name of Rawanduz even more prominent and respected within Kurdish culture.

Rawanduz Today

Today, Rawanduz is far more than a historically significant town. It continues to develop in the fields of tourism, education, art, and culture.

Rawanduz is regarded as one of the vibrant and important towns of Kurdistan. With its unique natural environment, long history, rich cultural heritage, and contribution to Kurdish identity, it remains a place of great pride for Kurds



WATER LIFE BIRTH HOMLAND

Abstract

Assad Qaradaghi is a Kurdish researcher and writer specializing in Kurdish linguistic and historical studies. He is known for his work on Kurdish etymology, the history of Kurdistan, and Kurdish cultural identity.

He has authored numerous studies and articles examining Kurdish language, heritage, and historical development through a scholarly and analytical approach.



This research examines the linguistic and cultural significance of the root word "water" in the original dialects of the Kurdish language. It explores a wide range of derivatives and compound words related to "Zā" and "Zē", demonstrating how the concept of water is fundamentally linked to life, birth, fertility, and sanctity in Kurdish thought.

The study also analyzes phonetic interchanges such as u: b: v_ and u: g: k, which are common in Kurdish and other living languages, and shows how these sound shifts contribute to semantic connections across vocabulary.

Through examples of place names, kinship terms, and biological vocabulary - including words for reproduction, genetics, homeland, and rivers - the research illustrates that water is not viewed merely as a natural element, but as a source of life and continuity for the Kurdish people. Comparative notes with Sumerian, Hebrew, and Sanskrit further highlight ancient linguistic ties.

***Keywords*:** Kurdish language, water, etymology, Zā, Zē, Zag phonetic interchange, culture, life, fertility.

Water, as is well known, is the lifeblood of civilization. This has been recognized since the dawn of civilization in Mesopotamia and subsequent civilizations. Water was seen as the source of everything, eternal and timeless in general, and especially for living beings..

Civilizations are directly constrained by the quality and quantity of potable water. They are also indirectly constrained by the impact of water on food, energy, transportation, and industry. Throughout history, human societies have devised innovative ways to secure water in their settlements, creating ingenious methods for collecting, transporting, and storing rainwater, springs, and groundwater, among other things.

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A Comprehensive Overview of Water

Water is defined as a chemical substance composed of the elements hydrogen and oxygen. It exists in nature in liquid, solid, and gaseous states. Its natural state is liquid at room temperature, odorless and tasteless. Water is one of the most abundant chemical compounds in nature and is considered the most essential substance for all living organisms.

It is the foundation of all life on Earth, constituting approximately 71% of its surface and 60% of the human body. It is the fundamental element for the survival of all living organisms and the continuation of life on the earth planet.



Water is one of the four elements that make up the Earth's composition, which are:

1-The four essential elements for life on Earth are:

- a. Water: The fundamental component of all living cells, the medium for all chemical reactions within living organisms, and the regulator of the planet's temperature.
- b. Oxygen: Essential for cellular respiration and energy production in most living organisms, and also the primary component of the ozone layer, which protects life from harmful ultraviolet radiation.
- c. Carbon: The backbone of all organic molecules (proteins, fats, and carbohydrates) that form the building blocks of living organisms.
- d. Nitrogen: A vital element for the synthesis of proteins and nucleic acids (DNA and RNA) and for plant growth..

The percentage of both hydrogen and oxygen in water

Water (H_2O) is composed of two hydrogen atoms for every one oxygen atom. Because oxygen is much heavier than hydrogen, their percentages vary drastically depending on whether you are counting the number of atoms or their weight:

- By Atom Count: Water is 66.7% Hydrogen and 33.3% Oxygen.
- By Mass (Weight): Water is 11.11% Hydrogen and 88.89% Oxygen.

2-1. Through the concept of Zoroastrian philosophy,

the four elements (water, fire, air, and earth) are considered sacred and fundamental cosmic forces. They are viewed as symbols of human life and pure elements whose defilement is forbidden.

These elements are associated with the following fundamental beliefs and details:

- Fire (Ater Agir): Considered the most sacred and supreme element, it symbolizes the divine light of Ahura Mazda, wisdom, and the universal law of the universe. It is the medium through which humanity receives guidance, hence the sacred, perpetually burning fires within Zardeshtian fire temples.
- Water (Aban): A vital element representing purity, cleanliness, and fertility. It is believed to carry divine knowledge and is protected by the guardian angel known as Anahita. Water is used in Zoroastrian rituals to purify the body and objects before worship.
- Earth: A symbol of fertility and stability, and the source that provides humanity with food and shelter. It is considered the mother of all beings and is highly revered through its protection and the avoidance of its pollution.
- Air (Wind): Represents the life force, purity, and the breath that connects the soul and body. It is the element that distributes the energy of other elements in nature and maintains the balance of the Zardeshtian environment.

2-1. Through the concept of ancient Greek philosophy,

the four elements (water νερό, fire φωτιά, air αέρας, and earth γη) were assumed to be the foundation from which everything in the universe is made, and were established by early philosophers such as Empedocles and adopted by Aristotle.

Each element is known by its own characteristics and features:

- Earth γη: Represents stability, solidity, and the physical foundation. In nature, it is associated with static materials and fertility.

- **Water νερό:** Represents flow, adaptation, emotion, and life. It is associated with flexibility and the ability to change phases.
- **Air αέρας:** Represents thought, communication, movement, and freedom. It is the invisible element that carries the energy of renewal.
- **Fire φωτιά:** Represents energy, transformation, power, and passion. It symbolizes heat, light, and the ability to bring about radical change.

(In the pre-Socratic period, the traditional Greek elements were known as the five elements (Earth, Water, Air, Fire, and Aether). This idea persisted throughout the Middle Ages and into the Renaissance, and had a profound influence on European thought and culture.

Water in The religious texts

In the Torah (Old Testament)

Genesis 2:10: The Spirit of God hovered over the face of the waters to bring forth order and life.

Isaiah 44:3 Water is the divine symbol of spiritual quenching, renewal of lies, and

blessed abundancPsalm 23:2: Water gives rest and guidance, fruitful life, divine joy

In the Bible (New Testament)

Gospel of John 4:13-14

Gospel of John 38-37 :7.

In the Hinduism religion

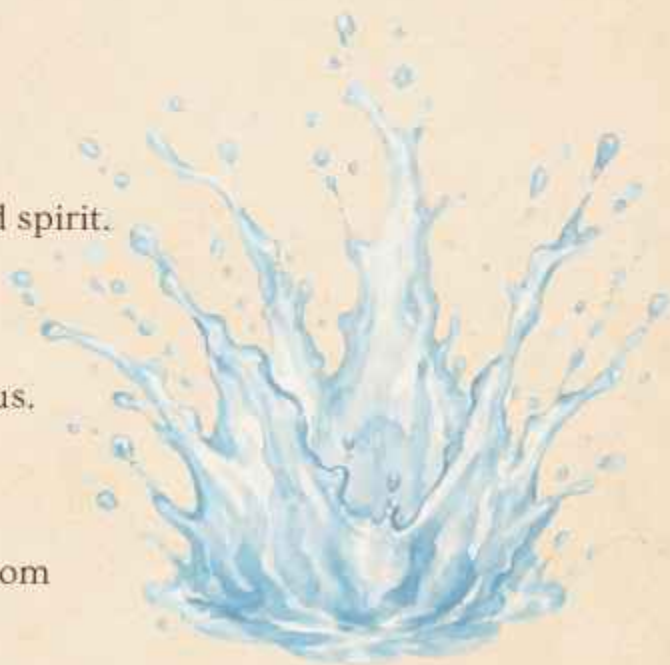
It is a sacred and essential element of life and spirit.

In the Buddhism religion

Water has a deep spiritual and symbolic status.

In the Islamic religion

God says in the Holy Quran(And We made from water every living thing 30/Al-Anbiya)



Water In The ancient language

In the Sumerian language

The sanctity of water is evident in Sumerian thought as the origin of existence and the source of life and purity, as it is symbolized in the Sumerian language by the cuneiform letter "A" (𒀭), and it is embodied in their myths by the god of wisdom and fresh water, "Enki".

In ancient Chinese philosophy

- water represents five dynamic forces or stages of transformation in nature, encompassing the following elements:
- Wood (Mu): symbolizes growth, spring, upward force, and expansion.
- Fire (Huo): symbolizes heat, summer, peak activity, and brilliance.
- Earth (Tu): symbolizes stability, late summer, and the center where energies are balanced.
- Metal (Jin): symbolizes harvest, autumn, contraction, and inward focus.
- Water (Shui): symbolizes stillness, winter, and the ability to adapt to different conditions

The word for water in some languages closely related to Kurdish

Sanskrit language

Sanskrit possesses a vast vocabulary, including over 200 different words for water, with the usage of each word varying according to context (purity, movement, purpose). Some of the most prominent of these words are:

- Jalam (जलम्): The most common and frequently used word in classical Sanskrit.
- Āp -अप/आपः: The fundamental word for water in ancient Vedic texts, symbolizing cosmic waters.

The word Ap (āp-) is synonymous with the Kurdish word for water and the word for ap in ancient Sanskrit.

Avesta language

The word for "water" in Avestan is pronounced "Āp" or "āpi". It is considered a purifying element for body and soul, and a source of health, growth, blessing, and mercy. Spiritual and physical purity.

Pahlavi/Kurdish

the word "Āb" means "pure, flawless, and free from contamination." Its origin is in the Avesta; the fifth Yasht of the Avesta is called "Ābān Yasht." The word "Ābān" is the collective noun for water. The suffix "Yesht" means hymn, praise, or worship.

Hydrogen and Oxygen

Initially, I will highlight only the role of the two main elements, hydrogen gas and oxygen gas, because they are essential elements in the creation of water on planet Earth.

The first gas in the universe appeared about 380,000 years after the Big Bang, consisting mainly of hydrogen and helium.

The percentage of hydrogen varies depending on the location or compound being measured.

Here are some of the most prominent hydrogen percentages in nature and around us:

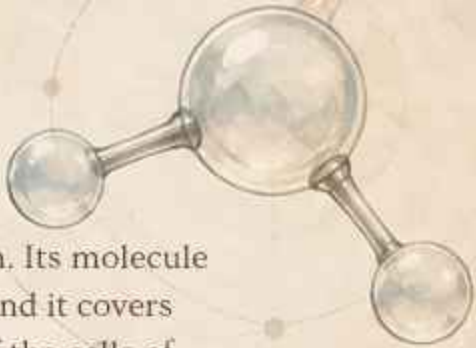
In water (H₂O): Hydrogen makes up 11.2% of water's mass, while oxygen makes up the remaining 88.8%.

In the universe: Hydrogen was the first chemical element to appear in the cosmos in general and the universe in particular.

It is the most abundant element, making up about 75% of the universe's mass, or 74% of its total mass.

In the sun: Hydrogen makes up about 73.4% of the sun's mass.

In the human body: It is the third most abundant element by mass, making up about 10% of body weight (for example, 7 kg in a person weighing 70 kg).



Water ,as we mentioned earlier...is the basis of life on Earth. Its molecule consists of two hydrogen atoms and one oxygen atom (H₂O), and it covers approximately 71% of the planet's surface. It is a component of the cells of living organisms and makes up a significant percentage of the human body. After this comprehensive presentation, I will attempt to explain the word for water in Kurdish and clarify its derivatives.

The discovery of hydrogen is credited to Henry Cavendish in 1766, who first identified it as a distinct element among flammable gases. He initially called it "Factitious Airs."

" In 1783, Antoine L. Lavoisier renamed the element hydrogen, deriving the name from the Greek words: Hydro (ὕδωρ), meaning water, and Gen (γενής), meaning creator or generator. The two words together form Water synthesis or Water generator. This phrase intrigues me, as it is expressed in Kurdish as Āwezê, which carries a similar meaning to the Greek. The word Zê means "seed of life." Therefore, we find this word deeply rooted and in circulation in its current form in the Kurdish language.

To complete this comprehensive research, I would like to review some derivatives of the root word "water" as used in the original dialects of the Kurdish language. I will also examine some interchangeable letters that carry the same meaning, for example: "u: b: v" and "u: g: k", etc.

I believe this kind of letter interchange exists in many living languages.

Derivatives of the root "Zā / Zê" related to water and life

- Zā: The root of the word indicates the existence of life.
- Zā: Male reproductive organ
- Kondamî zainde: Male reproductive system
- Zā: Born
- Zawe: He or she was born
- Zānāme: Birth certificate
- Zāxāne: Male reproductive cell
- Zāw or Zāb: Given new birth, water of life
- Zābî gewre w zabî biçuk: Big Zap and Little Zap
- Zāwā / Zāvā: Bridegroom.

- *Zā w Zê*: Mating / Procreation
- *Zê*: Female reproductive organ
- *Kondamî zêinde*: Female reproductive system
- *Zêd*: Homeland
- *Zêxāne*: The female life cell
- *Zêwā (Bûk)*: Bride
- *Dezêt*: She gives birth
- *Zê îrubārî Dîjle*: The living river of the Tigris
- *Šêlādze / Shilatze*: A village name, a Kurdish word composed of three parts: *Šêlā (Šîlā)* “girl’s name”, meaning pure and clean, + *lā* “mountain foothill” + *du* “two” + *Zê*. The interpretation of the compound word is: “a mountain through which two rivers of life flow.”
- *Qelādzê*: The name of a Kurdish city in the Sulaymani Governorate. It is a Kurdish word composed of three parts: *Qal’ah* + *du* “two” + *Zê*. It means “the passage of two rivers through the sides of the fortress.”
- *Zahāw, Zahāb*: A Kurdish city in the Kirmaşan Governorate. It is a Kurdish word consisting of two parts: *zê* “spring/water” + *āb/av* “water”. Together it means “a water-rich area.”
- *Zewî / Zemîn*: Earth. It means “living planet.”
- *Zî / Jî*: Root of the word. It means “to live”, “to dwell or exist”, “life” - the time between birth and death.
- Note: The letter J in French and Kurdish has the same pronunciation.

- Zn / Jn: In Kurdish, women hold a very high position; they are the nurturers of life. This beautiful expression reflects the mother's role in preserving the human race and raising future generations. This human and cultural role extends to reflect the values of giving, nurturing, and tenderness, which build psychological stability and social equality.
- Zîn / Jîn: Life
- Jîn: To give birth, to beget. Note: In Kurdish, both have the same meaning.
- Jîann: Life, generation, race
- Zêdān / Zigdān: Embryo
- Zaza: Grandchildren
- Zigmāk: Genetic traits
- Zigzany / Rijgary: Genetics
- Zikpêrle: Genetic mutation
- Āzā: Strength and bravery

Azāk / Aîzāk: Prolific. The word is similar to Isaac, son of Sarah, wife of Prophet Abraham.

Nezāk: Infertile, sterile

In the Kurdish word Azāk Aîzāk and the Hebrew word Yitzhak, I was struck by their similarity. This prompted me to clarify the points of convergence with the following interpretation.

The name Isaac is derived from the Book of Genesis (Genesis 21:3).

In Hebrew/Torah it appears as Yitzhak (יִצְחָק). In Greek it is Isaak, and in the Bible *Ισαακ* and Sahaq. In all of them it means "He laughed."

However, in the forms Isaac and Aîzōc a more positive interpretation is given:

“prolific”, This refers to a couple who have children at an unexpectedly advanced age, such as Ibrahim and Sara. Their names appear in Kurdish as Brâhîm and Sārā, and in Sanskrit/Rigveda as Brāhmā and Sārā.

_Note:(Sārā, सारा) in Sanskrit and Kurdish more accurately means “Essence” “Core”. In Hebrew it means “princess”.

- Zāg / zāk: Birth
- Roz / Roj: Sun
- Zāgroz / Zāgroj: Nativity of the Sun
- Zaggura or Ziggurat (/ˈzɪɡʊræt/, Cuneiform: ):
- An ancient historical word attributed to the Sumerian people. When this people migrated from the Zagros Mountains, known as the Sumerians, toward the warmer regions of Mesopotamia, they settled in an area called Uruk, now part of Iraq. After settling in this fertile and blessed land, inspired by their ancient memories of the towering mountain range, the climate allowed them to build a high, pyramid-shaped platform on the flat land, resembling mountain peaks. This structure was called a ziggurat. There, they built a temple to their god Enki and surrounded it with cities. They left behind a great civilization of which humanity is proud.
- Here, I would like to point out the word “ziggurat,” which caught my attention due to its similarity to the Kurdish language. For this purpose, I began by analyzing the compound word, composed of two parts: zag + urra, which means “birth of the city.”

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The Sassanids (224 to 651 AD) Were Kurds, Not Persians

Introduction

The vast majority of historians, both Eastern and Western, consider the Sassanids to be Persians. Some scholars say that the name "Sasanians" is derived from a "Persian" priest named Sasan, the ancestor of the dynasty and one of his sons was Pâpak, who revolted against the lawful ruler of Iran, Artabanus IV [1].

Some other researchers mention that a son of Dara II, the last Kayanian king named Sasan (called "the elder") fled to India and lived there in exile until his death. He was survived by a son who was likewise named Sasan (called "the younger"), "which continued in the family for four generations". A descendant of the family, likewise named Sasan, worked for Pabag, who was a local ruler in Pars. Pabag's daughter married Sasan and bore him a son named Ardashir [2]. Following this, Sasan is no longer mentioned. The Shahnameh thus indicates that the ancestors of Sasan resided in India following Alexander's conquests. This report has been used by scholars to point out Sasan's Indo-Parthian connection [3]. The historian Marek Jan Olbrycht has suggested that the family was descended from the Indo-Parthians of Sakastan.

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Due to resemblance of the coinage of Farn-Sasan the last Indo-Parthian monarch and the Sasanian Ardashir I, including the shared name Sasan—a name popular in the Indo-Parthian realm—suggests that the Sasanians and Indo-Parthians possibly shared a common ancestry [4][5]. Iranologist Khodadad Rezakhani also noted similarities between the early Sasanians and the Indo-Parthians, such as their coinage [6]. Yet, he stated that "evidence might still be too inconclusive" [7].

On the other hand, the Sasanian monarchs claimed descent from the Kayanids [8], a legendary "Persian" dynasty mentioned in the Avesta, the sacred texts of Zoroastrianism, which is commonly thought to be based upon the late Achaemenid dynasty. As such, Dara II, the Kayanid king Sasan supposedly traced his lineage to, was most likely based upon Darius III, whose empire was conquered by Alexander the Great just like Dara's [8]. Another differing account exists in *Kar-Namag i Ardashir i Pabagan*, in which Ardashir is presented as the son of Sasan, a descendant of Darius III, and a daughter of Pabag, a feudal ruler in Persis, whose name is not mentioned [9]. However, these conflicting accounts led some historians, like Touraj Daryaee, to believe that Ardashir simply claimed descent from anyone who was most convenient for him. Relating Ardashir to the legendary Kayanians with the nickname Kay, besides connecting himself to Sasan, a guardian deity, and also to Dara, which is possibly a combination of Darius I and Darius III the Achaemenid, hints at a possible attempt to claim lineage from the Achaemenids [10]. The Sasanians claimed such lineage for prestige and legitimacy of their rule [11].

Kurdishness of the Sasanian ruling family

1. The homeland of the ancestor of the Sassanid kings, Sasan, was Kurdistan. He fled to Persia after a prophecy that one of his descendants would rule the land of Ariana [12] [13]. Thus, we see that Sasan was Kurdish, not Persian, and not from the province of Fars. He even claimed a dubious lineage to the Kayanian king Bahman ibn Esfandiar ibn Goshtasp. Sasan was a camel herder for a feudal lord [12]. Dehkhoda states in his encyclopedia that the father of the Sasanian king Ardashir was the Kurdish herder Pabag [14].

Rashid Yasami, mentions that Sasan, Ardashir's grandfather, was from the Kurdish Shwankareh tribe, and that Pabag's mother was the daughter of a chieftain of the Kurdish Bazarangi tribe. This tribe's homeland is the Kurdish region of Fars province. Yasami adds that we can conclude that Ardashir was Kurdish [15].

Pabag, son of Sasan, belonged to one of the fire houses of Anahita. Pabag had a son named Ardashir, who founded the Sasanian Empire. Ardashir I was born in Persepolis (Persia), the province of Fars, where his grandfather Sasan had previously relocated. Ardashir loved military life and became one of the great military commanders. His brother was the governor of a province, but Ardashir rebelled against him and forced him to abdicate. After assuming power, Ardashir expanded his kingdom, annexing the coastal regions of the Gulf of Hormuz, Elam, Isfahan, and Media.

2. The expansion of Ardashir I's kingdom alarmed the last Parthian king, Artabanus V, who sent a messenger to Ardashir with a letter insulting his lineage and ancestry. The Sasanian king, Ardashir, read this humiliating letter aloud in the royal court before his subjects. The letter included the following: "You have overstepped your bounds and brought about your own demise, you Kurd raised in the tents of the Kurds. Who authorized you to wear the crown you have donned?" This letter is mentioned by both al-Tabari [16] and Ibn al-Athir [17]. The letter from the Parthian king clearly confirms that the ruling Sasanian dynasty was of Kurdish origin.

The denigration of Sasanian kings due to their Kurdish origins and affiliation with the Kurdish nation was not limited to Artabanus V of Parthian. Bahram Chobin, the ruler of Armenia and Azerbaijan during the Sasanian era and son of Bahram Goshtasp, also denigrated the Sasanian king Khesrew II (Parviz) for being Kurdish when Bahram attempted to usurp the throne from him, saying, "You son of a whore, raised in the tents of the Kurds!" [18].

3. Sasan belonged to the Kurdish tribe of Shuwankara, whose members were engaged in herding and agriculture. Towards the end of the Buyid period, they established a Kurdish ruling dynasty called the Atabegs of the Shuwankara kings in Persia. [19] This is also mentioned by the Austrian orientalist Eduard von Zampauer in his book, "Genealogical Dictionary [20]." The ruling families in Islamic history state that the members of the Shuwankara clan descend from the founder of the Sasanian state, Ardashir ibn Pabag [20].

4. Yaqut al-Hamawi mentions in his book "Mu'jam al-Buldan" (Dictionary of Countries), which he wrote between 1224 and 1228 CE [21], that when the Sasanian sultans built the city of Ctesiphon, they constructed a neighborhood within it which they named "Kurdabad," in reference to their Kurdish ethnicity. The name means "the neighborhood built by the Kurds." He mentions the names of six other neighborhoods in the city of Ctesiphon, in addition to Kurdabad.

It is worth noting that the name of the city of Ctesiphon is "Madian," which is a Kurdish name. It is composed of the word "Mad" (meaning "Medi") and the suffix "-an," which is used for the plural in Kurdish. Thus, "Madian" in Kurdish means "Madians" or "Medians." They are the ancestors of the Kurds. The Kurdish name of this city was altered by the Arabs from (Madian) to (al-Mada'in), and the Persians called it "Tisfun." The Sasanian king, Ardashir, also built a city specifically for the Kurds near the present-day city of Mosul and named it "Budh Ardashir" [22].



Furthermore, the Sasanian kings Qubad and Anushirvan built more than thirty cities in the Arran Plain, one of which was named (Malazgurd) [23][24]. Naming a district of the Sasanian capital after the Kurds, and the construction of Kurdish cities by the Sasanians, are further evidence of the Kurdish origins of the Sasanians.

5. The Sasanian kings were called "Khesrew." The word is composed of two Kurdish words: "khas," meaning "good" in Kurdish [25], and "rew," meaning "behavior" or "conduct" in Kurdish. "Khesrew" means "of good character," that is, "a respected and high-ranking person." The Persians adopted this title from Kurdish and modified it to "Khosrow," as the words "khas" and "raw" do not exist in the Persian language. The Arabs, in turn, Arabized this word, transforming it into "Kisra" or "Kasra." Thus, the Kurdish title of the Sasanian kings confirms their belonging to the Kurdish people.

It is worth noting that many people mistakenly believe that the name of the Sasanian king was "Kisra," during whose reign the Battle of Qadisiyah took place. However, "Kisra" is a title for all Sasanian kings, not the name of any one of them. It corresponds to the words "Majesty," "Excellence," and "Highness" used today to address kings, presidents, and princes, respectively. Many kings of other people had their own titles, just as the Sassanids did. For example, the Roman emperors were called "Caesar," the Coptic emperors "Pharaoh," the Turkish emperors "Khagan," the Yemeni emperors "Tubba," the Ethiopian emperors "Negus," and the Egyptian emperors "Aziz," and so on.



A Sasanian king posing as an armored cavalryman, Taq-e Bostan. Relief Taq-e Bostan (Kermanshah Province) in Eastern Kurdistan from the era of Sassanid Empire: One of the oldest depictions of a cataphract. The figure on top in the middle is believed to be Khesrew II. The figure to the right is Ahura Mazda, and to the left is the Arian Goddess Anahita. The cataphract is not known, although various theories exist on his identity, but he is certainly of royal nobility.

6. The names of the Sassanid kings were Kurdish names, indicating their Kurdish origin, as shown below:

a. Three Sassanid kings were named Yezdkurd. The inclusion of the word "Yezd" in their names suggests the Yazdani religious background of the ruling Sassanid dynasty, with the word "Kurd" in their names, which proves their Kurdishness.

b. Two Sassanid kings were named Khesrew (Xesrew). As explained above, (Khesrew) is composed of the two Kurdish words (khas), meaning (good or kind), and (rew), meaning (behavior or character). Thus, the name (Khesrew) means (a person of good character).

c. The name of two Sasanian kings is (Ardashir), a compound name consisting of the Median word (arda), meaning (righteous or good), and (shir), which in Kurdish means (lion). Thus, this name means (the good or righteous lion).

d. The name of one of the Sasanian kings is (Feyrûz) or (Pîroz), a Kurdish name meaning (blessed or holy).

e. The name of four Sasanian kings was Hormizd, an Aryan name derived from the name of the Sumerian god Hermes, the ancestor of the Kurds. Over time, this name changed to Huramezda or Mazda among the Aryan peoples, but after this change, it retained its original meaning, that is, "god."

f. The name of four Sasanian kings was Bahram or Baram, and the name of two others was Qubad. These two names are Kurdish; the first means "intelligent" and the second means "king."



7. Some Sasanian names are still prevalent among the Kurds in Kurdistan, for example, but not limited to, the name Khimani [25]. This Sasanian name does not exist among the Persians. Even today, there are Kurdish men and women who bear this name.

8. Hassan Pirnia mentions that the Sasanian called the Medes "May" [26]. This name remains among Kurdish male names to this day, even though more than 2,500 years have passed since the Median Empire disappeared. For example, the name Maykhan. The word "Khan" is always attached to the name "May," as a person is never named May alone. The title "Khan" is used, which corresponds to the terms "Majesty" and "Excellence" used to address kings and heads of state, respectively, in modern times, because the Medes were the Kurdish nobility. It is worth noting that the name for the Medes, "Mada," means "great" or "big" in the Median language [27].

It should also be noted that when the Arabs conquered Kurdistan, they renamed the Median center of power "Mahat," since "Mah" is the name of the Medes [28] and the suffix "at" is the plural suffix in Arabic. Al-Baladhuri mentions that when Kurdistan was conquered by the Arabs during the Islamic era, some of the conquered regions were divided into several sections. The taxes (jizya) collected from each section were sent to the Muslims residing in a specific area [29]. Therefore, the Arabs called the city of Dinawar and its surrounding areas "Mah al-Kufa" because the jizya collected from the inhabitants of Dinawar and its dependencies was distributed among the newly converted Muslim population of Kufa. Similarly, for the same reason, the city of Nehawend was called "Mah al-Basra," as the jizya collected from the inhabitants of Nehawend was given to the inhabitants of Basra who had converted to Islam after the Arab-Islamic conquest. Thus, the center of Media was divided by the Arab conquerors into "Mah al-Kufa" and "Mah al-Basra."



Taqi Kisra, the facade of the Sasanian palace in the capital Ctesiphon. The city developed into a rich commercial metropolis. It may have been the most populous city of the world in 570–622. (Taq Kisra, Madain, Iraq - February 2022. Photo by: Safa Daneshvar).

9. The Fadhlawi family, which founded the Fadhlawi Emirate (1155–1432 CE), belonged to the Kurdish Shawankareh tribe. Members of this family were descendants of the Sasanian kings [30]. The ruling family of this emirate were Kurds, and therefore their Sasanian ancestors must also have been Kurds. It is worth noting that this emirate was established in southeastern Lorestan and its rule lasted for 277 years. The kingdom encompassed Lorestan and extended to the outskirts of Isfahan, and at times also included Khuzestan province and the city of Basra.

10. In the late Buyid period, the Shuwankara clan established a Kurdish principality called the Atabegs of the Shuwankara Kurdish Kings in Fars [19]. The Shuwankara clan descended from Ardashir ibn Pabag, the founder of the Sasanian Empire [20]. The establishment of a Kurdish principality by this clan, to which the Sasanians belonged, is a clear indication that the Sasanians were Kurds.

11. The Hawrami Kurdish dialect is the same as Pahlavi, the language of the Sasanians. Masoud Muhammad mentions that in the book "Al-Mu'jam fi Ma'ayir Ash'ar al-'Ajam" (Dictionary of the Standards of nonarabic Poetry) by Shams al-Din Muhammad ibn Qays al-Razi, the following is translated from Persian into Arabic: [I found the people of Iraq passionate about composing and reciting Pahlavi language. Indeed, no melody from Arabic poetry or Persian love poetry has stirred their hearts and natures like:

The melody of Hewreman and Pahlavi verse [31].

The verse, the melody of Hewremani and Pahlavi verse praises Hewremani singing and that the melody of the singing is linked to its language, and this clearly indicates that the Hewremani dialect is the Pahlavi language.

As for the Persians, a new Persian language was created with the disappearance of the Parthian rule in 226 AD and the arrival of the Sasanian dynasty to power. This new language, used in the Sasanian era, is called (Parsiki) to distinguish it from Old Persian and Modern Persian [32]. The fact that Pahlavi (Kurdish) was the language of the Sasanians and that the Persians spoke another language, namely (Parsiki), confirms the Kurdishness of the Sasanians.

For example, Pahlavi words such as (sera), (serdar), (Ferman), (Sarheng), (Sertib) and so on are still alive in the Kurdish language



The Sasanians developed an accurate, phonetic alphabet to write down the sacred Avesta.

12. The Sassanians glorified Kawe the Blacksmith, as the name of the flag of this empire was the "Kawian Flag," and the word "Kawian" is derived from the name of Kawe the Blacksmith, who is said to have killed the tyrannical king Zahhak, who had made his blacksmith's breastplate into a flag [33]. The flag was 12 cubits high and 8 cubits wide, and it was made of tiger skin and studded with rubies, pearls, and jewels.

In the Battle of al-Qadisiyyah, fought between the Muslim Arabs and the Sasanian Empire in 636 CE, the Muslim Arabs triumphed over the Sasanians. They seized this flag and presented it to Caliph Umar ibn al-Khattab, along with two daughters of the Sasanian king Yazdkurd, who had been taken captive. Their names were Shahjanaan (or Kaybanu) and Sharbanu. Muhammad ibn Abi Bakr al-Siddiq took Shahjinnas his wife, and Husayn ibn Ali ibn Abi Talib took Sharbanu's wife. The Sasanian adoption of the Kawe flag is further evidence of the ruling Sasanian dynasty's Kurdish ancestry [34].

13. The book titled "The Little History," by an anonymous Syriac author (born after 680 CE), discusses the history of the Nestorian Church and recounts important historical events that occurred during the sixth and seventh centuries CE. On pages 100-102 of this book, the author provides important information about the origins of the Sasanian dynasty and the Sasanian commander Hormazdān, who was the military leader of Khuzestan. This commander was captured by the invading Arab-Islamic forces during the reign of Umar ibn al-Khattab and subsequently executed by the Muslims. The author states that Hormazdān was a cousin of the last Sasanian king, Yazdkurd III, and a grandson of King Ardashir Pabag, noting that this Sasanian commander belonged to the Median ancestors of the Kurds. Furthermore, Paravaneh Pourshariat mentions that Hormazdān was from Media, meaning he was of Median descent [35]. These two sources clearly indicate that the Sasanians were descended from the Median Kurds, providing further evidence of the Kurdish origins of the Sasanian rulers.

14. The resistance of the Sasanian Empire's inhabitants to the Arab Islamic conquest was primarily concentrated in Kurdish regions such as Sharazur, Mosul, Helwan, Nehawend, and Jelewla, where they defended Kurdish Sasanian rule. There was little resistance to this conquest in non-Kurdish areas. The Kurds' defense of the Sasanian state was, in essence, a defense of their own Kurdish state and their Kurdish rule.

15. In a poem he wrote over a century ago, the Kurdish poet Haji Qadir Koyi (1817-1897 CE) states that the Sasanians were Kurds. He specifically mentions the Sasanian kings Ardashir and Qubad and laments the neglect of recording Kurdish history in the Kurdish language [36]. Here are some verses from his poem:

If a Kurd doesn't want to learn his mother tongue,
It's certain his mother is a whore and his father an adulterer.
Come, let me tell you about things you don't know!
The world of politics is beautiful if you master its arts.
(Saladin) and (Nur ad-Din) the Kurds
And (Azizan)* of (Jazira), (Mush), and (Wan)
(Muhelhil)** and (Ardashir) and the lion (Disim)***
(Qubad) and the falcons of the Ardalan princes
All of these are undoubtedly pure Kurds.
Due to ignorance and illiteracy, they disappeared from the pages of history.
Books, tablets, and historical documents
If they had been recorded throughout history in our language,
history would have immortalized our kings, rulers, and princes,
and they would have remained shining stars illuminating the pages of history.

Thus, the reliable sources we rely on confirm that the Sasanians were Kurds and that the Battle of Qadisiyah, which took place between the Arab Muslims, led by Sa'd ibn Abi Waqqas, and the Sasanians during the reign of their last king, Yezdkurd III, was a battle between Arabs and Kurds. However, the occupiers of Kurdistan falsified history, stole Kurdish history, and considered the Sasanians to be Persians.



Here we mention the names of the twenty-four Sasanian kings, whose rule lasted for four hundred and twenty-six years (224 or 226 – 651 CE), as follows, in chronological order of their reigns:



- | | |
|-----------------|---------------------|
| 1. Ardashir I | 13. Yazdkurd I |
| 2. Shapur I | 14. Behram V |
| 3. Hormizd I | 15. Yazdkurd II |
| 4. Behram I | 16. Hormizd III |
| 5. Behram II | 17. Piroz I |
| 6. Behram III | 18. Blash (Welkash) |
| 7. Nersi | 19. Qubad I |
| 8. Hormizd II | 20. Khesrew I |
| 9. Azer Narsi | 21. Hormizd IV |
| 10. Shapur II | 22. Khesrew II |
| 11. Ardashir II | 23. Qubad II |
| 12. Behram IV | 24. Yazdkurd III |



Hamdallah al-Mustawfi mentions in his book "Nuzhat al-Qulub" (The Delight of Hearts), written in the 14th century CE, states that King Khesrew I organized taxes, the army, and state records. During this king's reign, the book "Kalila waDimna" was brought from India to the Sasanian lands, and philosophical and literary schools reached their zenith under his rule [37].

As a result of the Kurdish people's lack of a political entity to express their identity, record their history, preserve and develop their culture, language, and heritage, their history has been subjected to theft, obliteration, erasure, and unjust distortion. The occupiers of Kurdistan are attempting to eradicate the Kurdish language and culture, erase the Kurdish people's identity, and falsify their ancient history in order to consolidate their occupation of Kurdistan, remove Kurdistan from the map of the Middle East, and assimilate the Kurdish people through Turkification, Persianization, and Arabization.

The Kurdish people have a glorious history and are among the oldest peoples in the region. The Sumerian, Elamite, Hurrian-Mitanni, Hittite, Median, and Sasanian civilizations bear witness to the antiquity of this people and their great contribution to the building, development, and progress of human civilization.

Highlighting the true role of the Kurds in the founding of human civilization and understanding their culture and history requires the establishment of Kurdish academic centers to revive Kurdish culture and correct the writing of Kurdish history. The Kurds must search for their history within the pages of books and documents, in museum halls and archaeological sites, and through excavation of antiquities in ancient Kurdish kingdoms. They must also examine the correspondence and reports of governments and officials through objective scientific studies of Kurdish history to uncover the truth, despite the destruction, theft, and erasure to which Kurdish history has been subjected, especially since the Kurds lack a political entity under whose auspices this history can be written. The occupiers of Kurdistan wrote Kurdish history, distorting, stealing, and erasing it. Amidst this distortion and theft, the Kurds must search, find, and discover their history, making it accessible to Kurdish children and allowing the world to know the true history of the Kurds. I am not calling for the falsification of history, as the late Saddam Hussein did in his "rewriting history" campaign, but rather proposing the establishment of academic centers to collect, classify, record, preserve, compare, sift through, and analyze historical information about the Kurds, and then write the correct information objectively and scientifically.

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- * (Azizan) are the ancestors of the (Badir Khans), who ruled parts of Kurdistan (the regions of Jazira, Mush, and Wan) during the time of Caliph Umar ibn al-Khattab.
- ** (Muhahil) is (Muhahil) Shazinjani) who defeated the Seljuks in the city of Kermanshah and ruled the regions of Kermanshah, Khanaqin, Kifri, Kirkuk, Shehrezur, and Sirwan.
- *** Deysem was the Kurdish ruler who governed Azerbaijan during the Abbasid Caliphate.

General and Diplomat Şerif Pasha (1865–1951): Origins, Family and Political Career

Who was Şerif Pasha's paternal grandfather and from which family did he come?

According to various historical accounts, the paternal grandfather of Şerif Pasha was Hüseyin Pashazade, the Emir and head of the distinguished Âl-i Handan family of Sulaymaniyah (Southern Kurdistan).

The Âl-i Handan family was one of the old-established Kurdish aristocratic families of Kurdistan. Members of this family served the Ottoman Empire in high administrative positions, including as district governors (Kaymakam) and provincial governors (Vali).

The son of Hüseyin Pashazade, Kurd Mehmed Said Pasha (1834–1907), became one of the important statesmen of the Ottoman Empire and served the state for more than half a century.

Through marriage alliances, this family also became connected with the Ottoman ruling dynasty.

Kurd Mehmed Said Pasha (1834–1907), son of Hüseyin Pashazade, was the father of Şerif Pasha. He served as Ottoman Minister of Foreign Affairs (Hariciye Nazırı) and for many years as President of the Ottoman Council of State (Şûrâ-yı Devlet).

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Who was Şerif Pasha's maternal grandfather?

The maternal grandfather of Şerif Pasha was also named Şerif Pasha, a Kurdish marshal from Sulaymaniyah.

Therefore, Şerif Pasha was a grandson of two Pashas on both sides of his family. He belonged to one of the most influential Kurdish elite families within the Ottoman Empire.

What military rank did Şerif Pasha hold?

Şerif Pasha received his military education in France and graduated from the prestigious École spéciale militaire de Saint-Cyr, one of France's most renowned military academies.

He was awarded the French distinction of the Légion d'honneur.

Within the Ottoman Army, he reached the rank of Lieutenant General (Korgeneral) and became commander of the 1st Ottoman Division.

While holding this rank, he resigned from the Ottoman military.



Was Şerif Pasha a diplomat?

There is currently no conclusive evidence showing whether Şerif Pasha studied at the Mekteb-i Mülkiye, the most important Ottoman institution for training civilian administrators, or at a French school of political sciences.

However, because of his military education, his knowledge of several languages, and his international background, he was appointed Military Attaché of the Ottoman Embassy in Paris.

Later, he became the Ottoman Ambassador to Sweden.

Şerif Pasha held liberal and reform-oriented views. Sultan Abdülhamid II considered his presence in Constantinople politically inconvenient. In order to keep him away from the political center, he was first sent to Paris as an attaché and later appointed as ambassador to Stockholm.

This appointment also served as recognition and a reward for his father, Mehmed Said Pasha, who was serving as Ottoman Foreign Minister.

Şerif Pasha's marriage was politically and socially significant.

He married Princess Emine Halim Hanım, the daughter of Halim Pasha, who was the son of Mehmed Ali Pasha, the founder of the Egyptian Khedivate dynasty.

Through this marriage, Şerif Pasha's family became connected to the Kavalalı House of Mehmed Ali Pasha.

This relationship provided him, in addition to his own Pasha lineage, with further social prestige and diplomatic influence among the political circles of the period.

The brother of his wife, Said Halim Pasha (1863–1921), was also a major political figure.

Said Halim Pasha was a member of the Committee of Union and Progress (İttihat ve Terakki Cemiyeti) and later served as Grand Vizier (Ottoman Prime Minister) from 1913 to 1917.

He was assassinated in Italy in 1921 by Armenian assassins.



Continuation: Princess Emine Halim Hanım, the Mehmed Ali Pasha family, Şerif Pasha's own statements about his origins, and the British intelligence reports of 1920.)

General and Diplomat Şerif Pasha (1865–1951): Origins, Family and Political Career

Princess Emine Halim Hanım – Her Personality and Social Role

As a member of the Egyptian Khedival dynasty, Princess Emine Halim Hanım has been described as an educated and multilingual woman who was interested in social issues and engaged in charitable activities.

According to various accounts, she was also involved in supporting women's rights. In May 1919, she is reported to have been a member of the Kurdish Women's Association for Progress and Education (Kürd Kadınları Teâlî Cemiyeti) in Constantinople.

A comprehensive academic study of her life would contribute to a more accurate understanding of her personality and her social significance.

Was the Family of the Egyptian Khedive of Kurdish Origin?

The origins of the family of Mehmed Ali Pasha (Kavalalı Mehmed Ali Paşa) are the subject of different historical interpretations.

Some Kurdish and regional historical sources claim that this family had Kurdish roots.

Among the sources mentioned are:

- Afaf Lutfi Al-Sayyid Marsot: *Egypt in the Reign of Muhammad Ali*, Cambridge University Press, 1984.
 - Enver Ziya Karal: *Osmanlı Tarihi*, Volume 5 – *Nizam-ı Cedid ve Tanzimat Devirleri (1789-1856)*, Turkish Historical Society, Ankara, 2007.
- These works indicate that Mehmed Ali Pasha may not have originally come from Kavala, but that his origins have also been associated with the region of present-day Malatya-Erzincan.

However, the ethnic origin of the Mehmed Ali Pasha family remains historically disputed and is interpreted differently by various researchers.

Did Şerif Pasha Himself Make Official Statements About His Family?

Yes.

During the Paris Peace Conference of 1919, Şerif Pasha presented his origins and family connections in several official letters addressed to representatives of different states.

In these documents, he emphasized his Kurdish origins and referred to his family background.

According to his own statements:

- His father, Said Pasha, former Ottoman Foreign Minister and President of the Council of State, was born in Sulaymaniyah.
- His maternal grandfather, Marshal Şerif Pasha, was also born in Sulaymaniyah.
- Because of his ancestry and origin, he considered himself connected to Kurdistan.

In a letter dated 24 March 1919 to a British representative, he wrote:

"Since I have been entrusted with representing the interests of the Kurds at the Peace Conference, my personal status in Turkey has been suspended. For by my origin and my race, I belong to Kurdistan. Indeed, my late father Said Pasha, former Foreign Minister and President of the Ottoman Council of State, as well as the father of my mother, the late Marshal Şerif Pasha, were born in Sulaymaniyah."

He further explained:

"My wife is the daughter of the late Prince Halim Pasha. Halim Pasha was the son of the great Mehmed Ali Pasha of Egypt."

He requested protection from the British government for himself and his family, stating that he was threatened by supporters of the Committee of Union and Progress (İttihat ve Terakki).

Regarding his family, he mentioned:

- His wife: Princess Emine Halim
- His daughter: Seza Şerif Pasha
- His son-in-law: Salih Hüsnü Bey
- His daughter: Şerife Salih Hüsnü Hanım

The British Intelligence Report of 1920 on Şerif Pasha

In 1920, the General Staff of the British Mesopotamian Expeditionary Force prepared a confidential report on important personalities in the occupied territories.

The report described Şerif Pasha as follows:

"General Şerif Pasha. He has always been a determined opponent of the Committee of Union and Progress. He enjoys a good reputation in Southern Kurdistan. In June 1919, he introduced himself to us as the Emir (Mir) of Kurdistan. Şerif Pasha has the reputation of being an exceptional diplomat. He speaks French. He is currently in London."

The report therefore portrayed him as an important political figure with influence among Kurdish circles.

Information About Salih Hüsnü Bey (Son-in-Law of Şerif Pasha)

The British report also mentions:

Muhammad Saleh Husni / Salih Hüsnü Bey

- Son of Hüsnü Pasha.
- Son-in-law of General Şerif Pasha.
- Owned lands in Egypt and Basra.
- Managed, together with his wife and Princess Emine Halim, their properties in Egypt.
- Had served for a period as a lieutenant in the Ottoman Army.

The report further states that during his stay in Paris he was with Şerif Pasha and allegedly killed an assassin who had come on behalf of the Committee of Union and Progress to murder Şerif Pasha.



“The Family of Said Pasha and Its Importance in the Ottoman Empire – Şerif Pasha’s Wealth, His Conflict with İttihat ve Terakki, the Parliamentary Debate of 1910, and His Political Development until 1914.”

General and Diplomat Şerif Pasha (1865–1951): Origins, Family and Political Career

Part 3

The Family of Said Pasha and Its Importance in the Ottoman Empire

The family of Kurd Said Pasha (1834–1907), as well as the families connected to it through marriage, belonged during the reign of Sultan Abdülhamid II to some of the most influential Kurdish aristocratic families of the Ottoman Empire.

From these families emerged numerous important personalities, including:

- Grand Viziers (Sadrazam),
- Ministers (Nazır),
- Marshals,
- Ambassadors,
- and high-ranking state officials.

They played an important role in connecting the Kurdish elite with the Ottoman state administration.

Figures such as:

- Kurd Said Pasha (1834–1907),
- General and Diplomat Şerif Pasha (1865–1951),
- Said Halim Pasha (1863–1921),

as well as other members of these families, must be examined within the context of Ottoman politics, reform movements, the constitutional period, and the transition from the Ottoman Empire to the Republic of Turkey.

Their positions, political roles, responsibilities, conflicts, and attitudes toward:

- Sultan Abdülhamid II,
- the Committee of Union and Progress (İttihat ve Terakki),
- and the later Republican period,

remain important fields of historical research.



What Happened to Şerif Pasha's Wealth?

Because of his aristocratic background and his marriage to Princess Emine Halim Hanım, Şerif Pasha possessed considerable wealth.

According to the accounts presented in this text, however, he used a large part of his financial resources to support the Ottoman reform movement and especially the early phase of the Committee of Union and Progress (İttihat ve Terakki). At that time, the movement was still opposing the absolutist rule of Sultan Abdülhamid II.

Şerif Pasha supported the movement financially and politically when it was still regarded as a reformist constitutional movement.

Later, however, a serious conflict developed between Şerif Pasha and the leadership of the Committee.

It is reported that leading Unionists, including Ahmed Rıza Bey, whom Şerif Pasha had previously supported, later turned against him.

From 1910 onwards, his assets were confiscated as a result of legal proceedings. The issue of the seizure of his property was discussed in the Ottoman Parliament (Meclis-i Mebusan) in October and November 1910.

The Debate in the Ottoman Parliament Concerning the Confiscation of Şerif Pasha's Property Session of 20 November 1910

The deputy from Edirne, Rıza Tevfik Bey, expressed his concern:

"How do I know that tomorrow my own property will not also be confiscated? I am speaking about Şerif Pasha. Such things happen. Is Parliament consulted? Why is Şerif Pasha's property being confiscated? Why is his property being seized?"

The Grand Vizier İbrahim Hakkı Pasha replied:

"This is not confiscation, but seizure. He was convicted in absentia; therefore, his property is being seized."



Session of 25 November 1910

The deputy from Sivas, Nazaret Dağavaryan Efendi, stated:

“Various things are being said about Şerif Pasha. Yet he was from the beginning a supporter of the constitutional movement. He supported the majority party and stood beside it. He was even a close friend of those who most strongly defended the Constitution. How can someone suddenly completely change his position? It is also said that he provided significant financial support to the party at that time.”

These parliamentary debates demonstrate the political conflict between Şerif Pasha and the new leadership of the Committee of Union and Progress.

Should the Life of General and Diplomat Şerif Pasha Be Studied in Different Historical Periods?

Yes.

The life of Şerif Pasha can be divided into several political phases.

First Phase: Ottoman Statesman Until the Assassination Attempt of January 1914

During this period, Şerif Pasha primarily considered himself an Ottoman statesman. His political thinking and actions were shaped within the framework of the Ottoman Empire.

He advocated reforms and the preservation of the empire.

This phase included:

- his military career,
- his service as military attaché in Paris,
- his ambassadorship in Stockholm,
- and his cooperation with the early Committee of Union and Progress movement.

During the constitutional period of 1908, he initially supported the movement because he hoped it would establish a modern, lawful, and equal political order.

Why Did Şerif Pasha Resign from His Ambassadorship in Stockholm?

During his time as military attaché in Paris, Şerif Pasha came into contact with members of the Committee of Union and Progress living there.

He supported this movement financially and morally.

These contacts were reported to the Ottoman Palace.

As a result, his assignment in Paris was ended and he was recalled to Constantinople.

Later, the Sultan again removed him from the capital and appointed him as ambassador to Stockholm.

He remained there for approximately ten years.

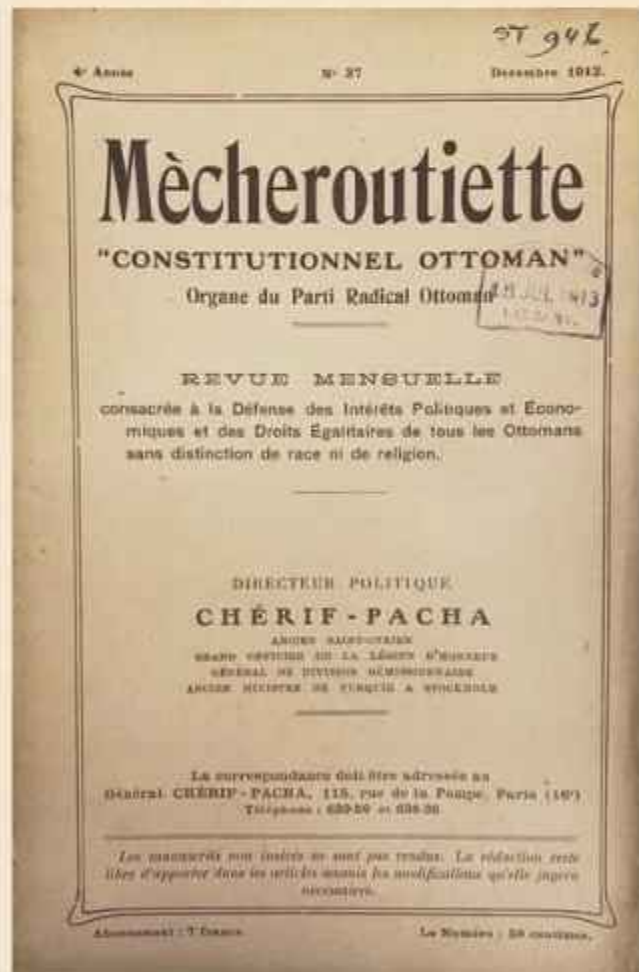
After the death of his father, Said Pasha, he received permission to travel to Constantinople to attend the funeral.

Later, he was supposed to be transferred to Madrid.

Because he did not wish to go to Madrid, he resigned from diplomatic service.

Only a short time later, in July 1908, the Unionists came to power, and Şerif Pasha returned to Constantinople.

“The Events of 1908–1909: The Committee of Union and Progress, Şerif Pasha as Chairman of the Pangalti Branch, His Resignation from the Army, His Break with İttihat ve Terakki, and the Paris Period with the Journal ‘Meşrutiyet’.”



Family and Political Career

Part 4

The Events of 1908–1909: The Committee of Union and Progress and the Break with Şerif Pasha

In July 1908, the Committee of Union and Progress (İttihat ve Terakki Cemiyeti) carried out a political transformation that led to the restoration of the Ottoman Constitution of 1876.

At the end of 1908 and the beginning of 1909, the Ottoman Parliament (Meclis-i Mebusan) was re-established. It consisted of elected deputies as well as individuals who were close to the Unionist movement.

In April 1909, the so-called Army of Action (Hareket Ordusu) was sent from Salonika to Constantinople. The leadership of this force consisted mainly of military officers connected to İttihat ve Terakki.

On 13 April 1909, another violent power struggle took place in Constantinople. Many people were killed during these events. Sultan Abdülhamid II was subsequently deposed and removed from Constantinople.

After these developments, it became increasingly clear that the movement was not only seeking to form a government but also aimed at controlling the entire state apparatus.



Şerif Pasha as Chairman of the Pangalti Branch of İttihat ve Terakki

During this period, Şerif Pasha served as the chairman of the Pangalti branch of the Committee of Union and Progress.

However, he gradually began to recognize the real structure of the organization.

According to his assessment, decisions were not being made by the publicly visible politicians, but rather by a small secret leadership circle within the Committee.

He criticized:

- the increasing involvement of the military in politics,
- the concentration of power in a small group,
- and the danger of the movement developing into an authoritarian system.

He presented several proposals to the leadership of İttihat ve Terakki.

However, these proposals were rejected.

His main demands included:

1. The military should not interfere in politics.
2. İttihat ve Terakki should not operate as a secret intelligence and power organization, but should transform itself into a social reform movement.
3. Equality of rights for all peoples and communities of the Ottoman Empire should be guaranteed.
4. After the elections, the Committee should function only as a political party within Parliament.
5. Elections should take place freely, without pressure or coercion.
6. The organization should not interfere illegally in government affairs.
7. Officers who had been dismissed or retired should be reinstated.
8. The Ottoman Army should serve the protection of the country, not the interests of a political party.

Resignation from the Army and the Break with İttihat ve Terakki

During this period, Şerif Pasha announced that he wished to leave the army as commander of the 1st Ottoman Division and as a general.

The leadership of İttihat ve Terakki reportedly attempted to persuade him to withdraw his resignation.

However, Şerif Pasha remained firm in his decision.

Because his political demands were not accepted, he distanced himself from this military-political organization.

He left Constantinople and settled in Paris.

How Did Şerif Pasha Describe the Committee?

In his later assessment, Şerif Pasha argued that İttihat ve Terakki was not an ordinary political party, but rather a group of military and civilian bureaucrats who sought to control state power through a secret organization.

He particularly criticized:

- the dominance of a small leadership group,
- the use of political violence,
- the interference of the military in politics,
- the restriction of political freedoms,
- and the idea of a centralizing assimilation policy toward the various peoples of the empire.

In his view, this structure did not seek to create free citizens, but rather to govern obedient subjects.



Şerif Pasha's Paris Period

After his break with İttihat ve Terakki, Şerif Pasha began his opposition to the government from Paris.

He cooperated with other Ottoman opposition figures.

An important role in this period was played by the journal:

“Meşrutiyet” (The Constitution)

The journal began publication on 15 October 1909.

It was published in French and English.

Şerif Pasha served as its political director.

The purpose of the journal, according to its own statement, was to provide a voice for those in the Ottoman Empire who had no opportunity to express their opinions freely.

In the first issue, Şerif Pasha wrote in essence:

“I too was a member of the Committee of Union and Progress. Today I stand against it. Why? I will try to explain the reasons for this development.”

He continued:

“If I had followed my personal interests and remained silent, this would have brought me great material advantages. But I have chosen to speak the truth.”

The Program of the Journal “Meşrutiyet” (1910)

In the third issue, published on 1 January 1910, the editorial board explained its political program.

The main demands were:

1. Freedom of the press and freedom of assembly.
2. Abolition of military courts and application of the Constitution and laws.
3. Review of unjust judicial proceedings.
4. Support for merchants, farmers, and landowners through loans and economic assistance.
5. Equality of all communities in terms of rights and duties.
6. Respect for the constitutional rights of the Sultan.

The journal declared that it was not connected to any secret organization and that it sought political change through legal and peaceful methods.

Fortsetzung folgt mit Teil 5:

“Şerif Pasha as an Opponent of İttihat ve Terakki until the Assassination Attempt of 1914 – His Role in Hürriyet ve İtilaf, the Paris Assassination Attempt, and the Beginning of His Kurdish Diplomatic Career.”

General and Diplomat Şerif Pasha (1865–1951): Origins, Family and Political Career

Part 5

Şerif Pasha as an Opponent of İttihat ve Terakki – Until the Assassination Attempt of 1914

Political observers of his time described Şerif Pasha as one of the most prominent opponents of the leadership of the Committee of Union and Progress (İttihat ve Terakki).

A description from 1914 characterized him as follows:

“The director of the journal Meşrutiyet is General Mehmed Şerif Pasha. He is a former graduate of Saint-Cyr and a Grand Officer of the Legion of Honour. He is the brother-in-law of the Ottoman Grand Vizier Said Halim Pasha.

He once fought against the Hamidian regime. After the Revolution of 1908, he separated from İttihat ve Terakki because of the dictatorial and pro-German tendencies of its leadership.”

The same reports stated that he played a leading role in the Freedom and Accord Party (Hürriyet ve İtilaf Fırkası) and continued to direct the journal Meşrutiyet from Paris.



The Assassination Attempt Against Şerif Pasha in 1914

After his break with İttihat ve Terakki, Şerif Pasha became a determined opponent of the organization.

According to various accounts, he was repeatedly threatened.

In 1913, the leadership of İttihat ve Terakki is said to have attempted to invite him to a meeting. Şerif Pasha refused because he feared that the meeting could be a trap.

He was aware of the political violence of the period and of the assassinations of opposition figures.

Later, an assassination plan against him was allegedly prepared in Paris.

According to these accounts, the Istanbul police chief **Azmi Bey**, together with several supporters of the Committee, travelled to Paris to carry out the operation.

The alleged attacker is identified in these accounts as **Yavuz Mehmed Kemal (Ali Cevad)**, a former supporter of İttihat ve Terakki who was described as one of the Committee's officials.

On **13 January 1914**, this man allegedly went to Şerif Pasha's residence in Paris.

According to the reports, he injured servants of the household who attempted to stop him.

Şerif Pasha's son-in-law, **Salih Hüsnü Bey**, intervened and shot the attacker.

According to this account, this action saved Şerif Pasha and other members of the family from the assassination.

The Second Phase of His Life: From Ottoman Statesman to Kurdish Diplomat

January 1914 represented a turning point in the political development of Şerif Pasha.

Until that moment, he had primarily appeared as:

- an Ottoman statesman,
- a military officer,
- and a reform-oriented politician.

After this event, a new phase of his life began.

He increasingly became involved in representing Kurdish political interests.

He was no longer viewed only as an Ottoman opposition figure, but also as a Kurdish diplomat.



British Reports on Şerif Pasha in 1920

A confidential British report prepared by the **Mesopotamian Expeditionary Force** in 1920 described his origins and political role.

It stated:

"General Şerif Pasha. A Kurd from the Caf tribe. Born in Sulaymaniyah. He has not lived in Kurdistan since childhood. In December 1914, he was living in Paris. At that time, he offered his services to the British in order to gain Kurdish sympathy for Great Britain. This offer was rejected."

Şerif Pasha and the Paris Peace Conference of 1919

After the First World War, the political future of the Ottoman Empire was discussed at the Paris Peace Conference of 1919.

The Kurdish movement sought international representation.

The Society for the Advancement of Kurdistan (Kürdistan Teali Cemiyeti) and other Kurdish circles assigned Şerif Pasha the task of representing Kurdish interests at the conference.

He became chairman of the Kurdish delegation.

Other figures connected with representation efforts included:

- Lütfi Fikri Kurdzade
- Süreyya Bedirxan

However, Lütfi Fikri Kurdzade supported mainly the idea of keeping the Kurds within a reformed Ottoman state and rejected the demand for an independent Kurdish state.

According to these accounts, Süreyya Bedirxan was unable to travel to Paris. Therefore, Şerif Pasha remained the most important representative of the Kurdish delegation.



The Agreement Between Şerif Pasha and Boghos Nubar Pasha

One of the most controversial decisions of Şerif Pasha was his cooperation with the Armenian representative Boghos Nubar Pasha.

In 1919, the two men signed an agreement supporting joint Kurdish-Armenian representation before the Allied powers.

This agreement caused considerable debate within Kurdish political circles. Some Kurdish activists criticized Şerif Pasha and accused him of acting without sufficient approval from all Kurdish representatives.

Others viewed it as a diplomatic attempt to represent the interests of two oppressed peoples together before the great powers.

Why Did Şerif Pasha Resign from His Position in 1920?

In 1920, Şerif Pasha resigned from his role as representative of the Kurdish delegation.

The reasons mentioned include:

- internal disagreements among Kurdish organizations,
- criticism from parts of the Bedirxan and Baban families,
- opposition to his agreement with Boghos Nubar Pasha.

According to the sources presented here, rivalries between different Kurdish elites also played a role.

Several influential Kurdish families competed with each other for political recognition and influence.

These internal conflicts weakened Kurdish diplomatic efforts on the international stage.

Fortsetzung folgt mit Teil 6:

“Şerif Pasha’s Reports on the Situation of the Kurds in 1919, His Letters to British Representatives, the Deportations of Kurds, His Final Years in Europe, Citizenship, and His Burial in Catanzaro.

General and Diplomat Şerif Pasha (1865–1951): Origins, Family and Political Career

Part 6

Şerif Pasha’s Reports on the Situation of the Kurds and Kurdistan (1919)

During and after the Paris Peace Conference of 1919, Şerif Pasha sent several official letters to representatives of the Allied powers, particularly to British authorities.

In these letters, he informed them about the political and humanitarian situation of the Kurdish population after the First World War.

He attempted to draw international attention to the situation of the Kurds and to advocate for their political and humanitarian interests.

In a letter dated 3 August 1919, entitled “The Situation in Kurdistan,” he addressed a British representative.

He wrote, in substance:

“Dear Sir,

The government of the Committee of Union and Progress (İttihat ve Terakki) took advantage of the withdrawal of Ottoman troops before the Russian and British armies and, within the framework of its policy of Turkification, carried out against the Kurds measures similar to those previously carried out against Armenians and Greeks.”

According to his account, Kurds were also subjected to forced displacement.

He continued:

“More than 900,000 Kurds were dispersed between Constantinople, Konya, Ankara, Smyrna and Adana. Half of these people died under conditions of great misery and suffering. The other half continues to live under the same difficult circumstances.”

He called on the British government to support the return of displaced Kurds to their homeland.

Şerif Pasha's Demands from Great Britain

Şerif Pasha argued that the Kurds did not have the same level of international support as other peoples.

He wrote:

"The Greeks have Venizelos. The Armenians receive extensive assistance from the United States in food, clothing and medicine. The Kurds, however, have placed the future of their country in the hands of the British."

He requested support for:

- the return of displaced Kurds,
- the restoration of their economic livelihood,
- the provision of livestock and agricultural tools.

He further wrote:

"Since all their livestock has been taken away from the Kurds, the whole of Kurdistan needs animals and agricultural equipment in order to work again and meet its material needs."

The Political Situation in Kurdistan After the Armistice

Şerif Pasha described the situation in Kurdistan as chaotic.

He stated that:

- there was no functioning local administration,
- the population lived in insecurity,
- officials sent by the Ottoman government had neither knowledge of the local language nor understanding of the traditions of Kurdistan.

For this reason, he demanded the dispatch of a joint British-Kurdish investigative commission.

Şerif Pasha and the Documentation of İttihat ve Terakki Policies

At the Paris Peace Conference, Şerif Pasha also informed representatives of various countries about the policies of the Committee of Union and Progress.

He submitted written reports concerning:

- the structure of the Committee,
- its political development,
- the role of the military,
- and the treatment of different communities within the Ottoman Empire.

In his view, it was necessary for the international community to understand the actual events that had taken place in the Ottoman Empire.

The Importance of Archival Documents

Documents preserved in various archives about Şerif Pasha today allow historians to examine his role more accurately.

They reveal:

- his diplomatic activities,
- his contacts with European governments,
- the relationship between Kurdish elites and international powers,
- and the development of the Kurdish political movement after the First World War.

Many of these documents became accessible only through later historical research.

Did Şerif Pasha Later Become an Egyptian Citizen?

According to the available information, Şerif Pasha remained for a long period an Ottoman, and later Turkish, citizen.

He was not voluntarily released from Turkish citizenship but lost it through an official state decision.

On 16 August 1950, following a request from the Turkish Ministry of Interior, a decision was made to remove his citizenship.

The decision was signed by the then Turkish President Celal Bayar.

The official justification stated:

"Mehmed Şerif (Pasha), son of Said Pasha, who remained abroad during the War of Independence and did not return to his homeland between 1923 and 1927, is excluded from Turkish citizenship."

Whether he had previously acquired Egyptian or Italian citizenship is not clearly documented.

Where Did Şerif Pasha Live and Where Did He Die?

After 1909, Şerif Pasha never permanently returned to the Ottoman Empire or later to the Republic of Turkey.

He mainly lived in:

- Monaco
- Italy

After the death of his wife, Princess Emine Halim Hanım, in 1926, he lived with an Italian woman from southern Italy.

He died in 1951 in the region of Catanzaro, Southern Italy.

The Burial of Şerif Pasha

After his death, different wishes existed within his family.

His daughter Şerife Emine, born from his marriage to the Egyptian princess Emine Halim, wanted her father's body to be transferred to Egypt and buried beside her mother.

His other daughter Melek Hanım, whose mother was Italian, wanted him to be buried in Catanzaro.

In the end, Şerif Pasha was buried in Catanzaro.

The funeral ceremony was reportedly very modest and attended by only a small number of people.

Conclusion

General and Diplomat Şerif Pasha (1865–1951) was an extraordinary personality who stood between several political worlds:

- an Ottoman general,
- a diplomat,
- a reform politician,
- an opponent of İttihat ve Terakki,
- and an international representative of Kurdish interests.

His life reflects the complex relationships between:

- Kurdish aristocracy,
- the Ottoman state,
- European powers,
- Turkish nationalism,
- and the Kurdish national movement.

Further research into his letters, diplomatic documents, and political writings can make an important contribution to understanding the history of Kurdish diplomacy in the early twentieth century.

The Four Kurdish Officers: Martyrs of Mahabad and Symbols of a Nation

Middle East Security and Strategic Affairs Analyst Afrin Times

In the history of the Kurdish people's struggle for freedom and self-determination, there are events that are not merely painful chapters of the past but also milestones that shaped Kurdish national consciousness. One of the most significant of these events occurred on June 19, 1947, when four young Kurdish officers were executed by the Iraqi monarchy after being accused of supporting the Republic of Kurdistan in Mahabad

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Alongside his journalistic career, he is currently working on several Kurdish-Hebrew linguistic and cultural publications, including translated books and language dictionaries.



The four officers—Mustafa Hushnaw, Khairallah Abdulkarim, Mohammed Mahmoud Qadsi, and Faik Hushnaw—were regarded as capable military professionals with a deep sense of national identity. They served in the Iraqi Army but chose to stand with their people when the Republic of Kurdistan was established in Mahabad in 1946 under the leadership of Qazi Muhammad.

The four officers left their official positions and joined the Kurdish national movement in Eastern Kurdistan. They helped build an organized military structure, trained Peshmerga fighters, and contributed to the establishment of the young republic's security institutions. Their actions symbolized the national unity of the different parts of Kurdistan and the shared aspiration for freedom.



Photo Akram Naasan
Suleimanja 2005

Following the fall of the Republic of Mahabad at the end of 1946 and the execution of Qazi Muhammad, the officers returned to Iraq. However, instead of receiving amnesty, they were arrested and brought before a military tribunal. Many Kurds viewed the proceedings as a political trial intended to deter any future efforts toward Kurdish national organization.

On June 19, 1947, the four men were executed at Baghdad's Central Prison. According to historical accounts, they walked to the gallows with their heads held high, expressing loyalty to their people and to the Kurdish national cause. Their deaths quickly became a symbol of sacrifice, courage, and unwavering commitment.

Through these executions, the Iraqi authorities sought to suppress Kurdish national aspirations. Yet the outcome was quite the opposite. The memory of the four officers became a source of inspiration for generations of Kurdish activists, intellectuals, and Peshmerga fighters. Their story continues to be studied and remembered as one of the most powerful symbols of the Kurdish struggle during the twentieth century.

Even today, decades after the event, the story of the four officers remains a testament to the power of national ideals and to the willingness of individuals to sacrifice their lives for their beliefs. Their legacy reminds us that national struggles are measured not only by military victories but also by steadfastness in the face of persecution, hardship, and personal sacrifice.

May the memory of the four Kurdish officers remain forever engraved in the history of the Kurdish people and in the consciousness of future generations.



WHAT SHOULD KURDS DO IN IRAN?

THE NEW HEGEMONIC STRUGGLE IN THE MIDDLE EAST

The war waged by the USA and Israel against Iran on February 28, 2026, continues with an indefinite ceasefire and a struggle for diplomacy and negotiation. The process that we can call the Third World War, beginning with Afghanistan and Iraq, followed by the Arab Spring, and now the intervention in Iran, manifests itself as a new hegemonic struggle.

Contrary to what was promised or hoped for, there has been no progress anywhere in the name of the people, democracy and freedom. Instead, there has been more chaos and uncertainty, to the point that we have come to look for the past.

Neither the old status quo can be overcome nor a new one established, due to the conflict of interests among both Middle Eastern and Western hegemonic powers in political, economic, ideological, military, geographical and many other areas, especially regarding energy resources.

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history, identity, and political developments in the Middle East. His work explores issues related to Kurdistan, Kurdish political movements, and the historical and political context of Iran.

His writings reflect an interest in Kurdish cultural and political affairs, with particular attention to questions of history, identity, and regional developments.

THE REAL POINT OF RESISTANCE: CULTURE

The real reason for this is the attempt to establish dominance while disregarding the people.

The real point of resistance here is not political, military or economic, but “cultural.” Middle Eastern culture is such a deep-rooted culture, in terms of religion, language and social structure, that any intervention that does not take this into consideration cannot achieve successful results.

As has been seen so far, interventions made only through rough tests, far from values such as universal human rights, religion, language, equality, freedom of expression, economic-political independence or interdependence, cause permanent harm to everyone.

DESTRUCTION WITHOUT AN ALTERNATIVE

For years, little attention has been paid to what will replace the old in any country that has been intervened in. There is only destruction.

On the other hand, the groups and organizations that emerged on behalf of the people in every region could not become an alternative because they fell into wrong and backward situations such as lacking sufficient diplomatic relations, political, social and economic organization and foresight, and, most importantly, entering into individual power struggles too early.

THE WAR IN IRAN AND ITS REGIONAL CONSEQUENCES

Now, a similar situation applies to the war in Iran.

Results were expected to be achieved with an intense attack and the killing of prominent leaders within five or six days. However, a situation emerged that did not end in the third month and, on the contrary, had a serious negative impact on all countries in the region and left the US-Israeli front in a difficult situation. The situation in the Strait of Hormuz has increased the prices of oil and petroleum products, and new transportation routes have begun to be sought. To solve the problem, the USA has become dependent on China, which it opposes. While Israel aims to dominate the region by neutralizing Iran, Türkiye has an alternative route, especially for oil transmission lines, thanks to the Kirkuk-Ceyhan pipeline.

All of these developments shook the world economy in a short time and revealed how fragile the global system is.

LESSONS FROM SOUTHERN KURDISTAN

The recent history of Southern Kurdistan and Rojava is full of important lessons. After the Saddam regime fell in 2003, the leading political Kurdish forces acted in unity, even though the conflicts and contradictions between them still continue. This paved the way for both their participation in the administration and the gains achieved to date.

Likewise, in 2017, Kurds in general, as well as regional and international powers, entered the independence referendum without the necessary support. This resulted in a huge geographical loss, as well as an irreparable setback in terms of economic and administrative control.

LESSONS FROM ROJAVA

In Rojava, important and historical gains have been achieved with great sacrifices and costs, again with the support of the international coalition.

However, the wrong system and inadequate administrative structure, not acting with sufficient forward-looking diplomatic and political foresight, not ensuring unity among the Kurds internally, not taking steps in time, insisting on one's own position, and expecting help from external powers under all circumstances, even though there is no guarantee or official promise, are just some of the reasons for the losses and setbacks.

THE SITUATION IN NORTHERN KURDISTAN

In Northern Kurdistan, the Turkish administration is doing everything to prevent the Kurds from gaining anything, despite all the steps taken.

WHAT SHOULD ROJHILAT KURDS DO?

Based on these short examples, Rojhilat Kurds should be very cautious and active.

The first priority is inter-Kurdish unity with a non-partisan approach.

The second is an alliance with local people on a democratic basis.

The third is an alliance with international powers based on a clear, written agreement.

And, if the Iranian administration accepts it, another important objective should be gaining legal rights with constitutional guarantees.

THE “THIRD WAY” MUST NOT BECOME PASSIVITY

Another important point is that the declared “third way” preference should not turn into a passive expectation stance.

Rojhilat Kurds should therefore remain cautious, organized and active, drawing lessons from the experiences of Southern Kurdistan, Rojava and Northern Kurdistan, while developing their own political, diplomatic and social strategy according to the realities of Iran and the region.

From Sykes–Picot to Lausanne

A Genealogy of Partition, Denial, and Repressive Nation-States

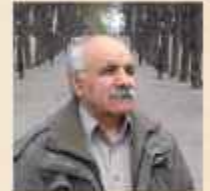
This article is divided into two parts. The first examines the colonial agreements—from Sykes–Picot to Sèvres and Lausanne—that led to the partition of Kurdistan, the denial of collective identities, and the rise of repressive nation-states in the Middle East.

The second focuses on the resistance movement and the re-emergence of Kurdish identity, highlighting Abdullah Öcalan’s initiatives, the Rojava experience, and the continuing struggle against denial and repression.

From July 24, 1923, the day the Treaty of Lausanne in Switzerland was signed, to July 23, 2026, 103 years have passed. The Treaty of Lausanne was a direct consequence of the 1916 Sykes–Picot Agreement and the 1920 Treaty of Sèvres. This text offers a condensed yet radical examination of the goals and consequences of this treaty of subjugation, a treaty that remains historically and politically significant for liberation movements, especially for the nationally and class-oppressed masses in the divided parts of Kurdistan.

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Lausanne was not an isolated event. It took shape at a moment when feudal empires were collapsing, and global capitalist powers were drawing a new map for the Middle East, Kurdistan, Palestine, and the lands formerly under Ottoman rule to redive the world.

The First World War was not merely a historical event; it was a form of capitalist politics in that period – a war for the redivision of markets, territories, resources, trade routes, and spheres of influence. The human, financial, ecological, and civilizational costs of this war – from the deaths of millions to the use of chemical weapons and the widespread destruction of ecosystems – were paid in order to reorganize the world in favor of capital and imperialism. In this context, the Ottoman Empire, as one of the last feudal-religious structures in the region, had to give way to dependent capitalist nation-states and new borders.

1. The Sykes–Picot Agreement: The Imperialist Map for the Partition of the Middle East

The Sykes–Picot Agreement was concluded on May 9, 1916, by François Georges-Picot [1] on behalf of France and General Mark Sykes [2] on behalf of Britain, amid the flames of the First World War and with the participation of Tsarist Russia. At that time, the feudal-religious Ottoman Empire was breathing its last. On one side of the war stood the Allied powers – Britain, France, Italy, Japan, and later the United States – and on the other side stood Germany, Austria-Hungary, Bulgaria, and the declining Ottoman Empire. This war marked the transition from the logic of old empires to the logic of modern capitalist nation-states and imperial blocs.

Following secret negotiations that began in 1915, Picot and Sykes finalized a confidential agreement to divide the Ottoman Empire's legacy among the victorious powers. Tsarist Russia, still driven by the expansionist dreams of Peter the Great, also sought its share in this division, especially in Istanbul, the Bosphorus and Dardanelles, and certain Armenian- and Kurdish-populated regions. The central aim of the Sykes-Picot agreement was to transform and divide the peoples and ethnic communities of the Middle East into small, dependent, and controllable units. These units were not constructed on the basis of the will of the peoples, their shared history of coexistence, language, culture, or social needs, but rather on colonial interests, oil routes, ports, strategic lines, and the balance of power among imperialist states. In this partition, the Arab territories of the Ottoman Empire were divided into spheres of influence. Parts of Syria, Lebanon, Adana, Cilicia, Amed (Diyarbakir), Aleppo, Damascus, and northern Iraq were placed under the French sphere of influence. Baghdad, Basra, Kirkuk, southern Mesopotamia, Jordan, Palestine, the ports of Haifa and Acre, and routes leading to the Persian Gulf were placed within the British sphere of influence. A further zone was assigned to Tsarist Russia, including Istanbul, the straits, and parts of Armenia and Kurdistan.





The Sykes-Picot Agreement marked the official beginning of the fragmentation of Kurdistan and the denial of the identity of millions of people who had lived for thousands

of years in the Zagros mountains, Mesopotamia, and the highlands of Kurdistan. Kurdistan

was divided among Iran, Turkey, Syria, and Iraq, and its fate was handed over to states that later implemented policies of denial, assimilation, forced displacement, suppression of

language, prevention of popular self-organization, and political elimination.

Following the October 1917 workers' revolution in Russia, this secret treaty was exposed.

The October Revolution denounced the Sykes-Picot as a treaty of subjugation, expansion,

and occupation. V. Lenin rejected it as a clear example of imperialist annexation and

territorial partition. Its exposure revealed that the agreement was not a plan for the

liberation of peoples, but a program for their renewed captivity within modern borders.

The Arab territories of the Ottoman Empire were divided into three political and administrative zones of influence: A, B, and C.

Zone A: Lebanon, Syria, Adana, Cilicia, Amed (Diyarbakir), northern Iraq, including the

Mosul Vilayet – Mosul, Erbil, Sulaymaniyah, and others – Aleppo, Damascus, and Lebanon were to fall under French influence.

Zone B: The British share included southern Syria, Jordan, central and southern Mesopotamia, Baghdad, Kirkuk, Basra down to the Persian Gulf, and Kuwait, as well as

areas later known as the United Arab Emirates, Oman, and Yemen. It also included the

ports of Haifa and Acre, Jerusalem, and present-day Jordan, with access to the Mediterranean preserved. Jerusalem was to be placed under international supervision,

including Russian participation.



Zone C: Istanbul, the Bosphorus and Dardanelles, and six Armenian- and Kurdish-

populated vilayets, including Van and Bitlis, were to be ceded to Russia.

The Ottoman and Tsarist Russian empires were shattered by this war and drawn into the

whirlpool of transformation and

revolution. In Russia, the conscious and

organized working class overthrew Tsarism. In the

Ottoman realm, however, national

chauvinism and counterrevolution turned

ethnic territories, especially Kurdish

regions, into prisons and slaughterhouses.

With the collapse of Tsarism and the victory of

the workers' revolution in 1917, the

October Revolution exposed this treaty as

a treaty of subjugation; Lenin rejected it as

expansionism, occupation, and territorial annexation.



Sykes–Picot.

The French sphere of influence is shown in blue, the British in red, and the Tsarist Russian in green.

2 The Treaty of Sèvres: An Unfinished and Deceptive Promise

Following the collapse of the Ottoman Empire, the crisis of central authority, and the

inability of Sykes–Picot to stabilize the new order, the Treaty of Sèvres was placed on the

agenda. It was signed on August 10, 1920, in the town of Sèvres near Paris, between representatives of the Ottoman state and the victorious powers of the First World War.

Britain, France, Italy, Japan, Greece, Romania, Portugal, Belgium, Poland, the Kingdom of

Hejaz, Yugoslavia, Czechoslovakia, and the Republic of Armenia were involved in this process.

The Treaty of Sèvres was intended to finalize the partition of the Ottoman Empire. Under its terms, the Ottoman state would lose a large part of its Arab, African, and European territories. Syria and parts of southern Anatolia, including Gaziantep, Şanlıurfa, Mardin, Cilicia, Adana, and Amed, would fall under French influence. Iraq and Palestine, subject to the implementation of the Balfour Declaration, would be placed under British mandate. Izmir and its surrounding areas would be ceded to Greece, and the Bosphorus and Dardanelles would be demilitarized. The most striking aspect of the Treaty of Sèvres was its formal recognition of the establishment of an Armenian state and the possibility of autonomy for Kurdistan. For the first time, in an official international document, the question of Kurdistan was raised as a political issue. Yet this recognition was unstable from the outset, instrumental, and dependent on the balance of power among the great powers. Sèvres appeared to open the door to the right to self-determination, but in practice, it remained within the framework of the imperialist order and top-down management. Ottoman officers, especially Mustafa Kemal, rose against the Treaty of Sèvres. At the Erzurum and Sivas congresses, they presented themselves as representatives of independence, democracy, nationhood, and the struggle against colonialism. In April 1920, Mustafa Kemal even spoke of Kurdish autonomy in the Ankara parliament and, in order to attract support and silence the movement against Kurdish national oppression, declared that "the destiny of Kurds and Turks is one, and the Kurdish question is our question."

These words, however, were no more than tactical and political formalities. The main goal of the Kemalists was the reconstruction of central power, the formation of a modern capitalist nation-state, and the consolidation of the political and economic rule of a peripheral bourgeoisie dependent on the global system. They spoke of the Kurds only as long as they needed their social, military, and political force to defeat domestic and foreign rivals. Once power was consolidated, those same promises turned into denial, massacre, forced displacement, and the political elimination of the Kurds. For this reason, the Treaty of Sèvres must be understood as a formal, unstable, and deceptive promise. On the one hand, it opened the historical possibility of raising the question of Kurdistan; on the other hand, because of its imperialist character and the instability of the balance of power, it could not lead to the real liberation of oppressed peoples. The green garden promised by Sèvres opened, through Lausanne, into the burning hell of denial and repression. The treaty's importance is also evident in diplomatic reports of the period. Esmail Momtaz, an Iranian diplomat who was following the European negotiations at the time, reported to Tehran in late November 1922 that the key issues under discussion included the determination of Turkey's national borders, particularly regarding Mosul, Kirkuk, and Sulaymaniyah; the borders of Syria; the status of Eastern and Western Thrace; and freedom of passage through the Dardanelles and Bosphorus.

The Treaty of Sèvres also addressed the Armenian Genocide in Articles 226 to 230, which was later amended. Under these articles, the Ottoman government undertook to hand over individuals accused of violating the laws and customs of international warfare to Allied military courts, to cooperate in the execution of sentences, and to provide all documents and information necessary for investigations and prosecutions.[3] Thus, the Treaty of Sèvres placed not only the question of Kurdistan on the agenda, but also the Armenian question, the new borders of the Middle East, and the legal responsibility of the Ottoman state for war crimes. Much of this was later set aside by the Treaty of Lausanne, which replaced it with a new political order based on the consolidation of the Turkish nation-state and the elimination of many previous commitments.



3. The Treaty of Lausanne: The Consolidation of the Denial of Kurdistan

The Treaty of Lausanne was signed on July 24, 1923. This time, the Turkish delegation, led by General İsmet İnönü, spoke from a position of strength. The newly established Kemalist state, after wars with Greece, Armenians, and the French, and after suppressing internal movements, had imposed itself as the decisive force in Anatolia. The imperialist powers had also concluded that the Kemalist state could guarantee the new order, stabilize borders, and contain social and national movements. At Lausanne, the provisions of Sèvres were set aside; Kurdish autonomy was eliminated, the Armenian question was marginalized, and non-Turkish ethnicities were erased from the legal and political sphere. The Turkish nation-state was recognized on the basis of the ideology of "one country, one language, one nation, and one flag." At Lausanne, the Kurds and Kurdistan had to be erased. The treaty not only consolidated Turkey's new borders; it also provided the legal and political foundation for the denial of all non-Turkish nationalities and ethnicities. The constitution of the new Turkish state, under the cover of laïcité, republicanism, and modernism, in practice carried extreme nationalism, assimilation, forced displacement, and the bloody repression of the Kurds. The Treaty of Lausanne drove the alliance of the oppressed peoples of the Middle East into separation, hostility, and war. The new borders were not borders of freedom, but lines of massacre, repression, occupation, denial, and partition. Kurdistan, one of the oldest geographies of human and cultural life in the region, was divided into four parts, each placed under the domination of a state hostile to Kurdish self-administration, mother tongue, independent organization, and collective identity.

Kemalism, by blending populism, nationalism, Pan-Turkism, and centralized state-building, presented itself as a force of "national liberation." In practice, however, it was a bridge from Ottomanism to a new repressive nation-state. This project initially misled some leftist and internationalist forces. The Communist Party of Turkey and part of the Comintern failed in their first assessment to correctly grasp the nature of Kemalism. Mustafa Kemal even established an official parallel communist party in order to contain communism. In this sense, Lausanne was not a peace treaty between states. It was a treaty for the elimination of nations, the silencing of liberation movements, and the reconstruction of the capitalist order in the Middle East.

4. Atatürk, Kemalism, and the Construction of the Repressive Nation-State

With the declaration of the Republic of Turkey and the removal of the last Ottoman caliph on March 3, 1924, the new Kemalist state presented itself as the heir to modernity, republicanism, and *laïcité*. *laïcité* did not mean the liberation of society from state domination. It meant the reconstruction of a centralized, military, nationalist state hostile to nationalities and ethnic communities.

With the collapse of the Ottoman Empire, officers emerging from the disintegrating Ottoman army, led by Mustafa Kemal, reconstructed past chauvinism and imperial grandeur – this time not under the banner of the caliphate, but under the name of republic, single nation, and laïcité. Their difference from earlier Ottomanism was one of form, not of the nature of domination. Ottomanism relied on caliphate and religion; Kemalism relied on “one nation, one language, one flag, and one state.” In both cases, Kurds, Armenians, Assyrians, Arabs, Alawites, Greeks, Yazidis, and other ethnic communities had to be absorbed into, or suppressed by, the machinery of central power. Mustafa Kemal and his officers, like Reza Khan in Iran, reconstructed the logic of denial, centralization, and the suppression of collective identities through the language of modernity and modern state-building. This nation-state became, in practice, a vast prison for the peoples of Anatolia and Kurdistan. Kurdish uprisings – including the Sheik Said uprising in 1925, the Ararat and Zilan uprisings in 1930, and the Dersim uprising in 1937 – were the historical response of Kurdish masses to this denialist order. These uprisings were not merely local rebellions; they expressed the historical rage of a people whose previous promises had been betrayed and who were now being repressed in the name of the “Republic” by the same old logic of despotism.

The suppression of these uprisings involved massacres, exile, the destruction of villages, the changing of names, the banning of language, the denial of identity, and the militarization of Kurdistan. The Turkish constitution and its educational, cultural, and military apparatus either called Kurds "Mountain Turks" or denied their existence altogether. This was not a temporary mistake; it was the foundation of the Kemalist state.

Stefan Ihrig, historian and author of *Atatürk in the Nazi Imagination and Justifying Genocide: Germany and the Armenians from Bismarck to Hitler*, shows that the Turkish War of Independence and the Kemalist experience had a serious impact on the Nazi imagination. In Hitler's Germany, the desire was to overturn the Treaty of Versailles in the same way that the Kemalists had cast aside the Treaty of Sèvres. Some political accounts attribute to Hitler phrases describing Mustafa Kemal as a "star in the darkness" and the "brilliant creator of the new Turkey,"[4] as well as the statement: "Mussolini is his first student, and I am his second." [5]

The exact wording of these quotations should be treated with caution, but the broader historical point is well documented: Hitler and sections of German nationalism admired the Kemalist success in overturning the Sèvres Agreement and in building a centralized nation-state.[6]

In his Reichstag speech of May 4, 1941, Hitler also referred to Turkey as Germany's ally in the First World War and praised the realistic leadership of the Turkish state.

5. From Turkey to Iran, Iraq, and Syria: The Regional Continuity of the Lausanne Logic

The logic of Lausanne was not limited to Turkey. In Iran, Reza Shah Pahlavi, through its centralized nation-state project, turned the Persian language into an instrument of forced homogenization and treated self-administration, education in the mother tongue, denied the other nations and ethnic group in Iran, and independent organization of nationalities as threats to "territorial integrity." The Islamic Republic continued the same logic through religious, security, and ideological language: repression in Kurdistan, execution of activists, securitization of national and class demands, and structural deprivation of peripheral regions. In Iraq, royal and later Ba'athist regimes pursued policies of denial, Arabization, forced displacement, and genocide against the Kurds. This logic reached its peak in the Anfal campaign, the chemical bombardment of Halabja, and the destruction of thousands of villages. In Syria, the governments of Hafez al-Assad and later Bashar al-Assad reproduced the same Lausanne order in Ba'athist form by depriving part of the Kurdish population of citizenship, banning the Kurdish language and culture, and placing society under security control. In all these countries, Kurdistan became a securitized, borderland, militarized, and deprived region. States under different names – secular, monarchical, Ba'athist, Islamic, or republican – shared one point in common: denial of the right to self-determination, suppression of language and culture, prevention of independent organization, and the transformation of Kurdistan into a territory of military control.

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6. Lausanne: A Treaty Against the Convergence of Peoples

One of the devastating consequences of Lausanne was the separation of peoples who had lived for centuries in a shared geography: Kurds, Arabs, Armenians, Assyrians, Chaldeans, Turkmen, Persians, Turks, Alawites, Yazidis, and others. This policy, especially through the partition of Kurdistan and the denial of Kurdish identity, turned people who could have lived in free and equal coexistence into artificial enemies under the rule of repressive nation-states. The borders drawn with the ruler of imperialist diplomacy tore apart not only geographical geography, but also memory, economy, migration, language, kinship, culture, and the possibility of convergence among peoples. Lausanne separated peoples so that states could rule over them, turning the Middle East into an arena of competition among centralized states and denied nations.

Therefore, the question of Kurdistan is not merely the question of one nation; it is a question for the entire Middle East. As long as the Lausanne order and the nation-states that emerged from it remain in place, the freedom of Kurdistan, Palestine, women, workers, and the peoples of the region will remain under threat. From Sykes–Picot to Sèvres and then Lausanne, the Middle East was divided according to the needs of imperialist powers and emerging nation-states. Kurdistan was not liberated from its multilayered oppressions; rather, it was divided into four parts, each placed under a state that turned denial and repression into official policy. Lausanne was not the end of a treaty; it was the beginning of a century of captivity, denial, resistance, and struggle. This treaty became the legal and political charter of an order that, through borders, armies, official languages, schools, prisons, and repression, sought to erase Kurdistan and other historical identities of the region from the memory of the world. The Islamist government in Turkey, the Islamic Republic in Iran, the Assad regime, and Saddam Hussein's regime were guardians and logical outcomes of the Lausanne order. History, however, is not only the history of captivity. It is also the history of resistance, renewed identity, the reconstruction of society, and the realization of ideas that have taken shape in Rojava, the women's movement, councils, communes, and the convergence of peoples.

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Kurds and the Globalization of Human Rights

Respecting the value and dignity of every individual's nature is very important for educating a unified society, because any violation of this dignity can have significant consequences for individuals. Every individual, by virtue of their humanity, has their own natural rights, and it is very important that these rights, known as human rights, remain free from violation.

Over the years, the concept of human rights has gradually developed, and it took considerable time to reach its current state. But notably, the Universal Declaration of Human Rights emerged in 1948, adopted by the United Nations General Assembly as a response to the lessons drawn from the Second World War.

Subsequently, the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights was adopted in 1966, the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights in 1966,

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So far, several books by him have been published, including:

"Globalization and the Arab World: From the Age of Reforms to Modern Arab Movements,"

"Iran's Geo-economics and Developmental Foreign Policy," and "Nationalism, State, and Identity in the Arab World."

He has also translated books such as:

"The Kurds in Iran: Past, Present, and Future" and

"The Kurds in the Restless Middle East Region."

Since then, most peoples have accepted that human beings are rational and, by virtue of their humanity, possess certain natural and inalienable rights recognized as human rights. In fact, human rights are natural rights that are universally valid for all individuals, regardless of place of residence, language, race, or religion.

The Main Pillars of Human Rights

Generally speaking, every individual justly enjoys human rights and must not be deprived of them on the basis of exclusion. Broadly, the most important pillars of human rights are: 1- Civil and political rights; 2- Economic, social and cultural rights; 3- Collective or group rights.

Globalization and Human Rights

But what is the relationship between globalization and human rights? It must be said that globalization has accelerated the expansion of international human rights. These rights transcend national borders and state frameworks, broadening their impact on a global scale. It should also be noted that today, globalization and the growth of popular awareness have led to the expansion of human rights values, the strengthening of international institutions, and increased public awareness of these rights. In other words, globalization has had a significant impact on the emergence of universal values and the universalization of human rights. In this regard, it must also be said that today the globalization of human rights values and political, cultural, and social freedoms has become so esteemed that their violation by totalitarian and despotic regimes is no longer acceptable.

Human Rights After the Cold War

Historically, however, a crucial turning point in relation to the globalization of human rights values was the end of the Cold War and the collapse of the Soviet Union in 1991.

Indeed, with the disappearance of the communist threat, the United States, together with the European Union, began urging the international community to adopt human rights, minority rights, and respect for multiculturalism as a way to overcome identity conflicts in the twentieth century. In fact, one of the enduring tenets of the post-Cold War era has been that globalization can serve as a catalyst for democratization and the promotion of human rights values by these countries. When democratic ideals cross borders or even reach authoritarian states, globalization makes democratization and human rights a imperative. Proponents of this view point to the spread of democracy in the last quarter of the twentieth century and also in the early twenty-first century, especially in the Arab world.

Human Rights and International Law

But as we have indicated, the concept of human rights means the rule of law and rights that regulate relations among individuals within states as well as between states. In international law, relatively accepted standards have been established on issues such as the laws of war, environmental law, crimes against humanity, and war crimes, all of which are founded on the basis of the globalization of human rights.

Conclusion

Overall, globalization and human rights are two interrelated subjects that affect how people and governments interact across the world.

Trump, My Father, and the Kurds

In early June 2026, as U.S. attacks against Iran were underway, U.S. President Trump—as always—sought a way out of the dilemma of how to end his war against Iran, which violated international law, and declared himself the victor. For none of the promises he had made at the start of the U.S.-Israeli war on February 28, 2026, had been fulfilled by this brutal war. Above all, the criminal Iranian regime was still in power. At the time, Trump spoke of regime change. To justify the disaster and his failure, Trump tried to shift the blame onto others, including the Kurds.

About 12 million Kurds live in Iran, accounting for about 10 to 15% of the 93 million Iranian population. Many in the U.S. and Israel assumed that an active role by the Kurds in Iran—especially their armed forces—could help the U.S. and Israel topple the regime in Iran. In this context, comparisons were drawn with the Kurds' struggle against Saddam Hussein in Iraq—who was overthrown in 2003 with the help of the Kurds—or with the fight against Assad and the "Islamic State" (IS) in Syria.

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In Syria, the Kurds were supported against both ISIS and Assad until 2024, when that support was cut off. However, since the Kurds in Iraq and Syria have had bitter experiences with U.S. policy—they were always abandoned at the crucial moment and subjected to massacres by Iraq, Turkey, or Syria—the promised U.S. aid either failed to materialize or arrived too late. For this reason, the Kurds in Iran did not want to react hastily and demanded guarantees from the U.S. that it was genuinely interested in regime change and democratization in Iran.

The Kurds made their active role against the regime contingent on these guarantees. President Trump omitted all of this in his statement. He claims that the Kurds received weapons from the U.S. but kept them for themselves and did not use them against the regime in Tehran.

Did the Kurds steal U.S. weapons?

Trump stated verbatim: "We sent weapons to the Kurds. (...) The Kurds let us down. I didn't agree with that decision. I said, 'No, I don't think they'll pass them on. I think they kept them for themselves.'" "I think that's a shame. But I'll remember that, you Kurds, I'll remember that."

(thenewregion.com, June 11, 2026)

It is well known that Trump repeatedly seizes on fake news to advance his political agenda or justify his failures. But his accusation that the Kurds had "stolen" the weapons was new. No one in either the U.S. or Israel could prove that the Kurds in Iran had received weapons from the U.S.

Rather, there were indications that the Trump administration had betrayed joint plans between the Kurds, Israel, and the U.S. to Turkish President Erdogan. The international press has reported on this extensively. (libnanews.com, June 7, 2026)

Whether or not the U.S. betrayed the plans is irrelevant here. In any case, there is no evidence to support Trump's claim that the Kurds stole U.S. weapons.

Such spectacular statements from Trump are nothing new when it comes to the Kurds. In 2019, when Trump ordered the withdrawal of U.S. troops from parts of northern Syria that had been fighting alongside the Kurds against ISIS, thereby leaving the Kurds defenseless against attacks by both ISIS and Turkey, Trump attempted to justify his misguided decision—which had drawn widespread criticism in the U.S.—by claiming that the Kurds had provided no assistance to the U.S. during World War II. (The Guardian, October 9)

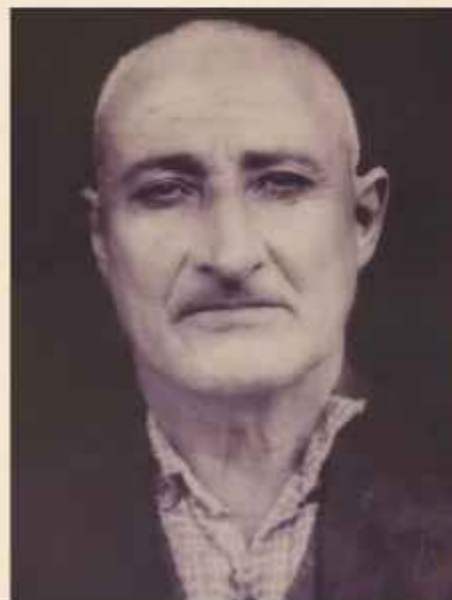
This claim by Trump was also false. Kurds were very actively involved in the fight against Nazi Germany in various countries. My father was among them. When Trump accused the Kurds of not having supported the U.S. in the war against Hitler's Germany, I responded to his claim on social media. In doing so, I jokingly pointed out my father's involvement in World War II. Incidentally, Trump should have known that the Kurds did not have their own state back then—just as they do not today—and therefore could not actively participate in international affairs as a state actor.

My Father in World War II

How did my father come to be involved in this war? After World War I, the Middle East was divided between the French and the British. The Kurds in Syria—including those in Afrin in the northwest of the country—found themselves within a territory that was henceforth known as Syria. This area became a French colony. My father was born in 1916, right in the midst of World War I, when the secret partition of the Middle East between Great Britain and France took place. Born. When World War II began in 1939, he was 23 years old. As a young man, he joined the Syrian units of the French Army stationed in Syria. From that point on, he was a member of the French military in Syria. When German troops occupied Paris and large parts of France on June 14, 1940, and the so-called Vichy government was formed in southern France, British troops marched into Syria from Iraq and Jordan in June and July to prevent Nazi Germany from using the territory of Syria controlled by Vichy France. As a result, Syria effectively came under British rule, and the existing military units became part of the British military. Thus, from that point on, my father was also a British soldier. He later became a member of an auxiliary unit of the 8th British Army.

My Father and the Desert Fox

The British 8th Army was a legendary unit of the British Army during World War II. As a multinational and multiethnic Commonwealth force in North Africa, it played a decisive role in the liberation of Europe and the defeat of Nazi Germany. The story of my father (1916–2000) is well known throughout our village in Afrin. As a result, I was exposed to stories from World War II even as a child. In my father's conversations and stories, terms like "Desert War," "Desert Fox," Erwin Rommel, Bernard Montgomery, and El Alamein came up time and again.



Sido Ahmad Sido (1916–2000), also known as Saydo Qadi, a Kurd from Afrin who fought in North Africa as part of the 8th Army, 1941–1945. Photo: Private collection.

The term "Desert War" primarily refers to the war against the German Afrika Korps, led by General Erwin Rommel (1891–1944), in North Africa—specifically in what is now Egypt and Libya. German General Rommel became known as the "Desert Fox" because he repeatedly eluded the British and successfully held his own against British General Bernard Montgomery (1887–1976). El Alamein is a town in Egypt where, in November 1942, a decisive battle of World War II took place between the German-Italian African Panzer Army under the command of Field Marshal Erwin Rommel and the British 8th Army under the command of Lieutenant General Bernard Montgomery. In November 1942, a decisive battle of World War II took place near El Alamein between the German-Italian Afrika Panzer Army under the command of Field Marshal Erwin Rommel and the British 8th Army under the command of Lieutenant General Bernard Montgomery. When the British 8th Army, in which my father was fighting, was preparing its advance in Italy in the summer of 1943, the High Command gave the members of the auxiliary forces a choice: either they would continue on to Europe, or they would remain in North Africa and return to their home countries later. My father decided against continuing on to Sicily, Italy, Europe, and Germany. And so it happened that in 1945 he missed the opportunity to come to Germany.

It wasn't until 1991 that he came to Germany—not as a British soldier, but to visit his son, whom he hadn't seen in ten years and who had found refuge in Germany a year earlier. At the time, we were living in Marburg, where we happened to meet a member of the German Africa Corps who struck up a conversation with my father.



Kurds in the Red Army

The largest group of Kurds who actively participated in World War II came primarily from the former Soviet Union.

During World War II, thousands of Soviet Kurds, Muslims, and Yazidis—primarily from the republics of Armenia, Georgia, Kazakhstan, and Kyrgyzstan—fought in the Red Army against Nazi Germany. Figures such as the Kurdish-Yazidi commander Samand Siabandov (1909–1989) were awarded the title “Hero of the Soviet Union.”

Like many other ethnic groups, the Kurds also suffered under Stalin in the 1930s. Many of them, especially Muslim Kurds, were deported from their homeland in the South Caucasus to Central Asia, specifically to the republics of Kazakhstan and Kyrgyzstan. These Kurds, too, fought against Nazi Germany after Hitler’s invasion of the USSR and advanced as far as Berlin.

A number of publications have been written about the role of the Kurds in World War II. These are available not only in Russian but also in English.

(kulturnistudia.cz/, 2-2023)

Trump should have known all of this before he spread his fake news. Politicians—especially those who play a major role in world politics—should also seek advice from experts, particularly when it comes to history and the past. After all: “Those who do not know history are doomed to repeat the mistakes of the past.”

Note: This article was originally published in German in “Vielfalt,” the journal of the Society for Threatened Peoples, Issue 3, 2026.



Samand Siabandov (1909–1989), a Yazidi Kurd who fought in the Red Army against Nazi Germany, 1941–1945. Photo: Wikipedia.

To Those Who Know the Pain of Identity...

When the compass failed us, this was not what we expected from you.

There are peoples who do not need to tell their story, because their features tell it on their behalf. The Kurdish people are one of those peoples.

A people who have known what it means for identity to become a struggle, for belonging to become an accusation, and for simply holding on to a name, a language, and a collective memory to become an act of resistance.

That is why our respect for the Kurdish cause was never merely political. It was a human respect for a long story of perseverance and sacrifice.

And perhaps for that very reason... our disappointment was even greater.

We never expected Kurdish leaders to fight the battles of others, nor to abandon their national project or their responsibilities toward their own people. Every people has the right to defend its future, and every leadership has the right to choose its own political tools.

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But there is a vast difference between politics when it builds the future and politics when it loses its ability to offer comfort to the oppressed.

Many members of Syria's minorities—the Alawites, Druze, and Christians—saw the Kurdish experience as more than simply a national experience. They also saw it as a moral experience.

They believed that those who had known the fear of losing their identity would be the most capable of understanding the fears of others, and that those who had spent years asking the world for justice would not abandon those waiting for a word of justice.

But the past few months have brought more questions than answers.

After the massacres on the Syrian coast, while families were gathering the names of their victims, searching for their missing loved ones, and trying to understand how life could continue after all this pain, the political agreement with the new authorities came swiftly.

For many people, the event was not merely a political step. Rather, it appeared as though it was an announcement that the language of interests could take precedence over the language of memory.

Then came the latest scene: the appearance of a representative of the Kurdish community in a council formed at the initiative of the current authorities, rather than through the will of voters.

That added another layer of questions to an already burdened collective memory.

There may be a political explanation for this.

Kurdish leaders may have their reasons.

But politics, no matter how skillful, cannot prevent people from feeling.

And the feeling growing among many today is not anger...

but disappointment.

Disappointment because we believed that the relationship between peoples who have experienced oppression was not a relationship based on interests, but one based on shared memory.

And that those who built their cause upon the defense of dignity would never accept allowing others to feel that their dignity had been left alone in their most difficult moments.

No one is asking Kurdish leaders to adopt the causes of others, nor to abandon their own priorities.

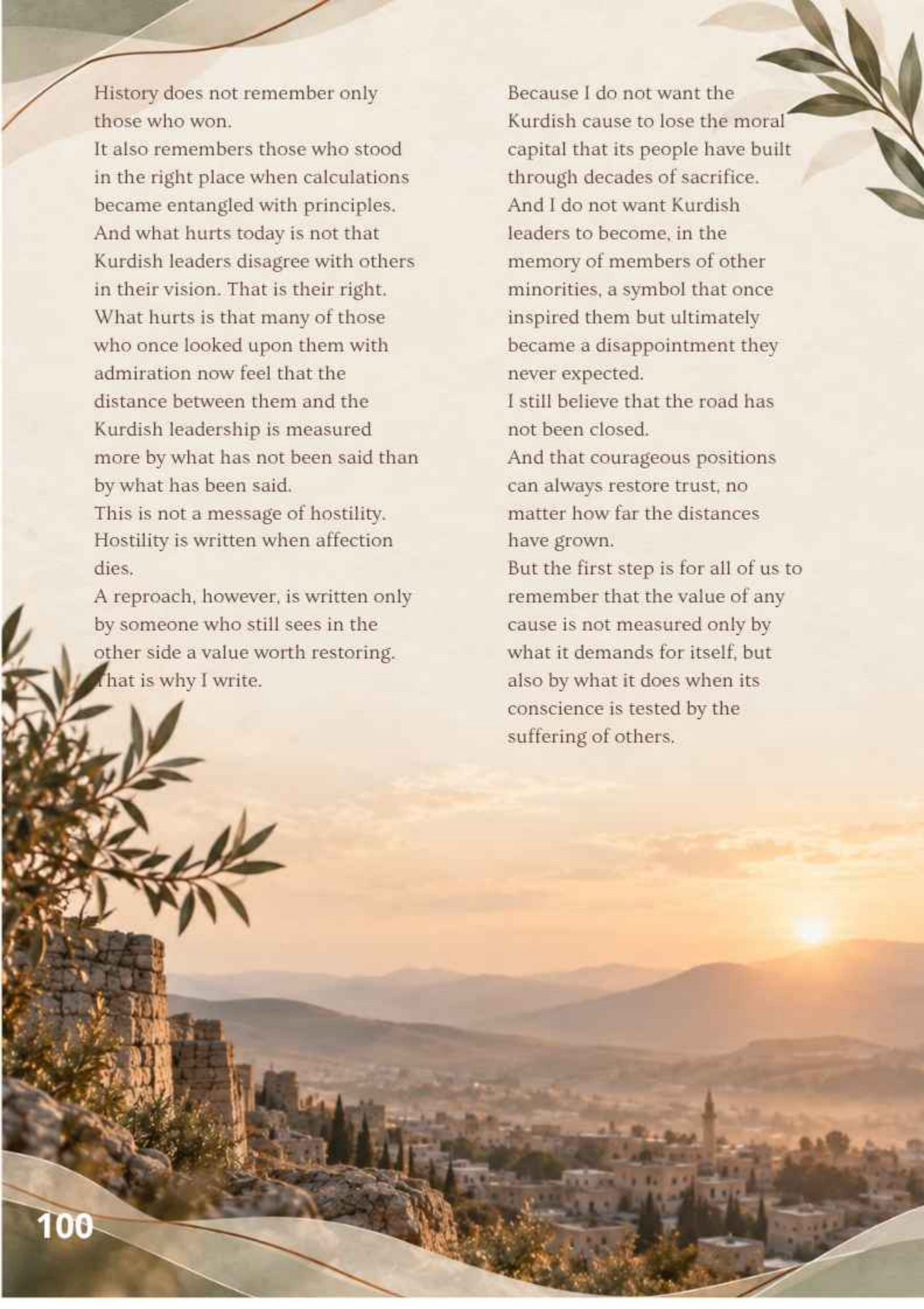
But it would have been enough for the moral compass to remain in its place.

Politics changes.

Alliances change.

Authorities come and go.

But positions and principles... are what remain.



History does not remember only those who won.
It also remembers those who stood in the right place when calculations became entangled with principles. And what hurts today is not that Kurdish leaders disagree with others in their vision. That is their right. What hurts is that many of those who once looked upon them with admiration now feel that the distance between them and the Kurdish leadership is measured more by what has not been said than by what has been said. This is not a message of hostility. Hostility is written when affection dies. A reproach, however, is written only by someone who still sees in the other side a value worth restoring. That is why I write.

Because I do not want the Kurdish cause to lose the moral capital that its people have built through decades of sacrifice. And I do not want Kurdish leaders to become, in the memory of members of other minorities, a symbol that once inspired them but ultimately became a disappointment they never expected. I still believe that the road has not been closed. And that courageous positions can always restore trust, no matter how far the distances have grown. But the first step is for all of us to remember that the value of any cause is not measured only by what it demands for itself, but also by what it does when its conscience is tested by the suffering of others.

The Theater of Fear: When Freedom Was Stripped Bare Before Power... From the Inquisition to McCarthyism

It always begins with a resounding word, or so we imagine. In the early 1950s, America stood tall as the sole guardian of the "Free World" against the communist tide. Yet, beneath this utopian mask lay a political and social machine preparing to devour its own citizens—not through the gallows, but by stripping them of their very selves. Senator Joseph McCarthy led this crusade, proving to history that "freedom," this sacred concept, might be nothing more than a cruel joke when it contradicts power's interest in tightening its grip.

The Spark of Ascent and the Genesis of the Term McCarthyism

The rise of Joseph McCarthy was no political coincidence; it was an astute investment in the "economy of fear." In February 1950, McCarthy delivered a speech in Wheeling, West Virginia, waving a piece of paper he claimed contained the names of 205 Communist Party members working within the US State Department. Although he presented not a single piece of evidence, and despite the later contradictions in his numbers, this moment was enough to ignite mass hysteria.

Amidst this whirlwind, in March 1950, political cartoonist Herbert Block (known as "Herblock") coined the term "McCarthyism" in *The Washington Post*, depicting it as a barrel of mud. The term quickly transformed from a mere description of passing political behavior into an institutional concept.

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concept. It came to represent the practice of leveling accusations of treason and subversion without evidence, alongside the political and social assassination of character for the sake of domination.

The Genealogy of the Inquisition: The Intersection of Foucault and Bourdieu in Deconstructing the Mechanisms of Power

Historically, the McCarthyite hysteria was not a purely American innovation; rather, it was a modernist cloning of the ecclesiastical "Inquisition" mechanisms. In both eras, humanity faced an authoritarian structure that fed on manufacturing the "invisible enemy." The Inquisition founded its legitimacy on purging society of "heretics" to protect the "freedom of eternal salvation"; McCarthyism founded its legitimacy on purging state institutions to protect the freedom of the democratic world. To understand this organic congruence, we cannot separate "discourse" from the "social field." Here, Michel Foucault's methodology intertwines with Pierre Bourdieu's tools to decode this scene. In the Foucauldian perspective, the investigative committees were not seeking objective "truth," but were rather exercising their power through the "production of discourse" [1]. The McCarthyite authority and the Inquisition did not rely solely on direct physical repression, but on monopolizing the right to determine who is a "patriot" and who is a "traitor," who is a "believer" and who is a heretic.

Once Foucault establishes the rules of this dominant discourse, Bourdieu steps in to explain how this discourse translates into practices within the "political and social field" [2]. McCarthy did not merely change the language of the discourse; he reshaped the rules of the "game." In this new field, "snitching" became the most valuable "symbolic capital" guaranteeing an individual's survival. Through the power of discourse (Foucault), the McCarthyite regime exercised the utmost degrees of "symbolic violence" (Bourdieu) against dissidents. The entire society was persuaded to become complicit in suppressing itself, destroying the symbolic and professional capital of any individual who deviated from the herd—all under the pretext of protecting the nation.

The Cultural Baggage of Freedom: Semantic Shifting in the Service of Hegemony

The paradox materializes in the cultural and social baggage of the word "freedom" throughout the ages. Freedom is not a fixed essence, but a floating signifier stuffed with meanings that serve the dominant class. In the era of the Inquisition, freedom meant "absolute obedience to the ecclesiastical text," and any departure from this text was enslavement to the devil. In the McCarthy era, the word underwent an identical semantic shift: freedom became associated with "ideological compliance with American capitalism," and any critical thinking or inclination toward social justice was branded as communism.

Authority emptied "freedom" of its individual emancipatory dimension, transforming it into a tool to enforce social discipline. Society willingly morphed into a "Panopticon" (a prison of absolute surveillance), where neighbor surveilled neighbor on behalf of the authority.

The Interrogation Room: The Slaughterhouse of Selves

Congressional hearing rooms were not mere parliamentary interrogation chambers; they were stages hosting an absurdist play whose sole protagonist was "fear."

Imagine a writer, director, or university professor sitting alone under blinding lights, surrounded by camera lenses and the stern faces of interrogators. In that moment, they are not questioned about a crime they committed, but about their thoughts, the hidden intentions in their heads, and the names of friends who once shared a café discussion with them.

Here, "Emotional Compression" [3] manifests in its harshest narrative and psychological forms. It is the moment a human being is backed into a dark, narrow corner, caught between their pride as a free-willed individual and the basic instinct for survival. In those rooms, we witnessed grotesque moments of collapse. Men and women who had spent their lives building their convictions found themselves bursting into tears, stammering, and breaking down psychologically to offer the names of their colleagues and friends as sacrificial offerings to avoid ostracism, unemployment, and "blacklists." Authority was not asking them for the truth; it was demanding they surrender their humanity, requiring "obedience" wrapped in the guise of "patriotism."

The Absurdity of Freedom in the Presence of Interest

The absurdity of freedom in that era becomes apparent when we realize how it was emptied of its true significance and restuffed to serve the hierarchical structures of power. In 1950s America, to prove you were "free," you had to completely agree with the state's official narrative. Freedom became a conditional grant, revoked the moment you thought outside the herd.

McCarthy and his backers realized that hurling the accusation of "communism" was a brilliant political tactic to eliminate rivals and climb the ladder of influence. On the social front, these accusations devolved into a tool for settling personal scores. The masks fell to reveal that the individual is merely a cog in a massive machine, and that intellectual independence is but a luxury, instantly crushed when it threatens the interests of the political elite or the stability of a false social peace.

The Fall of the Sorcerer and the Survival of the Curse

This hysteria persisted for years, ruining the lives of thousands of innocents, with some committing suicide to escape the shame, ostracism, and systematic destruction of their reputations. Yet, as is customary in every arrogant hierarchical structure, McCarthy made his fatal mistake when he believed the illusion of his own power, attempting in 1954 to aim his accusations at the institution of the US Army.

During televised hearings, McCarthy's prestige crumbled. The public saw, for the first time, a bullying, hollow man, lacking any real evidence. The famous words directed at him by the Army's chief counsel, Joseph Welch—"Have you no sense of decency, sir, at long last? Have you left no sense of decency?"—served as the final nail in the coffin of McCarthyism. McCarthy was politically censured, and his influence ended.

However, the end was not a triumph for freedom as much as it was a recalibration of the balance of power within the "political field." McCarthy fell because he overstepped his bounds and clashed with an institution possessing "symbolic and material capital" exceeding his own, not because the system suddenly awoke to the atrocity of what it had committed against humanity. McCarthy departed, but he left behind a harsh lesson: freedom is not an eternally acquired right. Rather, it is a profoundly fragile concept, always ready to mutate and take shape to serve the strongest in the terrifying equation of survival.

Footnotes

Footnotes:

The Archaeology of Knowledge and the Panopticon (Michel Foucault): Foucault's analysis of the "Power-Knowledge" (Pouvoir-Savoir) relationship is evident in how the McCarthyite authority produced its own discourse on "communism," transforming it into an axiom that forced individuals into submission and confession. This integrates with the concept of the "Panopticon," where surveillance was internalized; society began to police and discipline itself, turning individuals into guards of their own cells without the need for continuous, direct repression.

- [2] Symbolic Violence and the Field (Pierre Bourdieu): Symbolic Violence (Violence Symbolique) is the invisible oppression exercised with the complicity of those subjected to it, where hegemony imposes its vision as self-evident truths. In the McCarthyite "Field," intellectuals and artists were stripped of their "symbolic capital" (social and professional status) as punishment for not adopting the "Habitus"—the behavioral pattern dictated by the dominant discourse. This made snitching and abandoning principles a prerequisite for survival within the field.
- [3] Emotional Compression: A philosophical and narrative term coined by researcher Najla Al-Adnan. It refers to the state of "psychological squeezing" an individual suffers when subjected to "directed central pressure" from an external authority aiming to dismantle the autonomy of the self. In this state, the impact goes beyond ordinary stress to restructure the individual's "space of feeling"; this space is forced to shrink and contract to adopt the mold imposed by the authority. This central pressure acts as a centrifugal force, pushing values and principles from the center to the margins, leading to the "corruption of the emotional constitution." It shifts from a state of spontaneity and creativity to a state of "survival functionality," where the feeling of dignity or freedom becomes a burden thrust outside the circle of individual existence to ensure the survival of the self within the permitted space.

Therefore, Emotional Compression is the process by which free conscience is transformed into a malleable substance, shaped according to the demands of conflict or survival, thereby emptying the individual of their deep human essence.

Carrying Kurdistan Beyond Borders: A Diaspora Life of Resistance and Renewal

My Journey of Activism, Motherhood, and Leadership By Tara Miran

A Life Between Two Worlds

I have lived in London and Bristol for many years, but Kurdistan has never left me. It lives in my voice, my work, my motherhood, and in every space I enter. My activism is an extension of who I am; it's woven into my identity as a Kurd. But before any title or campaign, I am a mother of three. Motherhood remains my most cherished and important work, and Kurdish motherhood is an honour beyond words- cradling resistance and hope at once. Everything I do begins and ends with my three children.

Education: Building foundations

Education has always been a necessity for me as a Kurd. My father, Azad Miran, nurtured my curiosity from a young age, teaching me that learning is a form of liberation and a never-ending fruitful and worthwhile journey. My academic journey has shaped the way I understand community, inequality, and identity, deepening what my lived experience as a Kurd already taught me.



Tara Miran is a Kurdish community advocate, activist, and cultural organiser based in Bristol, UK. She holds a BSc in Sociology from London Metropolitan University and an MSc in Social & Cultural Research from Brunel University. She currently works as Civic Engagement Manager at the University of Bristol, with experience spanning community development, equality, women's empowerment, and civic engagement. Her work also focuses on strengthening Kurdish cultural visibility and amplifying Kurdish voices in the diaspora. Her community work has received several recognitions, including the MTM Special Recognition Award (2019), a Global Goals Centre Local Hero Award (2021), and a Lord Mayor's Award (2024).

I completed my BSc Sociology at London Metropolitan University in 2010, followed by my MSc Social & Cultural Research at Brunel University in 2011. These qualifications gave me the analytical grounding to articulate what I already knew: empowerment is built through access, representation, and belonging.

Career: Designing Spaces where Communities Thrive

Today, I serve as Civic Engagement Manager at The University of Bristol, leading Barton Hill Micro-campus, and the Temple Quarter Campus' Civic Spaces- an exciting and innovative campus opening in September 2026. These are places built to welcome, include, and empower.

My career has spanned research, engagement, and community development roles focused on health, employment, women, inclusion, & race equalities- including work with Bristol Women's Voice, This Girl Can, Bristol City Council, and the VCSE sector. I also facilitate bespoke training sessions and present key note speeches for organisations across the South West region of England. Across these spaces, I design programmes, organise and deliver workshops, host community conversations and initiatives that amplify diverse voices and challenge structural barriers.

I'm a strategist and cultural organiser working at the intersection of community empowerment, Kurdish identity, and social justice. I'm widely recognised for amplifying Kurdish voices in Bristol- delivering workshops on Kurdish women's resistance, organising demonstrations centred on the Kurdish Feminist Movement, and leading solidarity actions for Rojhelat, Rojava, and all four parts of Kurdistan. My activism also extends to local campaigns, including spearheading the Save St Pauls Dentist campaign, which secured NHS dental provision for thousands of residents.



Culture: Keeping Kurdish Identity Alive in Diaspora

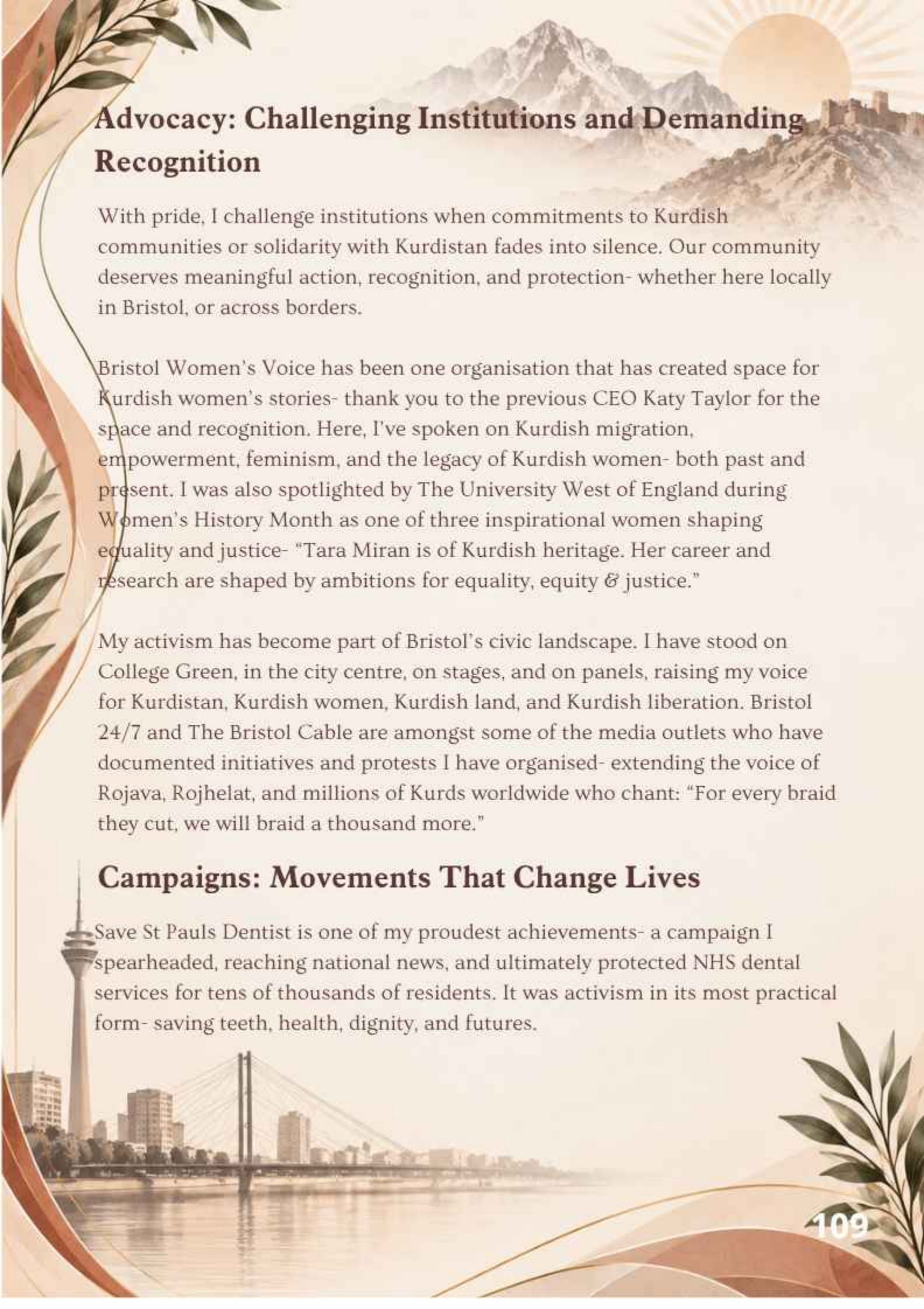
Activism is not only political- it is cultural, joyful, and communal. Kurdish culture resists through many different mediums, such as, music, dance, food, and storytelling. Our ancestors have passed this gift on to us- resistance through joy!

I curate Kurdish Newroz celebrations, lead Kurdish govend dances at public events, and preserve Kurdish heritage through representing our art, fashion, and cuisine. My Kurdish dolma recipe, part of the Greenway Project, is now immortalised as a mural in St Paul's with a mural painted by GRAFT, and my bamya recipe features in Eat Share Love.

In June 2026, I opened, and lead 'Kurdish Govend: Come dance with us!' at Bristol Refugee Festival's Grand Finale event. Kurds from Bristol and Wales joined, alongside non-Kurds who encountered Kurdish culture for the first time. The shared joy of that moment still echoes- Bristol calls for more Kurdish art, music, songs, fashion, and culture!

I continue to bring 'Kurdayeti' [Kurdishness] into every space I can- sharing our cultural food at events, reading Kurdish stories in schools, wearing Kurdish attire to work events and other celebrations, and weaving Kurdish narratives into workshops and public speaking. Our culture is rich, generous, and resilient- it deserves to be seen, recognised, and celebrated.





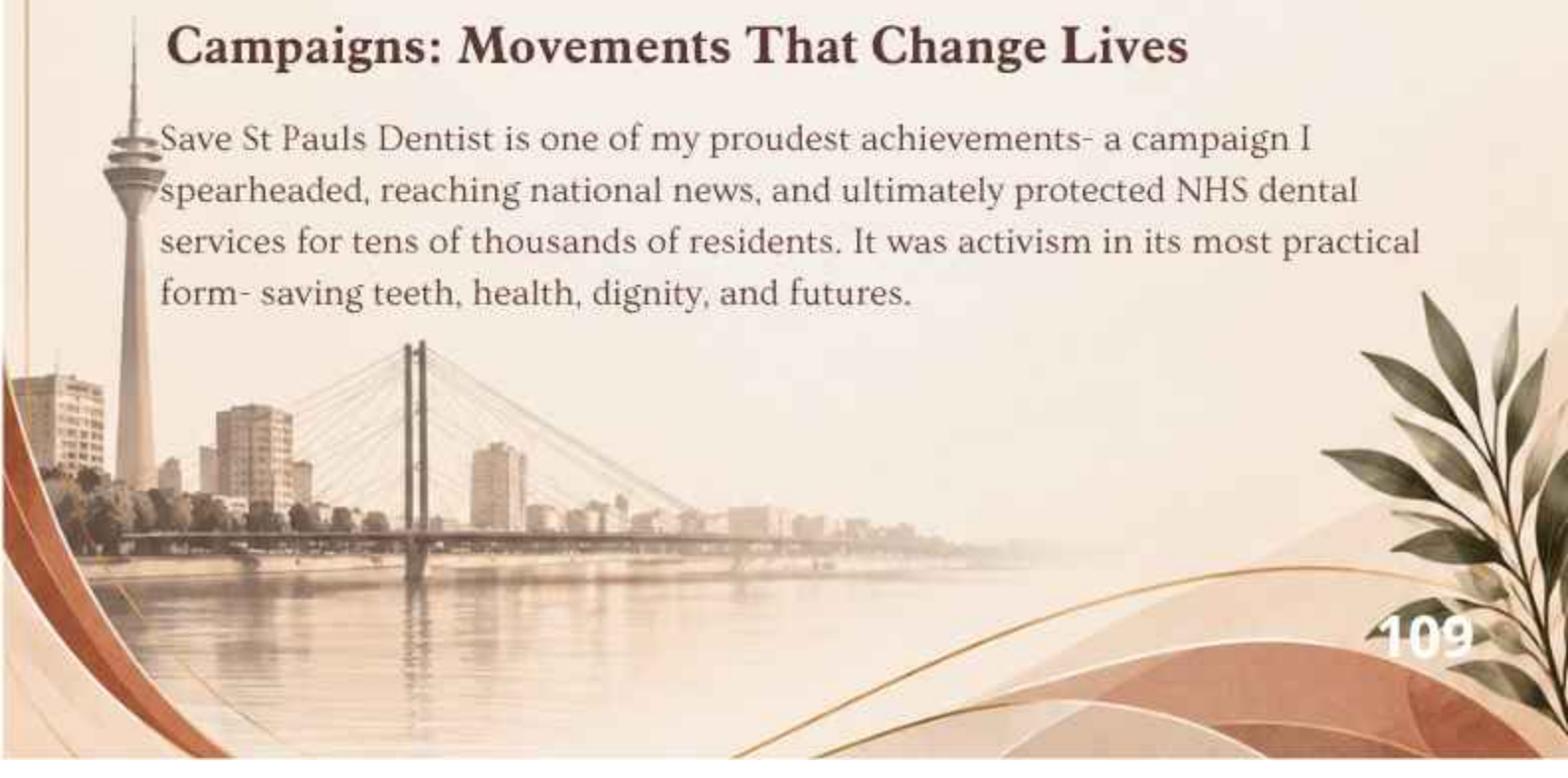
Advocacy: Challenging Institutions and Demanding Recognition

With pride, I challenge institutions when commitments to Kurdish communities or solidarity with Kurdistan fades into silence. Our community deserves meaningful action, recognition, and protection- whether here locally in Bristol, or across borders.

Bristol Women's Voice has been one organisation that has created space for Kurdish women's stories- thank you to the previous CEO Katy Taylor for the space and recognition. Here, I've spoken on Kurdish migration, empowerment, feminism, and the legacy of Kurdish women- both past and present. I was also spotlighted by The University West of England during Women's History Month as one of three inspirational women shaping equality and justice- "Tara Miran is of Kurdish heritage. Her career and research are shaped by ambitions for equality, equity & justice."

My activism has become part of Bristol's civic landscape. I have stood on College Green, in the city centre, on stages, and on panels, raising my voice for Kurdistan, Kurdish women, Kurdish land, and Kurdish liberation. Bristol 24/7 and The Bristol Cable are amongst some of the media outlets who have documented initiatives and protests I have organised- extending the voice of Rojava, Rojhelat, and millions of Kurds worldwide who chant: "For every braid they cut, we will braid a thousand more."

Campaigns: Movements That Change Lives



Save St Pauls Dentist is one of my proudest achievements- a campaign I spearheaded, reaching national news, and ultimately protected NHS dental services for tens of thousands of residents. It was activism in its most practical form- saving teeth, health, dignity, and futures.

Recognition: Awards That Tell a Story

My contributions have been recognised across Bristol and beyond, earning me an MTM Special Recognition Award (2019)- honouring my contribution to community empowerment and Kurdish visibility, a Lord Mayor's Award (2024)- recognising my activism, commitment to public life, and leading on initiatives calling for fairness in communities, public services etc, as well as a Global Goals Centre 'Local Hero' Award (SDG 5 Gender Equality, 2021)- celebrating my work advancing gender equality and Kurdish women's visibility. I was also a finalist in the Game-Changer category in the Bristol Women in Business Awards 2026, as well as being a finalist in their Programme of the Year category for my work in Nature Rising. Nature Rising- Global Majority leadership in engagement and environmentalism- also received a Soul Trial Wellbeing CIC award in 2025 in the trailblazer category- a meaningful award gifted by Her Majesty's Lord-Lieutenant for Bristol, Peaches Goulding OBE.

These awards matter not because of the accolades themselves, but because I'm the first Kurd in Bristol to receive them- putting Kurds and Kurdistan on the map, rightfully. They represent Kurdish stories being seen, heard, and valued. My work is rooted in responsibility to my ancestors, my children, and my Kurdish community.



As Kurds, we have experienced many injustices and unfairness, and I draw strength from these experiences, and use my voice, my freedom, and my life to create fairer spaces and systems, and to call for changes whereby underserved communities benefit and grow.

The Rest: Moments of must

Beyond my daily work and family life, I give my time to the causes and communities that shape me. I'm currently a trustee for the Global Goals Centre, offer key note speeches, and lend my voice to campaigns that demand fairness and visibility. I'm drawn to supporting and advocating for underserved communities- not out of obligation, but because I have a voice and strategies that can be beneficial and useful, and because everyone deserves a decent life.

Outside of my daily work, aside from campaigns and activism, I spend some time contributing voluntarily to various spaces whether it's in volunteering my time as a trustee for Global Goals Centre, stopping to smell the roses, exploring green and blue spaces, or drinking a good cup of chai Kurdy- I make time for rest, joy, and peace of mind.

I've particularly enjoyed creating and using the St Pauls Community Garden- praised and recognised in the 100 Reasons To Hope book by Danielle Brown MBE. To sustain and preserve my energy for the long-term, I value my resting time, and encourage every Kurdish activist and change maker to prioritise rest and relaxation- it's part of the recipe to remaining steadfast and grounded in the world of activism.

Why I Continue

Everything I do- every speech, every workshop, every campaign, and every act of organising- comes from a sense of responsibility to my ancestors, my children, and my Kurdistan. My activism is not a role; it is a deep commitment to ensuring that Kurds are visible in Bristol, that our struggles are acknowledged, and that our contributions are recognised.

I was born into a nation of freedom fighters- a people who resist injustice and seek a fairer life. Though far from my precious motherland, I am an extension of the brave and beautiful beating heart of Kurdistan. I hope for a life where I can continue to raise awareness and advocate for Kurds and Kurdistan, and then to pass the baton onto my children to continue the journey, until we reach a free and autonomous Kurdistan.

Kurdistan lives in our voices, wherever we are. In Bristol, mine is one of them: steady, unapologetic, and determined to ensure that Kurdish identity continues to thrive.

“Step aside, so that the Creator may speak.”

Introduction

Between art and memory, between wounds and consciousness, Kurdish artist Nilüfer Akbal offers a different perspective on the role of music and collective memory. She does not deny the value of cultural heritage or the importance of remembering past tragedies. Instead, she raises a profound question: Is it enough simply to recount pain and repeat it, or has the time come to transform it into a form of awareness that liberates human beings rather than keeping them imprisoned by it?

Nilüfer Akbal

was born in Varto, Muş. For many years, she has performed

Kurdish music in the Zazaki, Kurmanji, and Sorani dialects and has released seven albums, including original compositions with lyrics and music written by herself. In 2009, she hosted music and talk programs in Kurmanji and Zazaki on TRT Kurdî, Türkiye's first Kurdish-language television channel.

She sees art not only as a form of aesthetic expression but also as a path toward self-discovery and inner awakening. For many years, she has devoted herself to an inner journey inspired by the principle, “Know yourself.” She believes that until human beings truly know themselves and awaken to their own essence, they cannot make a genuine contribution to society or to the world we all share.

In her view, the outer world is a reflection of the inner one. Authentic transformation begins within and unfolds in the present moment—here and now. The greatest resistance, she believes, is the resistance to allowing the divine potential at the core of our being to reveal itself



In these two essays, the author weaves together her artistic experience and her spiritual journey through Sufism to present a reflection that reaches beyond politics and history toward the human being. Here, art becomes a path to healing, and memory becomes a gateway to wisdom rather than a prison that continually reproduces old wounds.

I. The Dengbêj Tradition Between Memory and Consciousness

There is no doubt that the Dengbêj tradition has made an invaluable contribution to preserving the Kurdish language and its rich oral heritage up to the present day. Yet, at their core, many Dengbêj narratives consist of lengthy stories about love, separation, jealousy, family affairs, and social events—sometimes even resembling what might be described as gossip.

There is also no question that Dengbêjs possess extraordinary vocal abilities. Their vocal range, mastery of the human voice, and singing technique are remarkable and can serve as an inspiration for singers everywhere. Listening to masters such as Şakiro naturally evokes a profound sense of admiration and amazement. There are many other outstanding examples as well.

In recent years, the Dengbêj tradition has increasingly been promoted and brought into the public sphere by cultural and political institutions. It has gained growing visibility through television programs, festivals, and numerous other cultural platforms.

Because Kurdish music was prohibited or suppressed for many decades, traditional *klam* and *stran* primarily tell stories of tragedy, suffering, displacement, and loss. These works undoubtedly possess immense historical and cultural value. Nevertheless, I would like to approach this subject from a different perspective.

The experiences I have gained on my own spiritual journey—particularly through Sufism—have opened another way of seeing. From this perspective, the constant repetition of the same pain, trauma, and dramatic stories can cause these emotional patterns to be recreated repeatedly within the subconscious mind. In Sufi teaching, there is a profound saying:

“Repetition is negation.”

Mere repetition neither produces new understanding nor genuine transformation; instead, it keeps a person trapped within the same psychological cycle.

Songs that continually revisit old wounds may reopen injuries that had already begun to heal. As a result, emotions such as anger, hatred, victimhood, and the desire for revenge may be unconsciously nourished once again. A society that continually lives within its past often finds it difficult to allow its wounds to heal completely.

In my observation, systems that feed upon people’s emotional wounds benefit from keeping those wounds open. An emotionally wounded person is easier to influence and manipulate. In many spiritual traditions, this condition is associated with the consciousness of the solar plexus—the level at which fear, anger, desire, and emotional reactions dominate one’s thoughts and actions.



Some people act unconsciously out of a longing for recognition, fame, or popularity. Others define themselves through hostility and the creation of enemies. Ultimately, both sides nourish the very same unconscious mechanism. In the end, no one truly wins.

I believe that much of our world still functions from this unconscious state. Humanity, as a collective consciousness, has not yet fully matured. Every word we speak, every text we write, and every song we sing affects not only others but first returns to our own consciousness. Later we ask ourselves:

"Why is this happening to me?"

These are precisely the questions I wish to explore.

For this reason, I have temporarily paused my own musical work. I do not wish to continue feeding unconscious suffering or carry my own emotional burdens into my music. If I create music, I want it to become a source of freedom—something that brings people closer to themselves and expands their consciousness.

I believe that every human being is a universe in itself. Those who sincerely walk the path of self-knowledge gradually discover that truth is not found in possession but in emptiness, surrender, and the experience of nothingness.

At this point, however, I do not wish to be misunderstood. Expressing emotions is essential for the human soul. Feelings that remain unexpressed or suppressed accumulate within us and may eventually create profound inner tension. A person who constantly suppresses anger may one day explode unexpectedly over something seemingly insignificant. We have all experienced such situations ourselves or witnessed them in others.

The real question, therefore, is this:

What should we be mindful of when expressing our emotions through music?

This is where awareness begins.

From what state of consciousness am I singing?

Am I singing from the ego—with thoughts such as, "How beautiful my voice is. How much people admire me. How great I am."?

Or am I singing with the awareness that both the one who sings and the power that enables the singing are expressions of the same creative Reality?

One of the deepest insights I have received from Sufism is that the Divine Presence is closer to us than our own jugular vein. Yet merely knowing this is not enough. It must become a living inner realization. That is a long and demanding journey requiring patience, sincerity, and the courage to confront oneself.



When a person sings from this state of awareness, they are no longer alone. The ego steps aside, and consciousness takes the lead. The song is no longer the voice of the ego but the voice of Being itself. Even if its subject is pain or tragedy, this awareness gives the song a healing and transformative power.

Thus, not only the song itself is transformed, but also the language that carries it, the people who preserve it, and the history it tells. In the light of consciousness, they acquire a new meaning. Pain is not denied, but it no longer defines our identity. Instead, it becomes an experience capable of opening the way toward truth.

For this reason, all wisdom traditions and every authentic spiritual teacher I have encountered ultimately point toward the same realization: as long as human beings do not know themselves, do not discover who they truly are, and do not awaken to conscious living, their actions remain unconscious—regardless of how noble their intentions may be.

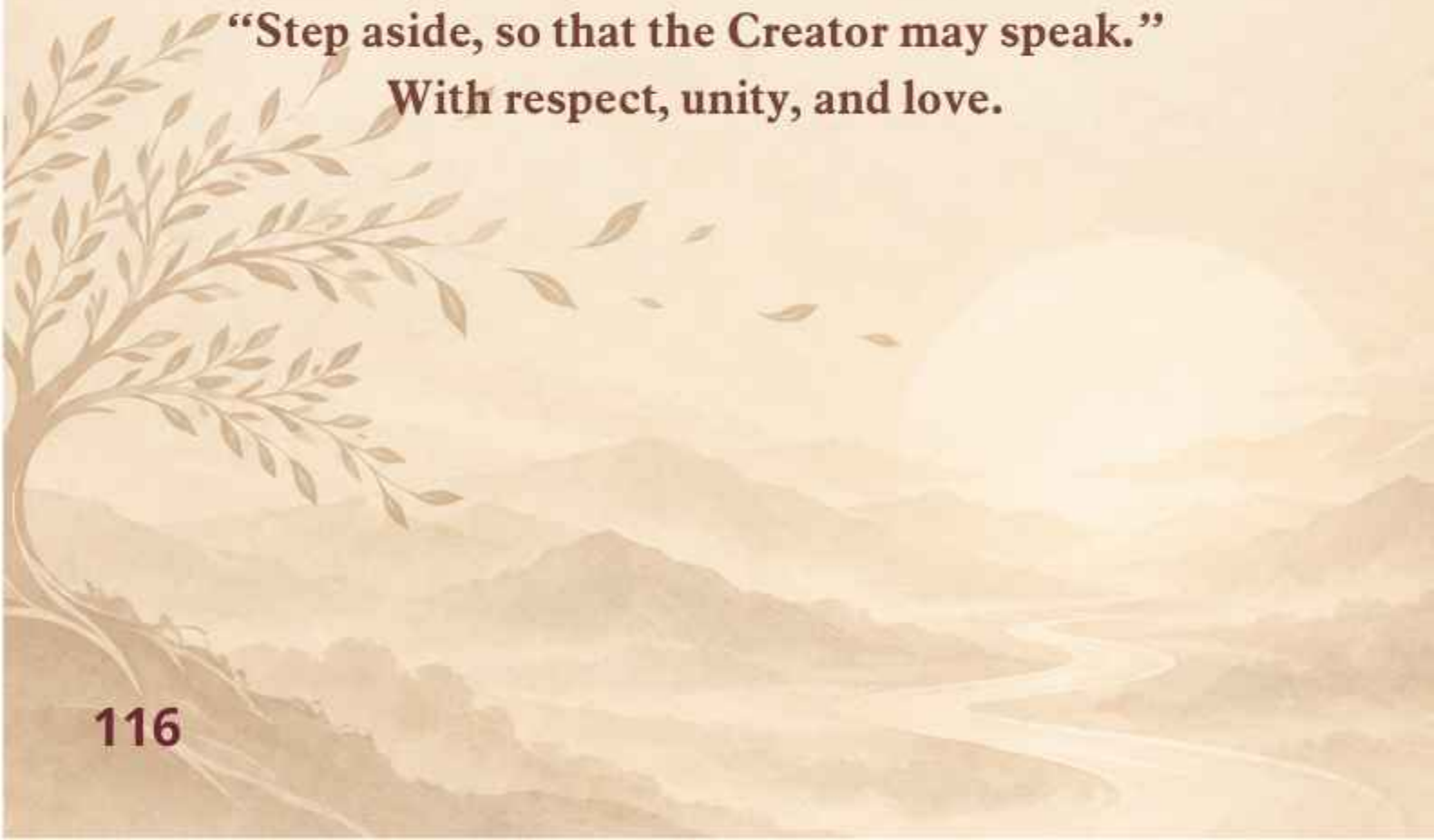
Actions that arise from awareness and from the direct experience of the unity of Being possess the potential to bring healing—not only to the individual but also to the greater field of consciousness with which every human being is connected.

Perhaps true art begins precisely at this point. The artist no longer seeks to place himself or herself at the center. Instead, they step aside and allow Truth to express itself through them.

Within the mystical tradition of Anatolia, there is a profound saying with which I would like to conclude this essay:

“Step aside, so that the Creator may speak.”

With respect, unity, and love.



II. From Karbala to Ankara

As the month of Muharram approaches once again, I find myself reflecting on the recurring cycles of violence, grief, and collective memory that have shaped both our history and our present.

Nearly every generation has witnessed tragedies that leave deep wounds in society. Whether in Karbala centuries ago or in more recent massacres in Türkiye, the pain of those who remain behind continues to echo through time. These events raise a difficult but necessary question: Why do societies repeatedly experience similar tragedies despite knowing their history?

There is a well-known saying: "A people who do not know their past cannot build their future." Yet merely knowing history is not enough. Historical knowledge becomes meaningful only when we understand how unresolved grief, fear, guilt, and revenge continue to shape individuals and communities.

Most of us know the story of Karbala. However, beyond its historical significance lies a profound psychological reality. Looking at Karbala only from within mourning, or only from the perspective of those who held power, prevents us from seeing the deeper dynamics that reproduce violence.

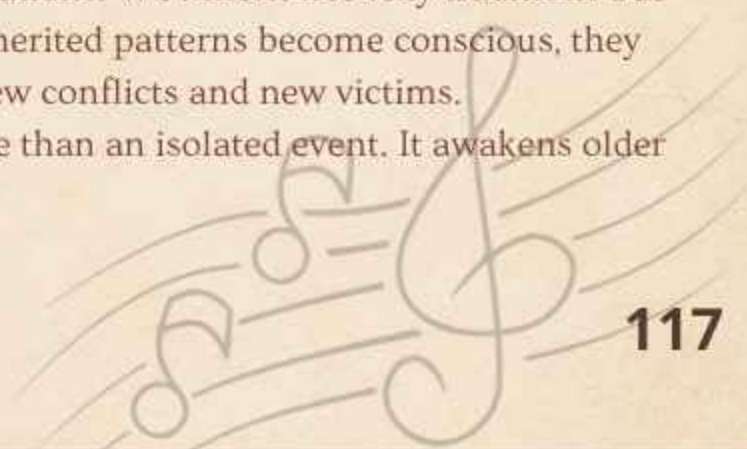
Those who suffer injustice naturally carry grief. But grief that cannot transform over time may evolve into anger, resentment, or the desire for revenge. These emotions gradually become part of personal and collective identity. The victim begins to define himself through suffering, and this identity risks becoming permanent.

On the other hand, those who inflict suffering are often driven by another powerful emotion: fear. Fear of losing power, status, or security creates a defensive mentality in which violence becomes justified as a means of self-preservation. In many cases, those who become oppressors have themselves inherited earlier experiences of humiliation or victimization, consciously or unconsciously reproducing what they once suffered.

No one is born either a victim or an oppressor.

Every human being is shaped by family, society, religion, culture, and the historical memory transmitted from previous generations. We inherit not only traditions but also unresolved traumas. Unless these inherited patterns become conscious, they continue to repeat themselves through new conflicts and new victims.

This is why every massacre becomes more than an isolated event. It awakens older wounds that have never fully healed.



Muharram therefore invites us not only to remember Karbala but also to reflect on the meaning of mourning itself. Since the martyrdom of Imam Hussein, generations of believers have preserved this memory through remembrance and lament. This tradition has kept alive the values of justice and resistance against oppression, yet it also reminds us how easily collective grief can continue to shape identity across centuries.

Historical sources indicate that Imam Hussein was invited to Kufa by groups who later failed to support him when confronted with political pressure and military force. Different historians interpret these events in various ways, but one lesson remains striking: betrayal, fear, and political calculation often become as decisive in history as open violence itself.

The same human dynamics appear repeatedly throughout history. Whether we think of Dersim, Maraş, Çorum, Sivas, Suruç, Ankara, or many other painful events, we encounter recurring patterns of fear, polarization, revenge, and inherited trauma. While the historical circumstances differ, the psychological mechanisms often resemble one another.

Breaking this cycle requires more than choosing sides.

As long as we remain imprisoned within the identities of either victim or oppressor, history continues to reproduce itself. Genuine transformation begins only when we develop the courage to observe these dynamics without surrendering to hatred, revenge, or inherited hostility.

Remembering the victims is a moral responsibility.

Equally important is creating a future in which new victims are no longer produced.

As we enter Muharram once again, I respectfully commemorate Imam Hussein and all those who have lost their lives through violence and injustice. May their memory inspire not endless cycles of grief, but a deeper commitment to justice, compassion, and peace.

Be True to Yourself... and Never Let Anyone Extinguish Your Light



There are people who do not want you to think, to create, or to become the person God intended you to be. Sadly, they believe that thought, creativity, and the freedom to live fully are privileges reserved for themselves. They believe that others should remain within the boundaries they have drawn, and think only with the minds they allow them to use.

What troubles such people is not simply that you disagree with them. What truly unsettles them is your intellectual independence, your freedom of will, your confidence in yourself, and your ability to see life through your own eyes rather than through theirs.

Dr. Rafeh Halabi

is a poet, writer, intellectual, and media professional from Daliyat al-Karmel. His literary and intellectual work explores humanity, freedom, peace, social coexistence, and the importance of independent thought. He has published several poetry collections and books and has written extensively on social, cultural, and humanitarian issues. Alongside his literary career, he has been active in community initiatives promoting dialogue, tolerance, education, and support for those in need.



When a person discovers the value of his own mind, believes in his capacity to learn and create, and understands that the bond between him and his Creator does not require anyone to stand between them, he becomes difficult to control, difficult to turn into a follower, and impossible to reduce to a mere copy of someone else.

A soul that is connected to God does not need an intermediary to monopolize its path to its Creator.

And a mind that God has honored with the gift of thought should never become rented space within someone else's mind.



God Almighty has given every human being a unique gift within the mystery of creation. He has endowed each of us with different abilities, talents, and potential.

It is unjust to force these differences into a single mold, or to convince a person that his worth exists only when he becomes a reflection of someone else.

So Be Yourself

Be true to yourself, to your mind, to knowledge, to sound thinking, and to righteous action.

Never allow anyone to take away your right to ask questions, to learn, to seek, to create, or to choose your own path in life—as long as you do not wrong anyone or violate another person's rights.

Our existence in this life is not meaningless, nor is the presence of humanity upon this earth without purpose.

God has honored us with countless blessings. He has given us reason, free will, the ability to choose, the capacity to work, and the ability to give. He has entrusted each one of us with a responsibility in this life.

So let us be grateful to God for what He has given us.

Let us recognize the value of what lies in our hands.

And let us be content with what we possess without ever extinguishing our ambitions.

Contentment Does Not Mean Surrendering to Reality

True contentment means knowing the value of what you have, and then using it as a foundation from which to move toward what you aspire to achieve.

Aspire, but do not become greedy.

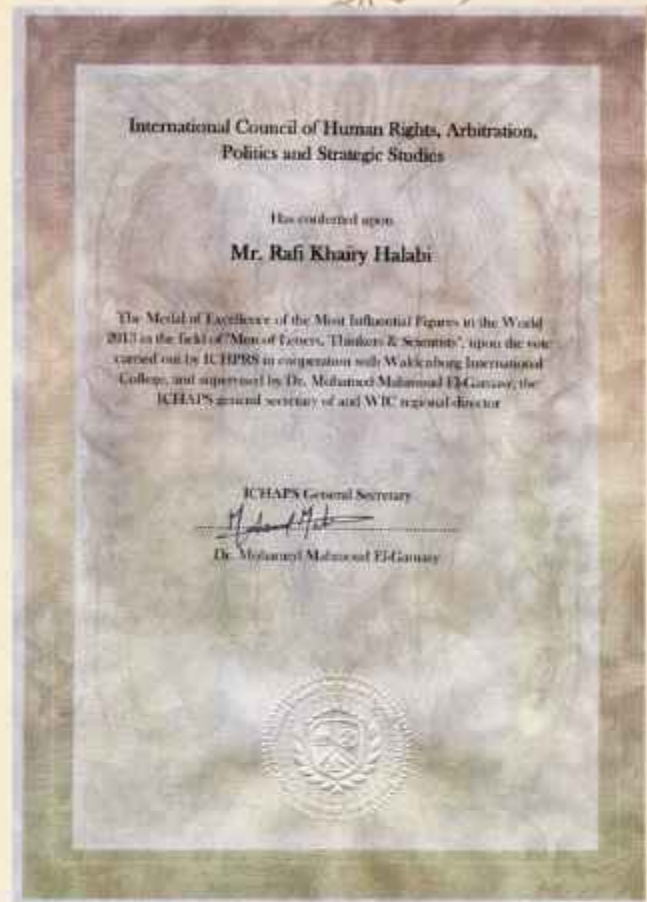
Dream, but do not wrong others.

Move forward, but do not push others backward.

Rise, but never build your ascent upon the downfall of another human being.

There is nothing truly noble about reaching the summit alone.

True greatness lies in reaching it while having helped another person take a step toward the light.



Love People as They Are

And if you wish to experience a measure of happiness, do not try to change everyone around you so that they become what you want them to be.

Love people as they are.

Respect their differences.

Give every human being the space to live with dignity and to express his or her humanity.

People were never meant to be identical copies of one another.

What we must learn is how to live with our differences in dignity—to disagree without becoming enemies.

If you are able to sacrifice something for someone who needs you, then sacrifice.

If you are able to help someone, then help.

And if you are able to open for another person a door to knowledge, hope, or goodness, do not close that door in their face.

Serve one another, and never become an obstacle in another person's path.

Life is too short to waste it watching, judging, and comparing ourselves with others.

And life is far too beautiful to turn into a destructive competition for status, recognition, and attention.



What Truly Elevates a Human Being

What truly elevates a human being is not bringing someone else down.
It is helping that person stand.

Always remember that God Almighty sees what people do not see and knows what hearts conceal.

He is the Watchful, the One who holds us accountable, and the One who helps us.

So do not make the approval of others your ultimate goal.

Do not allow fear of their judgments to become a prison for your mind.

And never allow anyone to convince you that your light must be extinguished so that theirs alone may shine.

The sky is vast, and the light of God is vaster still.

When minds are liberated from fear, they are capable of creating things that transcend the boundaries of what once seemed possible.

Be with God. Be with Reason. Be with Knowledge. Be with Humanity.

And stand with goodness wherever it may be found.

Remember that one of the most beautiful things a human being can leave behind is not what he possessed, but what he gave.

Not the number of people who feared him, but the number of people who felt safe in his presence.

Not how much he took from life, but how much he added to it.

Walk your path with peaceful hearts, free minds, and hands extended toward goodness.

Let your relationship with God be the source of your strength—not a justification for imposing authority over others.

For God Almighty has given the human being a mind with which to think, a soul with which to rise, a will with which to choose, a hand with which to work, and a heart with which to show mercy.

Do not squander any of these blessings.

Your brother, ever in need of God Almighty

Layla Bedir Khan: For Identity and Freedom

In the history of modern Kurdish art, only a few names stand out as having succeeded in transcending the boundaries

of geography, politics, and language to reach international stages. Among these names is

Layla Bedir Khan, the Kurdish dancer and artist who became known in the European press as the “Kurdish Princess” and who became one of the first Kurdish women to bring Kurdish art to European and American stages during the first half of the twentieth century.

Layla Bedir Khan’s life was not that of an ordinary artist. She was born into an aristocratic

Kurdish family connected to the history of the Emirate of Botan and

Emir Bedir Khan Beg. From childhood, she experienced exile and displacement, and later found in dance a means of

expressing herself, her culture, and the Eastern woman at a time when a woman appearing before an audience as a dancer was confronted by strong social and family restrictions.

More importantly, Layla did not regard dance merely as a profession or a path to fame. She transformed it into a means of expressing memory, identity, and civilization.

Kheder Abdul Karim

Syrian Kurdish
Visual Artist

Born in 1967

in Amuda, Syria,

Kheder Abdul Karim



is a Syrian Kurdish visual artist based in Germany since 2014.

His work explores identity, memory, imprisonment, exile, and humanitarian themes. He has exhibited in Syria and Germany, including Damascus, Qamishli, Berlin, and Cologne, and is a member of the Union of Syrian Visual Artists.

Born into a Distinguished Kurdish Famil

Layla Bedir Khan was born in Istanbul at the beginning of the twentieth century. Sources differ regarding the exact year of her birth. Some mention 1903, while others give 1908, the year Layla herself reportedly cited in some accounts. Some recent studies tend to favor 1903. Her father was Abdul Razzaq Bedir Khan, a member of the well-known Bedir Khan family, descended from Emir Bedir Khan Beg, the ruler of the Kurdish Emirate of Botan in the nineteenth century. Her mother was Henriette Ornik/Hornik, a woman of European Jewish origin who worked as a dentist.

Layla therefore grew up in a multicultural environment that combined Kurdish roots on one side with European openness on the other. In his youth, her father had been connected to Ottoman circles and held positions associated with the imperial court. Later, however, he became involved in political conflicts and spent years living through exile and instability. These circumstances left a profound mark on his daughter's life.

Emirens dotter danserska.



Prinsessan Leila Bederkhan,

som är ingen ringare person än dotter till emiren av Kurdistan, uppträder för närvarande i Wien som danserska. Sådana äro tiderna.



Childhood in Egypt: The Beginning of Layla's Relationship with Dance

Advertisement

Layla did not spend her childhood in one stable homeland. While still young, she moved with her mother to Egypt, where she spent several years in Cairo and Alexandria in a diverse cultural and diplomatic environment.

For Layla, Egypt was more than simply a country in which she lived. It was the place where she discovered the world of folkdance. She watched Egyptian women dancing during traditional celebrations, carefully observing the movements of their bodies and hands and the rhythms of the music, storing these images in her memory.

In one old interview attributed to her, Layla spoke about her early love of dance. She said that she used to watch ordinary women dancing in Egypt and that she did not merely imitate what she saw, but gradually began developing her own style of movement.

This is where her artistic personality began to take shape: a woman who belonged to Kurdish culture, grew up in Egypt, later studied in Europe, and absorbed something from every place she encountered, eventually creating an art form that could not be fully assigned to any single school or tradition.

The Tragedy of Her Father and a New Exile

The death of her father marked a decisive turning point in her life.

Abdul Razzaq Bedir Khan had spent difficult years in exile, and some studies state that he died under politically unclear circumstances in 1918.

Following her father's death, Layla and her mother moved to Europe, with Vienna becoming one of the major stations in her life. There, she began to approach the world of dance more seriously.

Her move to Europe was not simply a journey in search of artistic opportunities. Europe also became a new space in which she could escape the political and social turmoil that had affected her family.



How Did She Confront Her Family in Order to Dance?

This aspect of Layla's life is perhaps one of the most striking parts of her biography. At the beginning of the twentieth century, it was not easy for a woman from an aristocratic and conservative Kurdish family to choose dance as a profession or to appear before audiences on European stages. Dance, particularly for a woman belonging to a family of considerable social and political standing, was often regarded as a departure from accepted traditions.

Her family did not easily accept her decision. Accounts of her life suggest that members of the Bedir Khan family ignored or distanced themselves from her artistic career for a long period. Nevertheless, Layla remained determined for years and did not retreat in the face of rejection.

A major symbolic moment, apparently marking the beginning of her family's recognition of her achievements, occurred when she appeared at La Scala in Milan in 1932 in the role of Belkis in the ballet *Belkis, Queen of Sheba*, composed by the Italian composer Ottorino Respighi.

Researcher Layla Safiyya, citing a family account, recounts that Layla's uncle, Süreyya Bedir Khan, was waiting for her backstage carrying a bouquet of flowers. For Layla, that moment represented a delayed recognition by her family of both her achievements and the choice she had made.

Here lies one of the moving paradoxes of her story: Layla did not wait for her family's approval before beginning her journey. She first created her own success, and recognition came later.

Education and the Beginning of Her Professional Career

Layla continued her education in Montreux, Switzerland, before taking her first dance lessons in Vienna. There, she gradually transformed from a young woman who loved dance into a professional artist.

By 1924, she had begun appearing on important stages in Vienna and soon embarked on extensive artistic tours. In 1925, she arrived in Stockholm, where she presented a dance performance that attracted the attention of the Swedish press, which followed her career as an unusual and intriguing artistic figure arriving from the East.

Her name soon became familiar in several European capitals.



Layla and the Search for a Different Kind of "BellyDance"

Layla was not satisfied with studying ballet according to traditional European rules. She wanted to create something of her own.

She moved to Paris, where she studied Indian and Persiandances and became interested in Zoroastrian rituals and ancient religious dances. She also studied certain Egyptian and other Eastern traditions.

This interest in different cultures was reflected in her performances.

She used her body, arms, and movements in ways that differed from the strict conventions of classical ballet. In interviews, she explained that she did not always approach dance as a collection of predetermined movements. Instead, she relied heavily on feeling, improvisation, and inspiration drawn from folk traditions.

In this way, Layla became one of the figures who contributed to the transition from classical ballet toward freer forms of modern dance.



The “Kurdish Princess” on European Stages

The European press began introducing her as the “Kurdish Princess,” drawing upon her connection to the Bedir Khan family and the political history associated with it.

This title was a double-edged sword.

On the one hand, it gave her considerable fame and drew attention to a Kurdish woman at a time when many Europeans knew almost nothing about the Kurdish people.

On the other hand, Western newspapers sometimes presented her as a “mysterious Eastern woman” or a “princess from the East,” in accordance with the stereotypes common at the time.

Layla, however, attempted to confront such representations in her own way. She consistently emphasized her Kurdish identity while simultaneously refusing to be reduced to the conventional image of the Eastern woman.

In one of her well-known statements, she made clear that the dance she performed might be Eastern in character, but this did not mean that she herself was an “Eastern woman” in the stereotypical sense imagined by Western audiences.

La Scala: The Great Turning Point

The year 1932 was one of the most important in Layla Bedir Khan's career. She appeared on the stage of La Scala in Milan, one of the most famous opera houses in the world, performing the role of Belkis in the ballet *Belkis, Queen of Sheba*.

This was a historic moment, as Layla is regarded as the first Kurdish ballet dancer to appear on the stage of La Scala.

The achievement was not merely artistic. It carried considerable symbolic meaning.

A Kurdish woman from a family that had experienced exile had reached one of Europe's most prestigious artistic institutions and stood before an international audience while being introduced on stage as the “Kurdish Princess.”

At that moment, Layla was no longer simply a young woman insisting on dancing despite her family's objections. She had become an internationally recognized artist.





Layla Bedir Khan, the Kurdish dancer who brought her artistic identity to European and international stages.

America and the World :

Her career did not stop in Europe. She gave performances in the United States and participated in the 1939 New York World's Fair. Her performances reached broad audiences throughout Europe and North America.

Through these journeys, she carried with her a different image of the Kurdish woman: educated, independent, artistic, and capable of performing on some of the greatest stages in the world.

Her performances featured titles and themes inspired by the East, including subjects connected with Kurds, Persians, Druze, Egypt, and Mesopotamia. She also drew inspiration from the cultural traditions of the peoples among whom she had lived.

Woman, Artist, and Kurdish Identity :

Layla was more than a dancer. She was interested in history, religions, folklore, and ancient dances, and she regarded dance as part of the cultural memory of peoples.

From this perspective, her artistic project can be understood as an attempt to create a new language combining European technique with an Eastern spirit, and artistic modernity with Kurdish memory.

Her Kurdish identity was continuously present in her public image. She was known in Europe as a Kurdish woman and did not abandon this identity in order to achieve success.

On the contrary, her success itself became a means of introducing European and American audiences to the name of Kurdistan, the Bedir Khan family, and part of Kurdish history.

Marriage and Motherhood :

In 1930, Layla married Henri Jean Touache, entering a new stage of her life. The couple had one daughter, Nevin Bedir Khan. Although Layla achieved considerable artistic fame, her private life remained much less visible in the available sources than her professional career.

This also reflects the type of public identity Layla chose for herself: an artist who wanted her work to speak about her more than her private life did.

The Second World War and the End of Her Stage Career

The Second World War and the major political transformations that followed in Europe had a profound impact on artistic and cultural life. After the war, Layla gradually began withdrawing from stage performances. She did not, however, abandon dance.

She moved from being the dancer standing before an audience to becoming an artist passing her experience on to others. She opened a dance school in Paris and thus transformed from a performer into a teacher and the founder of an artistic project.

This represented a natural continuation of her career. If the first phase of her life had made her body a means of expression, the second transformed her knowledge into a means of educating another generation.

The Final Years: From Fame to Isolation

One of the painful paradoxes in Layla Bedir Khan's life is that the woman whose name once filled the newspapers of Europe and America, and who had been described as the "Kurdish Princess," ended her life under circumstances far removed from the fame she had once known.

Modern sources state that she died on December 26, 1986, in Montauban, France, and that she experienced difficult conditions during her final years. Some accounts even state that she died in poverty.

There is disagreement among sources regarding the exact location of her death, with some mentioning Paris. The date of December 26, 1986, however, appears to be more consistently established in recent sources, while the place of death remains disputed.

Perhaps the saddest aspect of this story is that even the location of her grave remained unknown for many years.

In 2023, her grave was rediscovered in the Saint-Cloud cemetery near Paris, where she had been buried beside her husband, Henri Jean Touache, who died in 1974.

Sources state that the grave, whose location had been lost for approximately thirty years, was rediscovered by journalist Ferida Demir.

A Legacy That No Longer Dances on Stage

The story of Layla Bedir Khan is not simply the story of a successful dancer. It is the story of a woman born into exile, who lived among multiple cultures, lost her father under difficult political circumstances, and chose an art form that was not easily accepted within her social environment.

She faced rejection from her family, yet did not retreat.

She confronted Western stereotypes about Eastern women but refused to allow her identity to be reduced to those stereotypes.

She stood on the stage of La Scala, appeared in the United States, and traveled through many European cities, carrying the name of Kurdistan to audiences who knew little about the Kurdish people.

She succeeded in turning her body into a language, dance into memory, and the stage into a space for asserting existence.



For this reason, Layla Bedir Khan should not be viewed merely as the “first Kurdish dancer” or as a “Kurdish princess dancing in Europe.” Important as such descriptions may be, they are not sufficient to explain the depth of her experience.

Layla belonged to a generation that witnessed the collapse of empires, exile, the rise of nation-states, and the loss of the family's homeland. She was also one of the women who attempted to create a place for themselves in a world that was not readily prepared to accept an independent Kurdish woman on the stage.

Ultimately, her story remains testimony to a painful paradox: a woman who once received applause on some of the greatest stages in the world spent her final years in relative obscurity, while decades passed before her grave was rediscovered.

Yet the disappearance of her grave could not erase her legacy.

Layla Bedir Khan left behind something more lasting than stone: the example of a Kurdish woman who made art a means of freedom, transformed dance into a bridge between Kurdistan and the world, and demonstrated that identity can remain present even when a person lives thousands of kilometers away from their homeland.

For this reason, rediscovering her biography today is not merely about recovering the name of an artist from the past. It is also about recovering an important part of the history of women, art, and Kurdish identity in the twentieth century.

Layla Bedir Khan did not simply dance. Through her body, her movements, and her stage, she was telling the world:

“I exist. I am Kurdish. And this is the art through which I have chosen to speak.”



When the Brush Becomes a Testimony to an Era of Displacement

In the cultural landscape that emerged from the Syrian war, the Kurdish artist Ardalan Ibrahim represents an artistic journey deeply rooted in memory, displacement, identity, and place. His life and work reflect not only the personal experience of an artist, but also the story of a generation whose lives were profoundly shaped by war, exile, loss, and the search for a place to call home.

Born on 20 May 1971 in the Bulbul district of Afrin, Ardalan Ibrahim grew up in a region renowned for its cultural richness and its landscapes of olive groves and mountains.

Ardalan Ibrahim

is a Kurdish artist from Afrin, born in 1971.



He developed an interest in art from a young age and worked in painting, sculpture, teaching, and decoration. He lived for many years in Lebanon before returning to Afrin, but later had to leave again because of the war. His experiences of exile and displacement strongly influenced his art, which often focuses on memory, homeland, war, and hope.

Afrin and its surrounding areas have long held an important place in the cultural memory of Syrian Kurds. For Ibrahim, however, this homeland would later become both a source of artistic inspiration and the scene of profound destruction and displacement.

His relationship with art began early and developed into a diverse artistic career. After obtaining his commercial secondary-school diploma in Damascus in 1990, he received recognition for his artistic work from the Teachers' Union in Damascus and participated in several individual and group exhibitions. Following his compulsory military service in Syria, difficult living conditions led him to leave the country for Lebanon.

Lebanon became an important chapter in his artistic and professional life. During nearly 28 years, Ibrahim worked in painting, sculpture, teaching, interior decoration, and other creative fields. He established a center for teaching art and taught students of applied arts. He also worked in women's hairdressing and body art, obtaining a professional hairdressing certificate in 2004.



His artistic activities extended beyond galleries and studios. He worked with television production teams and participated in programs in which he created rapid portraits of artists and singers live on television, sometimes completing a portrait in approximately ten minutes. He also collaborated with Al-Marwa Group on the decoration and preparation of sets for television series and music videos.

After more than 35 years away from Syria, Ibrahim returned to Afrin carrying with him the dreams, memories, and artistic ambitions of his youth. His return, however, was very different from the homecoming he had imagined. The homeland preserved in his memory had been profoundly transformed by war, destruction, displacement, and social change. One of his first major artistic projects after returning was the creation of a monumental portrait of Abdullah Öcalan on Mount Bulbul, covering approximately 1,200 square metres. He later worked with two friends to create a sculpture of Kawa the Blacksmith in central Afrin. He also contributed to the establishment of an artists' union and served as its president, while taking part in the administrative work of the Afrin Intellectuals' Union. The war once again forced him onto the road. Following the displacement of people from Afrin, Ibrahim moved to the Shahba region, where he continued his cultural and artistic activities despite difficult conditions. He helped re-establish the Intellectuals' Union and participated in numerous artistic and cultural initiatives.



Among these projects was the exhibition "For Afrin", presented in Shahba and Aleppo as well as in several locations in the Jazira region. He also participated in artists' gatherings in Kobani, Tabqa, and Jazira, extending his artistic activities across Rojava. One particularly ambitious project was an art initiative for children from Afrin and Shahba in Sardam Camp. Ibrahim worked on a collective painting approximately 500 metres long, giving children an opportunity to express their memories, experiences, and hopes through art. In this context, art became more than individual expression: it became a means of preserving memory and creating a sense of belonging for a generation growing up amid displacement. Ibrahim also established a painting commune in Shahba, serving as its president, and participated in exhibitions throughout Shahba and Rojava. His cultural activities extended to theatre and music as well, including his participation in the Mîtan Festival in Shahba in a musical theatrical performance based on the works of Darwishê Evdî and Adûlê, under the sponsorship of the Centre for Art and Culture.

Art as Memory

The central theme running through Ardalan Ibrahim's artistic journey is the relationship between human beings and memory.

In his paintings, people are not merely aesthetic subjects. They appear as witnesses, victims, survivors, and carriers of memory. Faces marked by exhaustion, bodies shaped by displacement, eyes searching for security, and landscapes altered by war all become elements of a visual language that speaks beyond the immediate circumstances in which it was created.

His work does not simply reproduce the events of war. Instead, it transforms personal and collective suffering into an artistic language. The painting becomes a space in which memories of home, loss, displacement, and survival can coexist. This is particularly significant in the context of Afrin. For someone who spent decades away from his homeland and eventually returned to find it profoundly changed, painting becomes a way of confronting the distance between the homeland remembered and the homeland encountered. His artistic language therefore carries an emotional tension: sorrow exists alongside hope, destruction alongside memory, and displacement alongside an enduring attachment to place.

Between Suffering and Hope

The strength of Ibrahim's work lies not simply in its depiction of suffering, but in its refusal to allow suffering to become the final word. His figures may carry the marks of fear and loss, yet they also retain dignity and vitality. His colours and lines often convey tension, but beneath that tension lies a persistent desire for life. The artist does not beautify tragedy, but neither does he surrender to despair.



For Ibrahim, art is therefore both an aesthetic practice and a human position. The brush becomes a means of speaking when ordinary language is insufficient. The canvas becomes an archive of experiences that might otherwise disappear with time. In this sense, his work can be understood as a form of cultural resistance: not resistance expressed through weapons, but through memory, creativity, identity, and the determination to continue creating despite circumstances that seek to destroy the possibility of normal life.

A Life Between Homeland and Exile

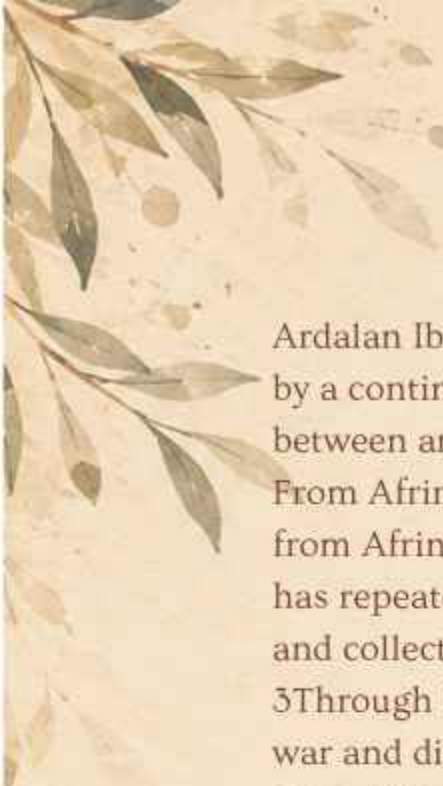
Ardalan Ibrahim's biography is inseparable from the places through which he has travelled: Afrin, Damascus, Lebanon, Aleppo, Shahba, and the wider cultural landscape of Rojava. Each place has left traces in his personal and artistic development. His decades in Lebanon broadened his professional experience and allowed him to work across several artistic disciplines. His return to Afrin brought him face to face with the transformation of his homeland. His subsequent displacement to Shahba confronted him once again with the reality of exile. Yet through all these changes, one constant remained: art. The brush, colours, sculpture, teaching, cultural organisation, exhibitions, and collective artistic projects became different forms of the same commitment—to keep creating, to preserve memory, and to give people a voice through culture. His work with children is particularly significant in this regard. A 500-metre collective painting is not simply an artistic project; it is also a symbolic act. It gives displaced children the opportunity to leave their own mark on history and to transform personal memories into a shared cultural record.



The Artist as Witness

Ardalan Ibrahim's story is ultimately the story of an artist who has repeatedly been forced to leave places while refusing to abandon the memory of those places. His journey illustrates how displacement can alter an artist's relationship with home. The homeland becomes simultaneously a physical place, a memory, a wound, and a source of inspiration. When the physical landscape changes, art can preserve fragments of the landscape that existed in memory. For this reason, Ibrahim's work deserves to be viewed not only through the lens of aesthetics, but also as part of a broader cultural record of a turbulent period in Syrian history. His paintings and sculptures carry traces of a personal journey, but they also speak to collective experiences of war, exile, loss, and survival. They preserve faces, emotions, places, and memories that might otherwise be forgotten.





Conclusion

Ardalan Ibrahim is an artist whose life and work have been shaped by a continuous encounter between art and reality, homeland and exile, memory and loss. From Afrin to Damascus, from Lebanon back to his homeland, and from Afrin to Shahba, his journey has repeatedly crossed the boundaries between personal biography and collective history.

Through his brush and sculpture, he has sought to preserve what war and displacement threaten to erase. His art does not merely tell the story of suffering; it also speaks of dignity, resilience, identity, and the enduring human desire for life.

Perhaps this is the deepest meaning of his artistic journey:

An artist and his art.

A human being between a heart that continues to beat with life and a body burdened by reality.

A brush immersed in the colours of emotion, crying out for life.

In a time when words can be lost amid the noise of war, Ardalan Ibrahim chooses another language—

the language of colour, form, memory, and creation.

And sometimes, a painting can become a testimony more enduring than words.

HEALTHCARE AND RETURN

Without Medical Care, There Can Be No Safe Return

Why the Reconstruction of Syria Must Begin in Its Health Centres

A family that has fled war does not return to its homeland simply because its house now has a roof again. They must know where to turn if one of their children develops

a high fever or the mother is pregnant. They need the certainty that the father will receive timely help in the event of a heart attack and that the grandmother will continue to receive her medication next month.

Where this security is lacking, return remains a political promise without a solid foundation.

The reconstruction of a devastated country is often measured first in concrete, asphalt and kilometres of new power lines. Visible structures convey progress: roads are opened, administrative buildings repaired, hospitals rebuilt. All of this is necessary. However, whether people actually return and stay depends not only on

physical infrastructure. What is decisive is whether everyday life becomes predictable again.

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This includes clean water, electricity, schools, jobs and public safety. But it also includes a health system that is accessible at the critical moment. A region only becomes habitable again once its social and medical foundations are functioning.

The scale of the task is enormous. The World Bank estimates the cost of Syria's physical reconstruction at around 216 billion US dollars. Almost a third of the pre-war

capital stock was damaged. At the same time, according to the World Health Organization, around 16.5 million people in Syria will need humanitarian assistance

in 2026. Infectious diseases such as cholera and measles are occurring alongside a

growing number of chronic conditions, damaged infrastructure and a severe shortage

of medical personnel. According to WHO estimates, up to 70 percent of the country's

original medical workforce has left.

At the same time, returns have already begun. By March 2026, according to the United Nations Refugee Agency, more than 1.5 million refugees and around 1.8 million internally displaced persons had returned. Yet in many places these people

encounter overstretched or only partially functioning structures. Return and reconstruction cannot therefore be organised sequentially. They are taking place simultaneously – and they depend on each other.

Anyone who wants to enable voluntary, safe and sustainable return must therefore

talk about healthcare.

Not Every Health Problem Requires a Hospital

A well-functioning hospital is indispensable. Complex operations, intensive care, serious injuries, premature births or acute cardiovascular diseases cannot be treated in a small health station. It would therefore be wrong to pit outpatient and inpatient

care against each other.

Equally misguided, however, would be to view the reconstruction of the health system

primarily as a hospital-building programme.

Large clinics are visible, politically impressive and easy to present as successes.

Yet

their construction takes a long time, ties up considerable resources and requires permanent doctors, nursing staff, medical technology, electricity, water, medicines,

laboratories and functioning transport links. A hospital that has been built but can only

deliver part of its services due to a lack of staff, spare parts or operating resources is

not a symbol of successful reconstruction. It is a symbol of misplaced priorities.

Germany's experience shows that concentrating on a few large sites can create new

gaps in provision, particularly in rural and structurally weak areas. This experience

cannot be transferred unchanged to Syria. However, the fundamental lesson still applies: good care begins as close to people's homes as possible and as early as possible in the course of an illness.

What is needed, therefore, is a tiered structure of care.

Its broad base consists of outpatient health centres, general practitioners, paediatricians, midwives, pharmacies and mobile medical units. These handle the treatment of common illnesses, minor injuries, care for pregnant women, vaccinations, preventive care and the ongoing management of chronic conditions. Building on this, regional facilities are required that offer extended diagnostics, specialist treatment and outpatient procedures. Only at the top of this system are hospitals providing surgical care, obstetrics, intensive medicine and specialised departments.

Crucially, these levels must not operate in isolation. A health centre must know where

it can refer a seriously ill patient. The hospital must be able to discharge the patient

back into local care after acute treatment. The ambulance service must be able to reach appropriate facilities and transmit medical information even during transport.

"Outpatient before inpatient" does not mean denying necessary hospital treatment. It

means treating patients at the lowest medically appropriate level of care. This is closer to the patient, conserves scarce hospital capacity and is generally more cost-effective.

Primary Care Is More Than a Small Surgery

An outpatient health centre must not consist merely of a treatment room and a medicine cabinet. It needs a clear remit, qualified staff, regulated opening hours and

a reliable link to higher-level facilities.

A robust basic medical service must include at least the treatment of acute illnesses

and minor injuries, care for children and pregnant women, and the management of

diabetes, high blood pressure, cardiovascular and respiratory diseases. No less important, though often neglected, are vaccination and preventive services, wound

care, medical follow-up, and basic laboratory and ultrasound diagnostics.

In addition to actual treatment, there must also be a reliable environment in which

communicable diseases are consistently identified and reported, the supply of medicines is secured, and there are clear referral pathways for serious and complex

cases.

Chronic conditions are particularly easily overlooked during reconstruction.

Their

treatment is less dramatic than the care of war injuries, but it is vital for those affected. A diabetic needs not only a one-off supply of insulin but continuous care,

suitable refrigeration, check-ups and treatment of possible complications. A patient

with high blood pressure needs medication before a stroke occurs. A pregnant woman needs support not only at birth but also antenatal care and an accessible

point of contact throughout pregnancy.

A functioning health system therefore proves its worth not only in emergencies. It

demonstrates its capability above all through reliability in everyday life.

An Ambulance Service Connects the Levels of Care

For remote villages, immobile patients and time-critical emergencies, a functioning ambulance service is essential. This consists not only of ambulances. It requires qualified emergency staff, accessible emergency call structures, control centres, medical standards, suitable vehicles and binding coordination with receiving facilities.

An ambulance is of little use if no one knows which hospital can admit a patient.

Similarly, an emergency number alone is insufficient if there is no control centre to prioritise calls and coordinate available resources.

During reconstruction, simple, robust and regionally sustainable solutions should take

precedence over technically impressive but unaffordable systems. Not every medical

need requires transport to hospital. Qualified emergency staff can treat certain

patients on site, provide advice or refer them specifically to an outpatient facility. This

relieves pressure on hospitals and keeps transport capacity available for genuine emergencies.

The particular dangers of a former war zone must also be taken into account: unexploded ordnance, mines, destroyed roads, inaccessible villages and a high number of untreated injury sequelae. The ambulance service is therefore not merely

a means of transport but an indispensable link between the population and the health system.

Medicine Supply Is Critical Infrastructure

Doctors can only treat effectively if the required medicines are available. Reconstruction must therefore consider the entire supply chain: from procurement or production through storage and transport to controlled dispensing to the patient. Reliable production and delivery structures, suitable storage conditions and a network of accessible pharmacies are needed. For temperature-sensitive medicines, vaccines or insulin, the cold chain must be maintained even with unstable power supply. At the same time, protection against counterfeit, substandard or improperly stored medicines is essential. The uncontrolled distribution of large quantities of medicines may appear helpful in the short term but can create new problems in the long term. Antibiotics in particular must not be used without clear medical guidelines. Misuse, incorrect dosages and interrupted treatment promote resistant pathogens – a danger that respects neither provincial nor national borders. Medicine supply must therefore be developed together with diagnostics, pharmaceutical advice, quality control and training.

Building Structures Instead of Permanently Managing Deficits

The human suffering on the ground, as well as the interest in safe return perspectives, requires support from states, international organisations and private aid

agencies. From the outset, however, it must be clear what purpose this assistance serves.

Humanitarian emergency aid saves lives in acute crises. It cannot, however, replace

a regular health system. What begins as a bridge must not become a permanent substitute administration.

Three phases should therefore be distinguished:

1. Short-term emergency aid secures survival and maintains indispensable medical services.
2. Medium-term reconstruction restores facilities, personnel, supply chains and regional care networks.
3. In the long term, financing, operation and responsibility must be taken over by sustainable local structures.

International support should therefore be linked to specific and verifiable structural

goals. These include the number of actually functioning health centres, the accessibility of medical services, the availability of essential medicines, the training of

local specialists and the ability to continue operating facilities after external funding ends.

No one benefits from a donated CT scanner if spare parts, trained staff or a reliable

power supply are missing after a few months. Technical maintenance must therefore

be planned from the very beginning. Anyone supplying medical technology must also

consider training, consumables, repair options and anticipated operating costs.

The goal should not be to start as many projects as possible. What matters is how many facilities are still operating five years later. No Sustainable Reconstruct



No Sustainable Reconstruction Without Oversight

The reconstruction of Syria's health system will require substantial international support. However, anyone providing European taxpayers' money for this must be able to understand where the funds are going, what services are being financed and whether they are actually reaching patients.

Corruption is not a minor budgetary issue. When contracts are awarded on the basis of personal or political connections, medicines are diverted or salaries are paid to staff who exist only on paper, those resources are immediately missing from patient care. Nor may international aid be distributed according to ethnic, religious or political

loyalty. A health service that favours certain groups and excludes others does not stabilise a country – it deepens its divisions.

The risk is considerable: in Transparency International's 2025 Corruption Perceptions

Index, Syria scores just 15 out of 100 points and ranks 172nd out of 182 countries surveyed. Such an index naturally does not allow judgement on every individual official, doctor or local provider. It is, however, a clear warning signal for all foreign donors. High financing needs, weakened institutions, unclear responsibilities and great time pressure come together particularly after a long war.

Anti-corruption measures must therefore not begin only after funds have already disappeared. They must be part of every project from the start.

International funding should initially be provided on a project basis and in individual tranches. Further payments should only be made once agreed deliverables have been verifiably achieved. It is not enough to complete the construction of a health centre. What matters is whether the facility is actually open, employs qualified staff, has the necessary equipment and medicines, and treats patients regardless of origin or religion. What must be financed are functioning services, not buildings and announcements.

Construction, supply and service contracts must in principle be awarded publicly and transparently. Contract values, selection decisions, contractors and subcontractors must be disclosed. The same applies to the actual beneficial owners of the companies involved. Otherwise, officials or local power holders could channel public funds into their own structures via formally independent companies. Exceptions due to particular urgency must be strictly limited and subsequently disclosed.

Medicines, medical products and technical equipment must be traceable from supplier to treating facility. Delivery quantities, batch and serial numbers, recipients and locations must be documented and checked on a sample basis. This protects against theft, black-market trading and multiple invoicing. It also reveals whether a donated device is actually in use or remains unused due to a lack of maintenance, spare parts or power supply. Recipients of funds must not be the only ones reporting on their proper use.

Independent financial audits and on-site checks are necessary. These must examine not only invoices and project reports but also verify whether facilities are open, staff are present and patients are receiving the promised services. In addition, the population needs safe channels for complaints. Anyone reporting bribery, the diversion of medicines or political discrimination must not thereby endanger their treatment or personal safety.

Control requirements ultimately remain ineffective if violations have no consequences. Funding agreements must therefore allow for the suspension of further payments, the recovery of misappropriated funds and the exclusion of unreliable contractors. Sanctions should, however, target those responsible as far as possible and not the patients. For vital facilities, arrangements must therefore be made to ensure continued operation in the event of a change of provider.

Anti-corruption efforts are not a vote of no confidence in the Syrian population. On the contrary: the first victims of corrupt structures are the people on the ground. Every diverted euro is missing from a clinic, a pharmacy or an ambulance.

International support must therefore be generous enough to build effective structures and strict enough to prevent their appropriation. Anti-corruption measures are not an obstacle to reconstruction. They are the prerequisite for reconstruction actually taking place.

The Diaspora Can Form a Bridge of Knowledge

In Germany and other European countries, there are many doctors, pharmacists, nurses, midwives, technicians and emergency staff with Syrian or Kurdish roots. Many possess not only professional expertise but also language skills, cultural understanding and personal connections to their regions of origin.

This potential should be used systematically.

Short-term medical deployments, digital training, telemedicine consultations and long-term partnerships between European clinics and local health centres are all conceivable. Experienced specialists could help build quality standards, training programmes, emergency structures and medicine logistics. A “train-the-trainer” approach would be particularly valuable: not only individual staff members but specialists who can pass on their knowledge independently would be trained. In the longer term, voluntary return programmes for qualified professionals should also be developed. These could include time-limited trial phases, recognition of qualifications, support for settlement and a degree of professional security. No one will give up a secure professional existence unless it is clear that they will be able to work on the ground, support their family and actually use their skills. The diaspora should be seen neither as a free pool of personnel nor as a permanent financier of local deficits. Its particular strength lies in its role as a bridge of knowledge, experience and trust

Medical Aid Must Not Be a Political Reward

Medical care must not depend on a person's ethnic group, religion, gender or political affiliation. This principle takes on particular significance in a society shaped by war and hostility.

Minorities in particular need reliable protection against discrimination. The same applies to children, older people, people with disabilities and those with chronic illnesses. Medical aid must be based on patient need, not on origin or loyalty.

A health system that also treats political opponents is not weak. It shows that state and social order are once again stronger than revenge and arbitrariness. Equal access to medical care cannot by itself restore lost trust. It can, however, help transform a ceasefire into gradual social stability.

International funding should therefore be linked to non-discriminatory access to medical services. Facilities that exclude patients on ethnic, religious or political grounds must not receive European funds.

Health Policy in Crisis Regions Is Also in Europe's Interest

It is not Europe's sole task to clear up the consequences of all wars or to permanently finance foreign health systems. Europe should not, however, indulge in the illusion that the state of these systems has nothing to do with its own interests.

A collapsed health system encourages further emigration. It prevents voluntary return, exacerbates humanitarian emergencies and promotes the spread of communicable diseases and resistant pathogens. Conversely, reliable healthcare creates prospects for staying and returning, strengthens local responsibility and reduces long-term dependence on foreign aid.

Humanitarian responsibility and legitimate national interest are not in conflict here. They point in the same direction.

Anyone calling for political return perspectives must also name the practical prerequisites. Voluntary return requires security, but security goes beyond the absence of fighting. It also includes the certainty that children will be treated, pregnant women cared for, emergencies saved and chronically ill people not left to their own devices.

Reconstruction Must Prove Itself in Everyday Life

Reconstruction has not succeeded when a new hospital is ceremonially opened. It has succeeded when a mother does not have to search for hours for help for her sick child. When a heart attack does not become a death sentence because there is no ambulance. When a diabetic does not have to leave his homeland because the necessary insulin is not reliably available. And when medical staff are no longer permanently dependent on foreign improvisation but can take responsibility themselves.

This requires not a collection of unconnected individual projects but a tiered system of local primary care, regional specialist care, high-performing hospitals, an ambulance service, medicine supply and qualified personnel. It requires verifiable goals, transparent financing, effective anti-corruption measures and a binding transition to local responsibility.

Medical care is not a peripheral issue in reconstruction. It is its human foundation – and one of the decisive prerequisites for turning the desire to return into a viable possibility.

The Beginnings of Syrian Football and the Role of the Kurdish Quarter in Damascus

Sport, Social Transformation, and Kurdish Identity in Damascus

By Marwan Falo

Based on the research of historian Hassan Zaza

Sport as a Mirror of Social and Political Change

The history of sport in the Middle East cannot be studied in isolation from the political and social developments of the twentieth century. In Syria as well, football was never merely entertainment; from its earliest beginnings it became a social space in which identity, community, education, and political perceptions were intertwined.

The Kurdish quarter in Damascus, known as the "Kurdish neighborhood," played a distinctive role in this context.

According to the study, individuals and families from this area had a pioneering role in the early development of Syrian football, through the establishment of early teams and clubs, as well as support for education, sport, and social participation.

Marwan Falo

is a Kurdish writer and researcher specializing in political, economic, and historical affairs. His work focuses on geopolitical developments in the Middle East and their impact on regional societies and economies. He combines strategic analysis with historical perspectives, with particular interest in energy, security, and economic stability.

Through his articles and research, he seeks to provide objective insights that connect historical context with contemporary developments while exploring future challenges and opportunities facing the region.



The First Steps of Football in Damascus

Historical data in the study indicate that football arrived in Damascus around 1900, but it began to gain wider popularity in the early 1920s.

It is noted that the Kurdish agricultural engineer Hussein Bey Al-Ayibish was one of the most prominent figures of this period, credited with a key role in introducing, organizing, and spreading football in Damascus.

One of the earliest playing grounds was the "Green Marjeh" on the banks of the Barada River, where informal matches were held between students of the Medical Institute (later the Faculty of Medicine) and students of the Anbar School.

Over time, this unstructured sporting activity developed into an institutional framework, and the field was later placed under the supervision of the Damascus municipality and transformed into an official civic stadium.

The First Organized Team in Syria

The study states that the first organized football team in Syria was formed under the leadership of Hussein Bey Al-Ayibish.

The team included a large number of young men from the Kurdish quarter of Damascus, along with figures who later became prominent in politics, administration, medicine, education, and economics.

Among the names mentioned are: Hamdi Bey Al-Youssef, Diab Matini, Mohammed Matini, Samih Al-Imam, Ali Bozo, Nouri Al-Ayibish, Ahmed Al-Alousi, Anwar Tello, Mohammed Al-Bazm, and others.

The study suggests that this team was not merely a sports gathering, but also a social space that contributed to the later rise of many of its members into prominent professional positions.



From Football to Organized Sports Movement

Sport in the Kurdish quarter continued to develop in the following decades, with a key milestone being the establishment of the Kurdistan Sports Club in 1936, considered in the study to be the first official Kurdish club in Syria.

The club was founded in the Kurdish neighborhood with financial and moral support from Hussein Bey Al-Ayibish and the politician Ali Bozo, and at the same time the "Kurdistan Scout Troop" was also established.

However, this trajectory did not last long, as the club was dissolved by a political decision of the government of Jamil Mardam Bey, ushering in a new phase of restriction and politicization of sports activity.

Sport in the Underground Sphere

After the closure of the Kurdistan Club, some sporting activities moved into an informal or semi-clandestine framework.

The study refers to the establishment of a club named "Salah al-Din al-Ayyubi", with the participation of intellectuals and educators from the neighborhood, including Izzat Falo and Rashid Jalo, and inspired by the Kurdish activist and politician Othman Sabri.

The club had a playing field on the slopes of Mount Qasioun and continued its activities until the late 1940s, before security authorities intervened and shut it down, destroying the field.



1963: A New Political Turning Point

With the rise of the Baath Party to power in 1963, a new shift occurred, as the study indicates that youth and sports activities in the Kurdish quarter of Damascus were banned.

Nevertheless, football did not stop; instead, it once again moved to informal spaces in areas such as Al-Salihyah, Abu Jarash, and Barzeh.

Kurdish Boys

Out of this difficult reality, the team "Kurdish Boys" was formed in 1966.

The team achieved notable success, winning several championships in the Damascus neighborhood league and managing to defeat officially registered clubs.

Ali Bozo played an important role in supporting it, and through Kamel Al-Bani, a license was obtained allowing the team to train at the Al-Maysat Stadium.

Among the team's most prominent players were: Mohammed Ali Tammar Agha, Abu Fouad Resoul, Fakhri Matini, Fared Matini, Nusrat Jalbi, Riyad Resoul, Khaled Brazi, Anwar Kiki, Shadhan Naimo, Mohammed Ayoub, Lund Mustafa Pasha, Saleh Tata, Ali Ayoub, and others.

From the Neighborhood to the National Team

The influence of the "Kurdish Boys" team was not limited to the neighborhood; it extended to the national level.

Several of its players later joined school teams and the Syrian national team, with one of the most notable milestones being their participation in the Syrian School Championship in Hama in 1970.

Football Between Identity and Society

This trajectory shows that football in the Kurdish quarter of Damascus was not merely a sporting activity, but was deeply connected to social, political, and cultural structures.

Clubs were founded and dissolved in succession, names shifted between official and unofficial forms, yet the game remained a space for social expression, relationship-building, and skill development.

A Forgotten Chapter of Syrian Sports History?

The study concludes that the Kurdish quarter in Damascus played an important role in the early beginnings of Syrian football, not only in sports terms but also in producing figures in fields such as medicine, politics, education, and administration.

It also highlights how political transformations affected sporting activity through closures, bans, and re-establishments in different forms.

Conclusion

Syrian football did not begin only in official institutions, but also in local initiatives, living communities, and young people who saw sport as part of their daily lives.

According to this study, the Kurdish quarter in Damascus was one of these early centers.

From Hussein Bey Al-Ayibish to the "Kurdish Boys," it becomes clear that football was a means of building community, strengthening social presence, and expressing identity.

Therefore, this story deserves to be an essential part of Syrian sports history, and especially of the history of the Kurdish community in Syria.

The Strait of Hormuz: The Passage That Never Sleeps

On a map, the Strait of Hormuz is a thin blue crease between the Iranian shore and Oman's Musandam Peninsula. The eye slides over it. It looks like a footnote. Then the oil market twitches, war talk thickens, or war-risk premiums on tankers jump overnight, and ministries in Tokyo, Beijing and Brussels discover that this crease can keep them awake. The modern world is built on a quiet assumption: that the strait stays open. Whenever that assumption frays, people remember how much of their comfort hangs on a bottleneck only a few dozen kilometres wide.

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Specialized in economic and strategic research, risk management, and strategic
planning. His expertise centers on:

Development of banking policies and regulatory frameworks

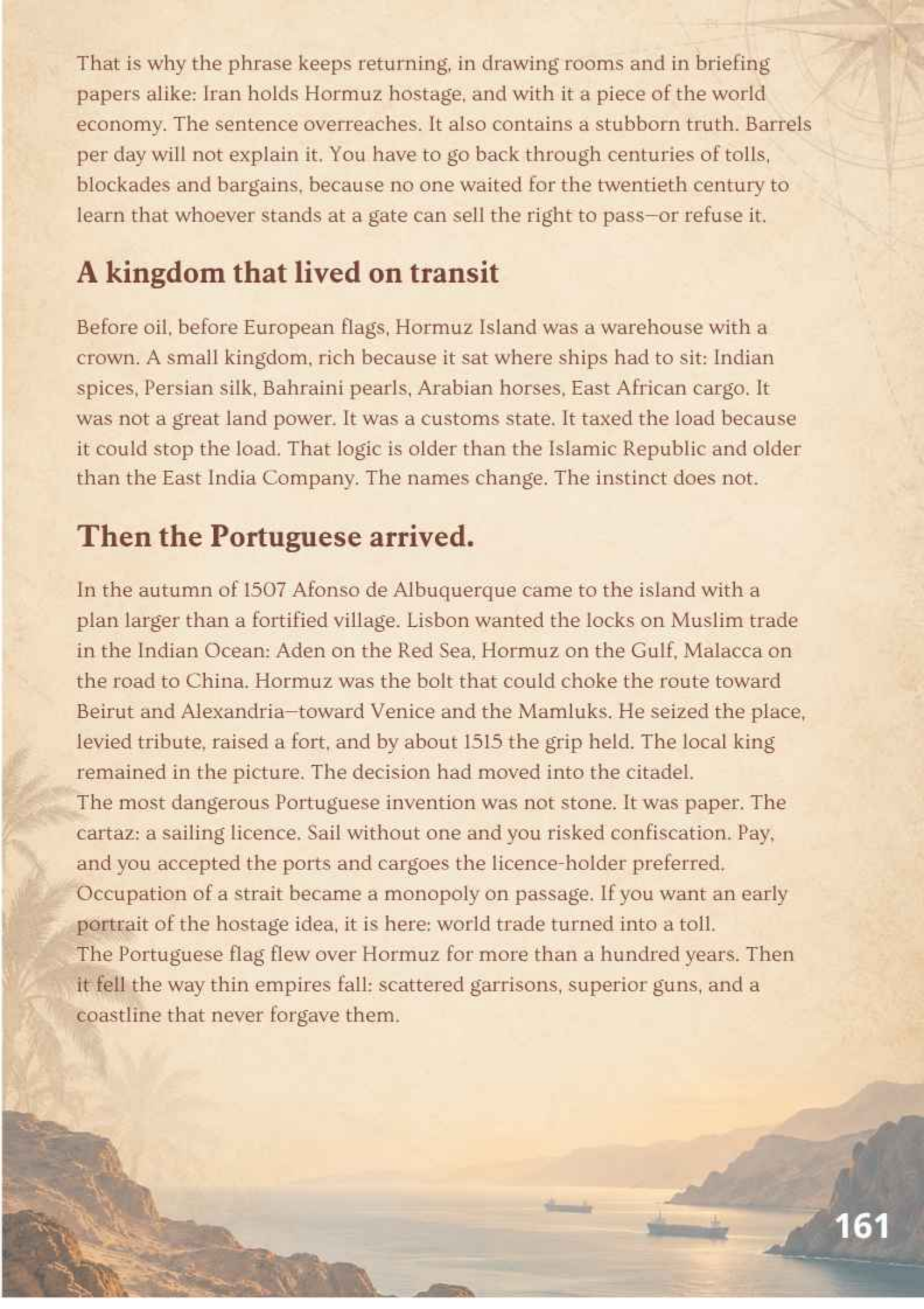
Credit risk, market risk, operational risk, and geopolitical risk assessment

Institutional strategy formulation and stress testing

Financial sustainability and long-term growth strategies in complex regional
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Dr. Mansour combines deep academic insight in political economy with hands-on
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risk-adjusted decision frameworks, and policy recommendations tailored to the
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banking industry.





That is why the phrase keeps returning, in drawing rooms and in briefing papers alike: Iran holds Hormuz hostage, and with it a piece of the world economy. The sentence overreaches. It also contains a stubborn truth. Barrels per day will not explain it. You have to go back through centuries of tolls, blockades and bargains, because no one waited for the twentieth century to learn that whoever stands at a gate can sell the right to pass—or refuse it.

A kingdom that lived on transit

Before oil, before European flags, Hormuz Island was a warehouse with a crown. A small kingdom, rich because it sat where ships had to sit: Indian spices, Persian silk, Bahraini pearls, Arabian horses, East African cargo. It was not a great land power. It was a customs state. It taxed the load because it could stop the load. That logic is older than the Islamic Republic and older than the East India Company. The names change. The instinct does not.

Then the Portuguese arrived.

In the autumn of 1507 Afonso de Albuquerque came to the island with a plan larger than a fortified village. Lisbon wanted the locks on Muslim trade in the Indian Ocean: Aden on the Red Sea, Hormuz on the Gulf, Malacca on the road to China. Hormuz was the bolt that could choke the route toward Beirut and Alexandria—toward Venice and the Mamluks. He seized the place, levied tribute, raised a fort, and by about 1515 the grip held. The local king remained in the picture. The decision had moved into the citadel.

The most dangerous Portuguese invention was not stone. It was paper. The cartaz: a sailing licence. Sail without one and you risked confiscation. Pay, and you accepted the ports and cargoes the licence-holder preferred.

Occupation of a strait became a monopoly on passage. If you want an early portrait of the hostage idea, it is here: world trade turned into a toll.

The Portuguese flag flew over Hormuz for more than a hundred years. Then it fell the way thin empires fall: scattered garrisons, superior guns, and a coastline that never forgave them.

The shah who needed English ships

Shah Abbas had no navy that could match Portugal. He had an army being rebuilt, a southern shore whose customs houses he wanted back, and one European enemy who could be struck with another European friend. Isfahan told the English East India Company that the silk trade would dry up unless the ships appeared. In 1622 Qeshm was besieged first, to cut the water. Then Hormuz, for long weeks. English guns smashed the Portuguese fleet at anchor and kept Goa from sending relief. The fort surrendered in the spring. The commercial centre shifted to Bandar Abbas.

The story is sometimes told as a pure Persian triumph over empire. There was a triumph. There was also an invoice. Whoever retakes a strait from the sea needs someone who holds the sea; whoever holds the sea wants a share. The English and the Dutch did not leave empty-handed. The Portuguese fell back on Muscat and the Gulf of Oman until the Ya'ariba drove them from Muscat in the mid-seventeenth century.

From that moment a rule still holds: Hormuz is not decided by the land map alone. The coast gives leverage. The channel is settled by whoever owns the ship, the insurance, and the power to resupply.

The British lake

The next two centuries were not quiet. Persia and the Ottomans contested the shores. Oman's fleet rose. The Qawasim raided shipping until London saw a threat to the road to India. The British expeditions of 1809 and 1819-1820 did not produce a Portuguese-style fortress. They produced something longer-lived: treaties, flags, a "Trucial Coast," and a naval presence that made piracy expensive. The Gulf became an informal British lake.

Then oil was found, and the meaning of the strait changed while its geography did not. In 1951, after Mossadegh nationalised Iranian oil, Britain blockaded Abadan and kept Iranian tankers from leaving. The power that guaranteed navigation used navigation as a weapon. Keep that sentence before Tehran enters the story. The Hormuz card is not an Iranian invention. Iran later played it more skilfully because it lives on the longer bank, closer to the narrow water. Britain left the Gulf in 1971. America arrived slowly, then all at once after the Iranian Revolution and the oil shocks. The Fifth Fleet inherited the watch. The strait became a Pentagon file as much as an oil-ministry file.

When the tanker became the target?

The Shah himself spoke, in the early 1970s, of Iran's ability to shut Hormuz. After 1979 the doctrine passed to a new regime, now in open enmity with Washington and the Gulf monarchies. The eight-year war with Iraq took the idea off the podium and put it in the water. The Tanker War did not close the strait the way a door closes. It taught the modern lesson: you need not occupy a passage to cripple it. A mine, a fast boat, a shore-based missile—then insurance explodes. America intervened. In the summer of 1988 the cruiser Vincennes shot down an Iranian civilian airliner over the strait and killed 290 people. Narrow water does not forgive a mistake.

After that the scene kept returning, like a play with the names slightly changed. Sanctions on Iranian oil; an Iranian official answers: if our oil does not pass, no one else's will. A naval drill, an aircraft carrier, a lull, another round. 2011 and 2012. 2018 and 2019 and the seizure of the *Stena Impero*. Attacks on tankers. Each time the market heard the message before any iron gate came down. Probability itself has a price.

Who owns the passage?

The legal question irritates anyone who wants a clean sentence. The strait lies in the territorial seas of Iran and Oman. The lanes in use follow schemes blessed by the International Maritime Organization. Oman ratified the UN Convention on the Law of the Sea. Iran signed and never ratified; neither did the United States. Most legal opinion treats Hormuz as an international strait: transit passage that cannot be suspended, and no toll for the mere fact of crossing. Iran's older line is closer to this: the Iranian side is territorial sea, innocent passage may be regulated and, in some readings, restricted; warships should clear their transit in advance.

In peacetime the argument passes over the heads of the pilots. In a crisis it is settled by whoever can make the voyage uninsurable. Oman is the party rhetoric forgets and any serious arrangement needs. The other bank is not scenery. No one administers this water for good from Bandar Abbas alone.

Where the influence actually sits

Influence comes in layers. Iran has the longer coast, the islands, the missiles, the drones, the boats, the mines—a high capacity to spoil. Oman has sovereignty on the southern shore and a temperament that dislikes turning the strait into an open weapon. Saudi Arabia and the UAE built partial exits by pipeline, to Yanbu and to Fujairah. Iraq, Kuwait and Qatar are more exposed: most of what they sell has no sea except this one. America has the fleet and the minesweeping nets. The real customer for Hormuz crude is not a speech in Washington. It is the refineries of Asia. China, India, Japan and South Korea take the largest share. A closure hits them first. That complicates Tehran's game. Beijing may be a partner in contracts. It is not a partner in an energy famine.

Above all of them stands an actor that flies no flag: the insurer. In practice Iran may not need to sink ten tankers. Two hits, a warning, jammed navigation signals—and the great underwriters refuse cover. The ships stop by themselves. The market locks its own door.

How do you kidnap an economy from a strait this thin?

The numbers explain scale, not dread. In ordinary times some twenty million barrels a day of crude and products move through Hormuz—about a quarter of the world's seaborne oil, roughly a fifth of consumption. A heavy share of seaborne LNG moves with them, Qatar's most of all. Eighty percent or more of the crude turns east. That is a dangerous concentration. Oil is priced at the margin. A modest shortfall is enough to lift the barrel, the premium, the freight—and then inflation walks into bread, power and the cost of moving anything. The hostage, though, does not require a total seal. A hard closure is expensive for the one who imposes it. A soft closure is cheaper: strike a ship, declare a compulsory corridor, detain a tanker on a navigational pretext, scramble the signal, and every voyage becomes a gamble. The cargo is not locked in a hold. The market is worn down until it asks to talk. That is the clever face of the weapon.



The doctrine spoken since the 1980s is almost crude in its clarity: sanctions that stop Iranian oil will be answered by a threat to stop the neighbours' oil. Energy security in the Gulf is chained to the lifting of Tehran's isolation. States that oppose Iran politically still share the bill, whether they like it or not. The European or American importer feels it even when most of the crude is bound for Asia, because the market is one market. A barrel that jumps in Asia jumps in Brent, in gasoline, in fertilizer, in the central bank's spreadsheet.

Even the threat, before a shot, pays. A naval exercise is a note to the trading floor. Investors do not wait for a sinking; they buy the fear. In spells of tension traffic can fall to a fraction of itself, crews and hulls sit stranded, and the price rises not because the strait vanished from the map but because no one will swear a ship will leave as it entered. Once the capacity is proven, it remains a standing weapon.

What the hostage sermon leaves out

It is a mistake to believe Iran "owns" the world economy because it owns a missile on a cliff. The weapon bites the hand that holds it. Iranian oil itself leaves through Hormuz. A long closure starves Tehran's budget and its imports, feeds anger at home, and confronts China—the largest buyer—with a shortage no speech can fill. Beijing prefers cheap, regular barrels to a strait run on nerves.

The alternatives exist, and they are irritatingly incomplete. Saudi Arabia's line to Yanbu has a large nameplate capacity and practical limits at the port and in maintenance. The UAE's line to Fujairah saved part of Abu Dhabi's crude because it empties outside the strait, on the Gulf of Oman; its capacity sits around one and a half to nearly two million barrels a day, with talk of expansion. At best the working bypasses replace a few million barrels against the twenty that used to take the water. They prevent total collapse. They do not prevent the shock. Kuwait, Iraq and Qatar remain in the open.

Then there is the reply. Washington has spent decades drilling the protection of tankers and the sweeping of mines. A declared, lasting closure is read in many capitals as an act against world trade, not a local scuffle. Iran knows the price. That is why, in most years, it preferred the grey zone: harassment that can be denied, not a dam with a slogan on it forever.

Law is not entirely dead ink. If an international strait becomes a booth for selective permits and fees, every strait on earth becomes a candidate for imitation. Maritime powers hate that precedent. Importing China hates it for selfish reasons. And Oman, again, is not a detail. There is no quiet kidnapping of this passage from one bank only.

In short: Iran can starve the market. It cannot run the world like a tap in a kitchen. The distinction matters. It is what separates analysis from propaganda.

Why the sentence still unsettles

Because the international order after the Second World War built its ease on open straits and Gulf oil that arrives. Hormuz is where that habit hits geography. A sanctioned, hemmed-in state sits on the longest shore of the most important energy corridor and learned that the system's weakest joint is not the aircraft carrier. It is the insurance slip and the refinery tank.

"Kidnapping the economy" is a description of effect, not a verdict in court. Whoever can add tens of dollars to the barrel, rattle the banks, and force an adversary to price the next strike is practising a coercion that looks like hostage-taking: the value is not in the water, but in the pain of those who need the water. A clever hostage, though, is not killed. A collapsing world economy, or a war that wrecks Iranian facilities and shuts the market for months, can swallow the player with the card. That is why the method, for most of these decades, has been tighten and ease: fear, price, talks, a step back—without throwing the weapon into the sea.

The history of Hormuz, cut to one line, is the history of turning a location into tribute. The island kings did it; the Portuguese did it with a licence; the Safavids did it with the customs house after the fort fell back to them; the British did it with a security system; the Americans did it with a fleet; the Revolutionary Guard does it with the missile, the mine, and the war premium. The cargo changed. The logic did not change much.

The answer is not to deny the Iranian shore. The answer is for the world to stop parking so much of its comfort in a single passage: more pipe to Fujairah, Yanbu and Oman's ports, deeper stocks, more energy from outside the Gulf, and a hard rule that an international strait is not a coastal fief. Until the substitute approaches the size of the risk, Hormuz—this almost comic sliver on the map—will remain one of the keys of the century. Not because Tehran stole it and dragged it into a cave, but because everyone else agreed, out of laziness and the calm of habit, to live at its mercy.

WEIN KOBANÊ

A Kurdish Story Told Through Wine Interview

1. How did the idea of Wein Kobanê begin, and what inspired you to launch the project?

For a long time, I had wanted to start a project of my own. As a chef, I often used wine in many of the dishes I prepared, and this gradually sparked a deeper interest in the world of wine. I wanted to expand my knowledge and understand wine more thoroughly, so I spent a great deal of time studying and researching it. Over time, I began thinking about turning this interest into a real project and creating a wine product that would be connected to my name and carry my own personal touch.

The idea began to take serious shape during the COVID-19 pandemic. At that time, I had more space to think and plan, so I used that period to develop the concept and explore the steps needed to transform it from a personal interest into an actual project.

Heval Akil

was born in Qamishli and has lived in Germany for around 26 years. He studied hospitality in Damascus and built his professional career as a chef, gaining international experience in Germany, the Netherlands, and Paris. In 2018, he earned a Master qualification in kitchen management, and in 2023, he received the Golden Spoon Award in North Rhine-Westphalia. He also serves on culinary examination committees in Dortmund. He is the founder of Wein Kobanê and published a German-language electronic cookbook in 2024.



2. Why did you choose the name “Kobanê” for the project, and what does this name represent to you?

I chose the name Kobanê because of what the city represents to me and to the Kurdish people. During the resistance in Rojava against ISIS, Kobanê became a symbol of resistance and freedom, particularly following the defeat ISIS suffered there.

For me, however, there is another aspect that is equally important: Kurdish unity during that period. What left a deep impression on me was seeing the YPG and YPJ forces, together with Peshmerga forces from Southern Kurdistan, standing side by side against ISIS.

That unity represented something greater than the battle itself. I saw it as a moment when Kurds from different regions and backgrounds came together around one common goal: defending their people and their freedom.

There is also another reason why I specifically chose the name Kobanê for a wine project. ISIS did not fight people only with weapons; it also attempted to impose its extremist ideology on society and everyday life, including prohibiting alcoholic beverages. Through this project, I wanted to express the exact opposite idea: that we are stronger than this mentality and capable of continuing, progressing, and developing, even in a field such as wine.

For me, therefore, Wein Kobanê carries two interconnected meanings: preserving the memory of Kurdish unity and the resistance that contributed to defeating ISIS in Kobanê, and rejecting the extremist ideology that attempted to impose itself on people's lives and freedoms.



3. Does Wein Kobanê carry a message beyond its commercial purpose? If so, what is that message?

Absolutely. For me, Wein Kobanê is not purely a commercial project, nor do I consider it my primary source of income. My livelihood does not depend on selling wine. I see this project primarily as a passion and something I genuinely enjoy developing.

Even the revenue generated by the project is largely reinvested into it, with the aim of improving the product and helping the project move forward rather than simply generating profit.

Above all, I see Wein Kobanê as a Kurdish project that carries a message and an identity. Through it, I want to contribute, in my own way, to bringing our voice and culture to the wider world and ensuring that our name is represented through a product that we can present with pride.

For this reason, the true value of the project, in my view, cannot be measured only in financial terms. Its value also lies in the message it carries and the image of the Kurdish people that it can present to others.



4. What were the early stages of the project like, and what were the main challenges you faced?

As with establishing any project or company, there were inevitably a number of challenges at the beginning. For us in Germany, bureaucracy was one of the main difficulties, alongside certain technical and technological challenges related to the project.

However, we did not see these obstacles as reasons to give up. Instead, we tried to deal with them step by step and learn from them. With each passing year, we have been able to make further progress, both technically and in understanding and navigating bureaucratic procedures more effectively.

In fact, every difficulty we encountered eventually became a learning experience and a motivation to develop both ourselves and the project. I can therefore say that these challenges have been an essential part of Wein Kobanê's journey and its development from year to year.

5. How did people react when they first saw a wine carrying a Kurdish name?

At the beginning, reactions varied. Some people welcomed and embraced the idea, while others did not. For me, however, the most important thing was being able to communicate the message behind the project, and I felt that I succeeded in doing so. I therefore did not allow negative reactions to affect my determination to continue.

The pleasant surprise was that around 95% of the reactions were extremely positive. Many people warmly welcomed the idea, and their support went beyond words. Some restaurant, café, and shop owners began displaying and selling Wein Kobanê, and we also received considerable interest and orders through online sales.

Most of the criticism we encountered was related to the idea of placing the name Kobanê on a product such as wine. But this did not stop me. I preferred to focus on the positive reactions and support we received because they gave me further motivation to continue developing the project.

We also received encouragement and support from a number of Kurdish television channels and media outlets that produced reports about the wine and the project, helping its story reach a wider audience.

Wein Kobanê has also been present at several cultural events and film festivals, including the Kobanê Film Festival, the Kurdish Film Festival in Hamburg, the Kurdish Film Festival in Berlin, and the Kurdish Çand û Huner Festival in Berlin. These events have contributed to spreading the name of Wein Kobanê and bringing its message to a broader audience.

6. Have you faced criticism or difficult situations because of the name “Kobanê”?

Yes, I have faced some criticism, which is natural for anyone starting a new project and introducing a different idea. In my experience, however, the negative reactions have been very limited.

During the five years that I have worked on the project, from the time Wein Kobanê was first introduced to the public until today, I can remember only two people who directly expressed a negative opinion about the idea. Interestingly, their attitudes later changed after they saw the project develop and succeed. They not only came to accept the idea, but eventually began supporting the project, recommending our products to their friends, and encouraging others to try them.



7. What distinguishes Wein Kobanê from other brands on the market?

I do not believe Wein Kobanê currently has a direct Kurdish competitor in Germany. There are many Kurdish products, but Wein Kobanê is the first Kurdish wine presented under a Kurdish name with a clearly expressed Kurdish identity. For this reason, I do not see direct Kurdish competition in this particular field.

Another feature that distinguishes us is that, from the very beginning, we wanted Kurdish identity to be present in every detail of the product. The colors of our four bottles were inspired by the colors of the Kurdistan flag. When the four bottles are placed side by side, their colors come together to represent the colors of the flag. The differences are not merely visual; each color also represents a different wine with its own taste and flavor.

For the Wein Kobanê logo, we chose the image of a free woman holding a sun with 21 rays, incorporating these symbols into both the identity of the product and the message of the project.

These details were also closely connected to the way the project was launched. Wein Kobanê was presented to the public for the first time on the eve of Newroz. We wanted everything, from the bottle colors and the 21-rayed sun to the timing of the launch itself, to be connected to Kurdish identity and culture.

8. How far has Wein Kobanê reached since its launch?

At the beginning, we relied primarily on online orders, and through them Wein Kobanê began reaching customers in different parts of Europe. Over time, orders expanded beyond Europe, and the product reached Canada, the United States, Australia, Israel, and Kurdistan. We also received orders from Turkey and sent wine to some customers there. However, they experienced difficulties receiving the shipments because of the name carried by the product, Kobanê.

Among the orders that had a particularly special meaning for me were those from Israel. Seeing Wein Kobanê reach there was personally significant to me.

Within Germany, we have also managed over the years to establish a strong name and a good presence for the project. This gives us further motivation to continue expanding and to bring Wein Kobanê to new places and markets in the future.



9. How do you see the role of Kurdish entrepreneurs in presenting a positive image of Kurdish society in Europe?

With all humility, I do not really see myself as a businessman. I see myself first as a chef and as someone who has his own wine project. However, through Wein Kobanê and over the past five years, I have had the opportunity to meet and work with many Kurdish businesspeople, particularly while introducing and promoting the wine.

What made me happy was the warm reception the project received from them. Many offered their support and helped Wein Kobanê reach a wider audience.

They often told me that the strength of the project lies not only in the product itself, but also in the message it carries and in the possibility of introducing others to the Kurdish people through a different kind of product, such as wine.

It was very meaningful for me to see that they looked at the project with a sense of pride.

10. Do you believe economic projects can help introduce Kurdish identity and culture while also functioning as commercial businesses?

Yes, absolutely. I believe such projects give us an important opportunity to introduce our people and our identity in a different way.

Wein Kobanê is not consumed only by Kurds. It also reaches people from other societies and cultures. When someone who is not Kurdish drinks a wine carrying the name Kobanê, that name may encourage them to ask questions about the city, learn about its story, and discover more about Kurdish culture.

For me, this is one of the most important messages the project can carry. Through a single product, we can open a small window through which others can learn about the Kurdish people, their culture, their history, and the story of Kurdistan.

We also want to communicate that the Kurdish presence is not limited to politics. We also have culture, history, and identity that we can present to the world in many different ways. For this reason, I believe a commercial project can go beyond the boundaries of sales and profit and become a means of introducing an entire people, culture, and story.

11. In your opinion, what do Kurdish entrepreneurs need in order to have a stronger presence in European and global markets?

In my opinion, reaching European and international markets requires, above all, hard work and consistency. It is not enough simply to start a good project. You have to continue developing it year after year and constantly improve the product, the idea, and the way it is presented.

From my experience, I do not believe there are challenges that cannot be overcome. When you have a project with the potential to develop, together with the determination to continue working hard, many obstacles become manageable over time.

I therefore believe that what Kurdish entrepreneurs need most is consistency, continuous development, and the determination not to stop at the first difficulty. When these elements are present, entering the European market and eventually reaching wider international markets becomes possible.

12. Has the name “Kobanê” ever opened a conversation with people who previously knew little about the city or the Kurdish people?

Yes, it has, although this has happened to a more limited extent with non-Kurds because the name Kobanê is naturally already well known among Kurds. For us, the important thing was to bring the name and its story to people outside the Kurdish community as well.

Many Europeans had already heard of Kobanê, particularly because of the major battle the city fought against ISIS. The battle lasted for a considerable period and brought the city's name to international attention. The support provided by European countries to Kurdish forces in the fight against ISIS also contributed to greater public awareness of Kobanê and what happened there.

At Wein Kobanê, however, we did not want the name to remain simply a word printed on a bottle. For this reason, we prepared short stories to accompany each bottle of wine, allowing customers to read about Kobanê and better understand the background of the name and the story we want the project to communicate. In this way, wine has become a means of opening a conversation and introducing people to Kobanê and to part of the Kurdish story.

13. What responsibility comes with giving a project the name of a city that carries such significance for an entire people?

Carrying a name such as Kobanê is certainly a major responsibility. When you choose for your project the name of a city with such powerful symbolism, you have to understand from the beginning what you may face and the responsibility that comes with that choice.

However, I never saw this responsibility as something to fear or as a problem that might prevent me from continuing. From the beginning, I had strong faith in the project and its potential for success. I believed that the name Kobanê would give the project a deeper meaning and that it could succeed and reach people.

For me, I work on this project so that a Kurdish name can have a presence in the world and as a contribution to our identity and our cause.

Therefore, I never allowed the possibility of encountering problems because of the name to become a source of fear. Instead, I accepted all of the responsibility I chose to carry with it. I decided to call the project Wein Kobanê.



14. What advice would you give to young Kurds who dream of launching their own projects?

My message to Kurdish youth, particularly those who want to establish projects carrying Kurdish names and identity, is simple: do not stop at thinking about your ideas. Start working on them and develop them.

When you have an idea, you need to work hard on it and develop it step by step until you can meet the conditions and requirements necessary to transform it into a real project. Simply reaching that stage gives the project greater value and places it on a more serious and professional path.

I also encourage Kurdish youth to continue establishing new projects because I believe that the more successful Kurdish projects we have, the stronger our presence becomes and the greater our ability to establish ourselves in European and international markets.

Most importantly, there must be continuity. The goal should not be to establish a project that survives for two or three years and then disappears. Real success requires patience, continuous development, and determination to remain and move forward.

So my advice is simple: start, develop your ideas, and do not stop.

15. What new projects or plans are you currently working on?

At this stage, our main focus is on developing Wein Kobanê and expanding its reach. One of our most important future goals is to bring the product to international markets.

To achieve this, we are currently working on further developing the project, particularly from a technical perspective, and preparing it more professionally for the next stage.

Reaching wider markets will also require us to increase production. Until now, we have produced the wine in limited quantities, but our future plans require us to gradually move toward larger production volumes so that we can meet demand if the project expands internationally.

We are therefore currently preparing everything necessary to implement this plan step by step, so that Wein Kobanê will be ready to enter a new stage and reach wider audiences and markets.



16. Finally, what message would you like to share with the readers of AFRIN TIMES?

To all the readers and writers of AFRIN TIMES, I wish you every success. I would also like to extend a special greeting to everyone behind the magazine and say: thank you. What you are doing is beautiful and very important work.

What particularly impressed me is that the magazine is published in English. As a global language, English allows its content to reach readers around the world rather than remaining limited to particular countries or communities. In my opinion, this gives the magazine and its message much greater potential to reach a wider audience. I wish AFRIN TIMES continued success and hope that it continues presenting stories and ideas that deserve to reach people.

I was also very pleased that the team behind the magazine saw my project, Wein Kobané, not simply as a product, but as a message and a story worth telling through the pages of the magazine.

For that, I extend my sincere thanks and appreciation to the team and to the readers of AFRIN TIMES, and I wish them continued success in this work.



THE KURDISH HORSE

History, Heritage, Bloodlines, Phenotype & the Future

A SPECIAL RESEARCH FEATURE



BEHROUZ DOUSTI

Author, Researcher & Project Lead | Kurdish Horse Research Project

THE KURDISH HORSE

BEHROUZ DOUSTI



Behrouz Dousti - Kurdish Horse Research Project.

This research feature brings together historical references, breeder testimony, photographs, pedigrees and examples of the contemporary generation of the Kurdish Horse.

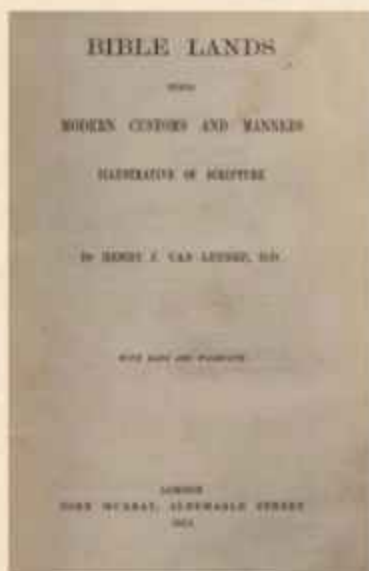
The purpose is to connect history with the living horse: phenotype, character, mare families, stallion lines and the young generation now carrying these bloodlines forward.

EDITORIAL PRINCIPLE

Historical statements that are not independently verified are identified as archival references or oral attributions. Modern pedigrees are presented from the records and information supplied to the project.

THE HISTORICAL RECORD

European publications and archival traces



Selected archival material preserved in the project file.

NINETEENTH-CENTURY REFERENCES

The project archive contains a quotation attributed to *The Lands of the Bible: Their Customs and Manners* (1875), describing Kurdish horses as exceptionally enduring and able to withstand hard use. It also preserves a May 1858 French newspaper notice describing the horse then ridden by Sultan Abdülmecid as a black Kurdish horse, swift and purebred.

RACING AND PUBLIC NOTICE

The archive records nineteenth-century reports connected with Tbilisi racing, including Kurdish horses and a grey Kurdish horse associated with Agha Bey. These items are important because they show the name 'Kurdish horse' circulating in period print beyond Kurdistan.

CULTURE AND MYTHOLOGY

The supplied historical material also records the importance of horses in Kurdish folklore and heroic tradition, where horses are named as individual companions rather than anonymous animals. Such material connects breeding history with cultural memory.

TAQ-E BOSTAN, KERMANSHAH

The horse in the monumental visual history of the Zagros



Equestrian relief at Taq-e Bostan, Kermanshah, commonly identified as Khosrow II on horseback. Photo: Philippe Chavin / Wikimedia Commons, CC BY 2.5 / CC BY-SA 3.0.

A MONUMENTAL HORSE IMAGE IN KERMANSHAH

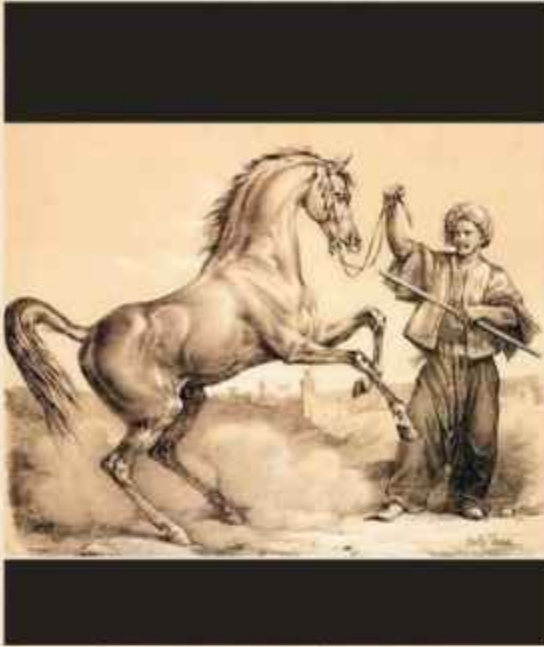
Taq-e Bostan is a Sasanian rock-relief complex in Kermanshah, in the Zagros region. Among its best-known images is the monumental equestrian figure traditionally identified as Khosrow II, shown fully armed on horseback. For this research project, the relief is important as clear visual evidence of the long-standing military, royal and cultural importance of the horse in the historical landscape of Kermanshah and the Zagros.

WHAT THE RELIEF DOES - AND DOES NOT - PROVE

The relief should not be treated as genetic proof that the horse carved in stone was identical to the modern Kurdish Horse. Its value is different and still substantial: it places sophisticated horse culture, cavalry imagery and equestrian prestige in the same geographic heartland that remains central to Kurdish horse breeding today. That historical continuity of place and horse culture forms part of the wider context in which the Kurdish Horse should be studied.

LE KURDE IN FRANCE

A Kurdish horse in the French stud tradition



LE KURDE

- Purchased in Kurdistan and brought to France by General Horace Sebastiani.
- Sebastiani served as French ambassador at Constantinople.
- Used at the Haras du Pin and Haras de Pompadour.
- Recorded in early French stud-book material.
- Died at Pompadour in 1822.
- Later French equestrian writing credited his descendants in service, racing, competition and breeding.

Period equestrian illustration used as historical context, not asserted as a portrait of Le Kurde.

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- Later French equestrian writing credited his descendants in service, racing, competition and breeding.

The history of the Kurdish Horse extends far beyond the last two centuries and belongs to the much older equestrian history of the Zagros. The importance of Le Kurde is more specific: he provides a clear European documentary example from more than 200 years ago of a horse explicitly identified as Kurdish entering a major breeding institution outside his homeland.

A. Froemer's Le Trotting-Club de Paris records Le Kurde as a horse purchased in Kurdistan and imported by General Sebastiani. The same account places him in the French national stud system and records his death at Pompadour in 1822. One horse cannot define an entire breed, but a documented name, origin and breeding career can demonstrate that horses explicitly identified as Kurdish were already recognised and valued in European breeding more than two centuries ago.

PHENOTYPE: TYPE BEFORE FASHION

Conformation, movement and the natural carriage of the Kurdish Horse



Illustrative phenotype study prepared for the project; not a breed standard by itself.

PHENOTYPE NOTES

For contemporary Kurdish horses, this feature uses an approximate height range of 145-160 cm at the withers (14.1-15.3 hands). The phenotype illustration is a visual study rather than a rigid breed standard.

Head and neck, chest, back, loin, croup, limbs, movement and tail carriage should be evaluated together. The aim is a functional, athletic mountain horse with recognisable Kurdish type, sound structure, endurance and a proud but natural presence.

TOOFAN KABIR & SULTAN GONBAD

A paternal line that continues through generations



Toofan Kabir (left) and Sultan Gonbad (right). Both photographs are shown complete inside non-white editorial panels.

TOOFAN KABIR

Within the pedigree material assembled for this project, Toofan Kabir stands at an important point in several influential branches. Recorded sons include Sultan Gonbad, Sardar Babaei and Sohrab Kabir.

SULTAN GONBAD

Sultan Gonbad is recorded as a son of Toofan Kabir and the sire of Kamran Ghadiri. Through Kamran Ghadiri and later Toofan Kiani, this branch remains visible in pedigrees of the contemporary generation.

SARDAR BABAEI & KAMRAN GHADIRI

Two important names preserved in the project archive



Sardar Babaei (left), a recorded son of Toofan Kabir. Kamran Ghadiri (right), photographed at 29 years of age.

SARDAR BABAEI

Sardar Babaei is recorded in the project pedigree as a son of Toofan Kabir. His photograph is preserved here as part of the visual history of influential Kurdish stallions.

KAMRAN GHADIRI

Kamran Ghadiri is recorded as a son of Sultan Gonbad. The photograph used here was taken when he was 29 years old, making it especially valuable as a record of an aged stallion whose name continued through later breeding.

RECORDED THREAD

TOOFAN KABIR > SULTAN GONBAD > KAMRAN GHADIRI

TOOFAN KIANI & SOHRAB KABIR

Two branches leading into modern Kurdish breeding



Kiani (left) and Sohrab Kabir (right), shown with their complete original frames

TOOFAN KIANI

Toofan Kiani is recorded as a son of Kamran Ghadiri. His paternal chain in this project therefore runs through Kamran Ghadiri, Sultan Gonbad and Toofan Kabir. His descendants provide a visible link between an older line and young horses being developed today.

SOHRAB KABIR

Sohrab Kabir is recorded as a son of Toofan Kabir and the mare Sahar. He became the sire of well-known stallions including Sirvan Larti and Sarvar Heydari, as well as other stallions and mares. His influence survives through descendants.

SIRVAN LARTI & SARVAR HEYDARI

Sons of Sohrab Kabir



Sirvan Larti (left) and Sarvar Heydari (right). The horses are kept complete rather than cropped to fill the frame.

SIRVAN LARTI

Sirvan Larti is recorded as a son of Sohrab Kabir. His name appears again in the paternal pedigrees of young horses such as Qandil and Safin, demonstrating the continuation of this branch into a new generation.

SARVAR HEYDARI

Sarvar Heydari is also recorded as a son of Sohrab Kabir. His inclusion alongside Sirvan shows the breadth of Sohrab Kabir's influence rather than reducing that influence to a single descendant.

ENSYATOR & BEN TOOTI AFSANE'I

Oral memory and the continuing Tooti family



Ensyator (left). Ben Tooti Afsane'i (right), pictured beside the late Haji Mohammad Ali Babaei.

ENSYATOR

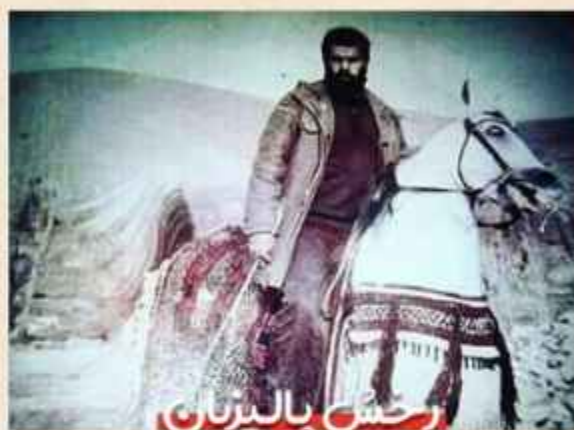
Ensyator is recorded in the project archive as a son of Gheymagh. He is remembered by the breeder epithet 'the mad one who never became sane.' The phrase is preserved as oral tradition, reflecting the powerful temperament and presence associated with his memory.

BEN TOOTI AFSANE'I

Ben Tooti Afsane'i is recorded as a son of Tooti Afsane'i. His line appears again in the maternal pedigrees of the new generation. The photograph also preserves the presence of the late Haji Mohammad Ali Babaei, remembered as an important figure in the horse world.

SOHEIL HEYDAR & RAKHSH PALIZBAN

Breeding families and a historical Kermanshah connection



Soheil Heydar (left), recorded as a son of Tooti Afsane'i. Rakhsh Palizban (right), the famous horse associated with General Azizollah Palizban.

SOHEIL HEYDAR

Soheil Heydar is recorded as a son of Tooti Afsane'i. Through Servin Dousti, this family contributes to the maternal pedigree of Safin, one of the young horses presented later in this feature.

GENERAL PALIZBAN AND RAKHSH

General Azizollah Palizban, born in Kermanshah, is remembered in regional horse culture for his interest in the Kurdish Horse. Rakhsh Palizban is described in pedigree material supplied to this project as Shabdiz x Susan. An admiring quotation about the Kurdish Horse is attributed to Palizban in breeder memory; because its original publication has not yet been established, it is treated here as an oral attribution

TAF AW DOUSTI

A promising young Kurdish Horse in training



Tafaw Dousti - young, talented and currently in training. The complete photograph is retained.

PATERNAL LINE

Toofan Kiani > Kamran Ghadiri > Sultan Gonbad > Toofan Kabir

MATERNAL LINE

Tutia Dousti > Ben Tooti Afsane'i > Tooti Afsane'i > Goli

Tafaw Dousti is presented as a strong example of the new generation produced from established Kurdish bloodlines. Still young and developing, he shows considerable promise and remains in training; his future will be judged by development, soundness, character, movement and performance.

QANDIL

Old roots in a young generation



.Qandil - a young example of established Kurdish lines continuing forward

PATERNAL LINE

Sirvan Larti > Sohrab Kabir > Toofan Kabir.

MATERNAL LINE

Tutia Dousti > Ben Tooti Afsane'i > Tooti Afsane'i > Goli.

Qandil is included as an example of the emerging generation rather than as a finished horse. His pedigree connects influential names from both paternal and maternal families, illustrating how older bloodlines remain visible in young Kurdish horses today.

SAFIN

A one-year-old linking several recorded families



Safin, photographed at one year of age. The complete horse is retained in the frame.

PATERNAL LINE

Sirvan Larti > Sohrab Kabir > Toofan Kabir

MATERNAL LINE

Servin Dousti > Soheil Heydar > Tooti Afsane'i.

Project records also identify Servin Dousti, Safin's dam, as a granddaughter of the legendary Ensyator. Safin therefore illustrates how several remembered Kurdish families can meet in a single young pedigree.

THE FUTURE OF THE KURDISH HORSE

Preservation requires more than admiration

The Kurdish Horse has survived because breeders, riders and families continued to value it through changing borders, economies and fashions. That survival should not be taken for granted. The next stage requires disciplined pedigree recording, identification, transparent breeding records, careful mare selection, sound stallion evaluation and preservation of photographs and oral histories before they disappear.

MARES MUST BE TAKEN AS SERIOUSLY AS STALLIONS

A heritage breed cannot be protected by celebrating famous sires while allowing maternal families to disappear from the record. Mare lines should be documented, photographed and evaluated with the same seriousness.

TYPE WITHOUT IMITATION

International recognition should not require the Kurdish Horse to imitate another breed. Its strongest case is its own: a mountain-bred horse with a distinct cultural history, practical athletic qualities, proud presence and bloodlines that breeders can still trace through living animals.

FROM MEMORY TO EVIDENCE

Oral history is valuable, but it becomes more powerful when paired with dated photographs, stud records, historical publications and genetic documentation. The purpose of this project is to help move the Kurdish Horse from scattered memory towards a durable archive.

THE PRINCIPLE

A pedigree is not a trophy. Its value lies in the qualities actually transmitted: soundness, character, balance, movement, durability and recognisable type.



SOURCES, ARCHIVE & CONTACT

How this feature was assembled

PROJECT HISTORICAL ARCHIVE

Historical transcriptions and images compiled for the project, including nineteenth- and twentieth-century references to Kurdish horses, European publications, visual material and competition reports.

FRENCH MATERIAL

A. Froemer, Le Trotting-Club de Paris, and related French equestrian material concerning Le Kurde and the use of oriental horses in French breeding institutions.

BREEDER RECORDS

Pedigree notes, family records, oral histories, interviews and photographs compiled for the Kurdish Horse Research Project. Modern pedigrees in this feature are reproduced from information supplied to Behrouz Dousti and the project.

EDITORIAL STANDARD

Historical claims that remain unverified are identified as archival references or oral attributions. The objective is not to enlarge the story through exaggeration, but to strengthen it through documentation.

VAHAB LARTI

**Three Generations in the
Service of the Kurdish Horse**
Interview conducted and
compiled by Behrouz Dousti -
Kurdish Horse Research
Project



Vahab Larti (right) with his father, Abbas Larti (left). Three generations of the Larti family have been devoted to the Kurdish Horse

For the Larti family, the Kurdish Horse is not simply an animal of beauty or a breeding interest. It is a family legacy, shaped across three generations through breeding, selection, riding and daily work with horses.

"The Kurdish Horse is beautiful and proud, yet at the same time noble, brave and fearless."

THE INTERVIEW

1. What does three generations of Kurdish Horse heritage mean to you?

It is part of our family history and a responsibility to preserve what earlier generations built.

2. How long has your family been involved?

Roughly six decades across three generations.

3. What qualities made the breed important to your family?

Beauty, courage, endurance, nobility, intelligence and riding quality.

4. How would you describe the ideal character?

Brave, intelligent and energetic, but also noble, manageable and trustworthy.

5. Which matters more: pedigree, appearance or performance?

All three matter. Pedigree is very important, but pedigree alone is not enough. A horse should also show the correct phenotype and conformation, and its quality should be supported by performance and, especially for a breeding stallion, by the quality of its offspring.

6. How important is the mare in a breeding programme?

The mare is extremely important. In my personal experience, around 60 to 70 per cent of the success of a breeding result can depend on the quality of the mare. This is an experiential estimate, but it reflects how strongly I believe the mare should be valued in breeding decisions.

7. What qualities should a good breeding mare have?

She should have a strong pedigree, correct conformation, good health, a desirable phenotype and the character needed for a breeding programme. A good mare should complement the stallion rather than simply be paired with him because he is famous.

8. Why do you place so much importance on the dam line?

A strong mare can have a major influence on the quality of the foal. Traditional breeders have always paid close attention to good mothers, and my own experience has reinforced that view. The mare should never be treated as secondary.

9. How would you describe the ideal conformation of the Kurdish Horse?

I prefer a proportional, powerful horse with a balanced head, a broad forehead, lively eyes, a strong and proportional neck, a back that is not excessively long, a broad and deep chest, strong limbs and sound bone. Balance and durability are essential.

10. What should breeders look for in the head and neck?

The head should be harmonious with the body, with a broad forehead and an alert expression. The neck should be strong, muscular and well attached, contributing to balance, carriage and the proud presence of the horse.

11. How important are the chest, back and limbs?

They are fundamental. The chest should be broad and deep, the back should be strong and not excessively long, and the limbs should be correctly formed with sufficient bone. These features affect function as much as appearance.

12. How do you evaluate movement in a Kurdish Horse?

Movement should be energetic, coordinated and balanced. The horse should move with confidence and presence. Natural ability, conformation and correct training all influence the quality of movement.

13. How important is tail carriage?

Tail carriage is an important part of the Kurdish Horse's phenotype and presence. What matters is not simply how high the tail is carried, but whether the tail set, croup, movement and natural carriage work together harmoniously.

14. Which traits do you consider especially distinctive in the Kurdish Horse?

Endurance, intelligence under saddle, courage, nobility, boldness, riding quality and expressive carriage are among the characteristics that give the breed its identity.

15. Why has Sirvan Larti been important in your breeding work?

Sirvan Larti has been important because he combines pedigree, phenotype, movement, nobility, riding quality and practical performance. For me, the true value of a stallion is ultimately measured by what he consistently transmits to his offspring.

16. What qualities do you believe Sirvan has passed to his offspring?

In my experience, Sirvan has transmitted desirable qualities, including nobility and type, to many of his offspring. His influence is seen through production rather than appearance alone.

17. At what age can a young horse be evaluated with greater confidence?

Some qualities can be seen early, but evaluation becomes more reliable as the horse develops. Around two years of age, conformation, balance and type are clearer and the breeder can make a more confident assessment.

18. What is one of the biggest mistakes breeders make when choosing a stallion?

A major mistake is choosing a stallion mainly because he is beautiful or fashionable, without properly studying the mare, the pedigree and the stallion's production record. A beautiful horse is not automatically a good producer.

19. How important are pedigree records, identification and microchipping?

They are essential for protecting the breed. Breeders should be able to trace a horse's background and breeding history with confidence. Reliable pedigrees, identity records and microchips make long-term preservation much stronger.

20. What role can shows and festivals play in the future of the Kurdish Horse?

Shows and festivals can be very useful when they are organised professionally and judged according to sound principles. They can encourage breeders, introduce the breed to the public and help create common standards.

21. How do you view the equestrian history of Mahidasht and Kermanshah?

The history of horse keeping and equestrian activity in the region is very deep. Historical photographs and surviving family material from Kermanshah and Mahidasht show organised horse events more than half a century ago. The region has long been associated with horse breeding and equestrian culture.

22. What should a breeder consider before planning a mating?

The breeder should study both the stallion and the mare carefully: pedigree, conformation, phenotype, health, temperament, strengths and weaknesses. The aim should be to improve the next generation, not simply to produce a foal.

MAHIDASHT AND KERMANSHAH

A DOCUMENTED EQUESTRIAN TRADITION

The Larti family archive includes material documenting organised equestrian activity in Kermanshah more than half a century ago. The surviving commemorative banner is dated 11 Esfand 1351 in the Iranian calendar, corresponding to 2 March 1973.



Left: commemorative banner from an equestrian gathering, dated 11 Esfand 1351 (2 March 1973). Right: archival photograph of an organised horse event in the Kermanshah region.

23. How did the loss of Crystal, the dam of Sirvan Larti, affect your breeding programme?

The loss of Crystal, Sirvan Larti's dam and an important mare in the breeding programme, was significant. To help preserve and continue her influence, female descendants from Sirvan's line were retained and used in the breeding programme.

24. How would you compare Kurdish Horse breeding today with earlier years?

In my view, breeding has progressed considerably compared with previous years. Knowledge, selection, registration and attention to quality have all improved, although there is still much work to do.

25. What is one of the current dangers facing the breed?

Lack of knowledge among some producers is a serious problem. Producing low-quality horses under the Kurdish Horse name can discourage buyers and enthusiasts and damage confidence in the breed.

26. Has official pedigree collection and microchipping helped?

Yes. The collection of pedigrees and the microchipping work carried out by the agricultural authorities have contributed significantly to preserving identity and pedigree information.

27. How important are competitions and organised events for promoting the Kurdish Horse?

They can be very effective if they are principled, well organised and of good quality. A professional event can introduce the breed to new audiences and encourage breeders to improve their standards.

28. What qualities should an outstanding Kurdish Horse possess?

It should have an excellent pedigree, especially a strong dam, an attractive and correct appearance, good riding quality and, above all, nobility. For me, nobility of character is extremely important.

29. How do you assess the development of judging standards for the Kurdish Horse?

Judging has improved greatly and continues to develop. Better knowledge and clearer standards can help judges evaluate horses more consistently and help breeders understand what they should aim for.

30. What advice would you give to someone beginning Kurdish Horse breeding?

Start with a good mare. A beginner who buys a quality mare gives himself or herself a much better chance of producing a good foal. The foundation of the breeding programme matters more than rushing to produce large numbers.

SOHRAB KABIR

AN INFLUENTIAL SIRE OF THE KURDISH HORSE

Sohrab Kabir was one of the highly influential stallions in modern Kurdish Horse breeding. His importance was not limited to his own qualities; his lasting legacy can be seen through his offspring. He became the sire of well-known stallions including Sirvan Larti and Sarvar Heydari, as well as other quality stallions and mares. Through his sons, daughters and later descendants, his influence has continued across several Kurdish Horse breeding programmes.

Sohrab Kabir died approximately five months before the preparation of this article. His loss was significant for breeders who recognised his importance, but his influence did not end with his death. He left a substantial breeding legacy through many sons, daughters and later descendants.



Sohrab Kabir, sire of Sirvan Larti. This image is a modern restoration/reconstruction based on an older family photograph and is presented for illustrative purposes.

31. If you had greater resources, what would be your first priorities for the breed?

My first goal would be to help achieve international registration and recognition for the Kurdish Horse. After that, I would focus on quality breeding, modern scientific knowledge, preservation of valuable genetic material and the careful use of the best existing bloodlines.

32. How would you describe the Kurdish Horse in one sentence?

The Kurdish Horse is beautiful and proud, yet at the same time noble, brave and fearless.

33. Where do you place the historical heartland of the Kurdish Horse?

I associate its historical heartland with western Iran, particularly today's Kermanshah Province. The monuments of Taq-e Bostan and historical references to large numbers of horses being raised on the Mahidasht plain reflect the depth of equestrian culture in this region.

34. Which stallions do you consider especially influential?

Among the influential stallions I would name Sohrab, Sirvan, Kamran, Tooti, Chapak, Rakhsh-e Palizban, Zuljanah and Shouresh. Each is remembered for a different contribution to breeding and selection.

35. How do you assess Sirvan Larti's influence as a sire?

In my experience, Sirvan has been a strong transmitter. I estimate that he has around two thousand offspring, and I consider roughly 70 per cent of his production to have been successful and influential. These figures reflect my own breeding experience and assessment.

EDITORIAL NOTE

This interview has been edited for clarity, structure and English-language publication while preserving the substance of Vahab Larti's responses. Numerical estimates and historical interpretations are presented as Larti's own views unless independently documented.



THE KURDISH HORSE THROUGH THE EYES OF A BREEDER

**Interview with Ali Louh
Mousavi**

**Ali Louh Mousavi (left), whose
involvement with horses spans
around 55 years.**

Ali Louh Mousavi has around 55 years of experience in horse breeding and the equine world, having begun working with horses at the age of nine. Over the years, he has worked with Kurdish, Arabian and Turkmen horses, but the Kurdish Horse became the principal focus of his work. He values the breed for its authenticity, courage, compact strength, endurance, natural tail carriage, nobility, expressive movement and suitability for mountainous terrain.

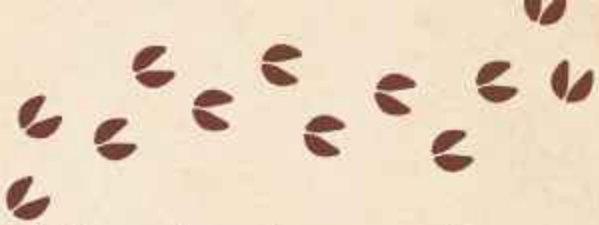


"In my view, 60 to 70 per cent of a successful result depends on a good mare."

"The Kurdish Horse means tail carriage."

"The Kurdish Horse is the lion of the forest of the world's horses."

INTERVIEW



How did your life with horses begin?

I began working with horses when I was nine years old. Horses have been part of my life ever since, giving me around 55 years of practical experience in breeding and the equine world. That experience has shaped the way I judge breeding, movement, character and quality.

Which breeds have you worked with over the years?

I have worked with Kurdish, Arabian and Turkmen horses. In earlier years I was interested in good horses regardless of breed, particularly horses that combined beauty with good riding qualities.

Why did the Kurdish Horse eventually become your main focus?

I was drawn to the Kurdish Horse because of what I see as its authenticity, courage, endurance, physical strength and proud presence. Its compact body and strong limbs are also well suited to mountainous and rocky terrain.

How would you define a good Kurdish Horse?

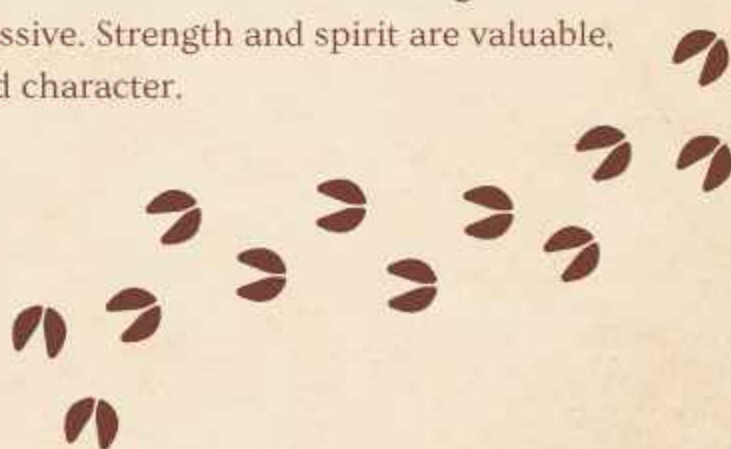
For me, a good Kurdish Horse must combine correct type, strength, courage, nobility, expressive movement and natural tail carriage. No single feature is enough on its own; the overall horse must look and behave like a true representative of the breed.

What makes the breed especially suited to the Zagros and other mountainous environments?

Its compact build, strong limbs, endurance and ability to move confidently over difficult ground are important qualities. These are characteristics I associate closely with the Kurdish Horse and with the environment in which it has traditionally been bred.

What kind of temperament do you value most?

I value nobility, courage and composure. A Kurdish Horse can be energetic and expressive without being needlessly aggressive. Strength and spirit are valuable, but they should be accompanied by a good character.



How important is conformation when selecting breeding stock?

Conformation is fundamental. I look for a balanced, compact and strong horse with the physical structure needed for sound movement and performance. Beauty matters, but it should be supported by correct structure and function.

How important are facial beauty and overall presence?

They are important because the Kurdish Horse should have identity and presence. I pay attention to the head, expression, overall balance and the way the horse carries itself. Beauty should be part of the whole horse rather than an isolated feature.

What should an ideal Kurdish breeding stallion offer?

An ideal stallion should combine correct type, movement, nobility and courage, and it should be capable of transmitting desirable qualities to its offspring. A breeding stallion must be judged not only by appearance but also by what it produces.

How much does the stallion's temperament matter in breeding?

It matters a great deal. I would avoid a stallion with persistent nervousness, aggression, biting or kicking. Temperament is part of breeding quality, and a stallion should have the character expected from a good Kurdish Horse.

Which stallion has been especially important in your own breeding experience?

Tofan Kiani has been one of the best horses I have bred. In terms of the qualities I value, he has been an important horse in my experience.

Are there horses you consider especially promising for the future?

Yes. Biqarar and Golbahar are among the horses I see as especially promising. I believe their qualities give reason for optimism about future breeding.





How important is the mare in the final result?

The mare is extremely important. In my personal view, 60 to 70 per cent of a successful breeding result may depend on the quality of the mare. That is why the mare should never be treated as secondary in a breeding programme.

What should you look for when selecting a mare?

I want a mare with quality, good conformation, authentic breed characteristics, nobility and the ability to contribute positively to the foal. The choice of mare should be made as seriously as the choice of stallion.

Is pedigree enough on its own to make a horse valuable for breeding?

No. Pedigree is important, but it must be supported by phenotype, conformation, movement, character and production quality. A famous pedigree alone does not automatically make a horse a good breeding animal.

How should a breeder think about matching a stallion and a mare?

The breeder should look at the strengths and weaknesses of both horses and try to make a thoughtful match. Breeding should not be random or based only on the reputation of one parent. The aim is to produce a foal that preserves and improves desirable qualities.

How do you recognise a promising foal?

I look at phenotype, general build, facial beauty, movement, colour, expression and presence. A promising foal should already show balance, quality and the beginnings of the traits expected from the breed.

What should correct movement in the Kurdish Horse look like?

I like movement that is powerful, coordinated, lively and expressive. The horse should show energy and a strong, quick start, with good front action and an overall sense of balance and presence.

How important is natural tail carriage?

For me, it is one of the defining features of the breed. I often say, "The Kurdish Horse means tail carriage." There are Andalusian horses that are beautiful and move well, and in some ways they may resemble the Kurdish Horse, but they do not carry the tail in the same way. That is why natural, proud tail carriage in motion is so important to me; it contributes greatly to the Kurdish Horse's identity and presence.

Is the height of the tail the only thing that matters?

No. What matters is the overall natural carriage of the tail and how it works with the horse's movement, body and expression. Tail carriage should be part of a balanced picture, not an artificial pose.



What do you consider one of the biggest breeding mistakes today?

Unplanned crossbreeding with other breeds is one of the greatest mistakes. A crossbred horse may still be a good horse, but it should not be presented as a pure Kurdish Horse within a purebred breeding programme.

What is needed to protect the breed more effectively?

The breed needs an organised and specialist structure with clear standards, pedigree records and responsible breeding guidance. Horses should be assessed for authenticity, strengths, weaknesses and suitability before breeding decisions are made.

Has the Kurdish Horse improved compared with 20 or 30 years ago?

In my view, yes. I believe the general quality has improved, although there is still much more that can be achieved through careful selection, better records and more consistent breeding standards.

What support does the Kurdish Horse still lack?

I do not believe the breed has received the level of organised attention, support and planning that it deserves. Stronger institutions, clearer standards and more serious promotion would help it reach a higher level.

What future do you hope to see for the Kurdish Horse internationally?

I hope the Kurdish Horse will be recognised internationally for its own identity and qualities, rather than by imitating another breed. I would like to see it stand confidently alongside internationally known breeds. To me, the Kurdish Horse is the lion of the forest of the world's horses.

THE KURDISH HORSE THROUGH THE EYES OF A RIDER

Interview with Hedayat Karvandi

Hedayat Karvandi has around 30 years of experience in horse keeping, breeding, riding and training. Over the years, he has worked with Kurdish, Arabian and Turkmen horses, gaining extensive practical experience in equine behaviour, training and riding. A significant part of his work has been devoted to the Kurdish Horse, and his perspective on the breed is rooted in years of direct experience in the stable, the arena and under saddle. Today, he focuses his work specifically on the Kurdish Horse.



"The aim of training should never be to break the horse. Its power and courage should be guided."

"The tail is the horse's sword."

"A good Kurdish Horse should move with courage and full commitment, while remaining responsive to its rider."

INTERVIEW

After many years of experience with different breeds, what made you choose the Kurdish Horse?

What attracted me most to the Kurdish Horse from the very beginning was its pride, stamina and nobility. Over the years I have worked with Kurdish, Arabian and Turkmen horses, but in the Kurdish Horse I have found a combination of power, courage, intelligence, readiness and character that is very special. Those qualities gradually led me to focus my work more specifically on this breed.

How would you describe the character and temperament of the Kurdish Horse?

The Kurdish Horse can be very calm and noble in the stable, but once under saddle it shows a great deal of energy, courage and readiness. I consider this combination one of the breed's most valuable characteristics. A good horse should not be needlessly aggressive. It should be noble and composed, while still showing its strength and spirit when asked to work.

How do you evaluate the intelligence and learning ability of the Kurdish Horse?

The Kurdish Horse is highly intelligent and usually learns very quickly. In my experience, some of these horses only need to see a movement or command once or twice before remembering it. Sometimes the connection between horse and rider becomes so strong that it feels as though the horse understands the rider's intention before the command is even fully given. If this intelligence is combined with proper training, it becomes one of the breed's greatest strengths.

What difference does an experienced rider feel when sitting on a good Kurdish Horse?

The Kurdish Horse is energetic and very ready for work. In my experience, it prepares itself quickly and pays close attention to the rider. It can respond to very small cues. A good Kurdish Horse should move without fear or hesitation, feel soft under saddle, and at the same time always be ready to go forward and accelerate. That readiness and energy give the ride a very special excitement.

How do you evaluate a young Kurdish Horse for its future as a riding horse?

First, I look at the overall structure of the body: proportions, joints, legs, bone quality and the horse's general physical balance. In addition, age, nutrition, management and the environment in which the foal was raised are all important. The sire and dam must also be considered. For me, choosing a young horse cannot be based only on beauty. One must ask whether its body, character and development suit the kind of work expected from it in the future.

What does the ideal Kurdish Horse look like in terms of conformation?

I prefer a Kurdish Horse with a compact, balanced body, not overly long or stretched. The head should be proportionate, the forehead defined, the neck strong and well set, and the chest broad and powerful. The legs should be straight and strong, the bone solid and the hooves firm. Conformation matters because it must ultimately support balance, strength and quality of movement.

At what age should the serious training of a young Kurdish Horse begin?

For the more serious stages of training, I consider around thirty months of age to be suitable, although each horse must be judged according to its individual maturity and readiness. In the beginning, the body should be strengthened and basic groundwork should be established. Then lunging and other foundation exercises can be introduced gradually, and only after the horse is physically and mentally prepared should ridden work begin. Training a horse is a gradual process and should never be rushed.

What is the biggest mistake trainers make with a young horse?

The biggest mistake is rushing. Applying too much pressure, getting into conflict, or trying to overpower a young horse can damage the entire training process. A trainer must have soft hands and guide the horse step by step. Every horse has its own personality. If the trainer ignores that personality and tries to achieve results by force, the horse's trust in humans and in the rider may be harmed.

How can a Kurdish Horse be made obedient without losing its courage and spirit?

The aim of training should never be to break the horse. Power, courage and energy are part of the value of the Kurdish Horse and should not be destroyed. The trainer's task is to guide that energy in the right direction. The horse must learn to remain responsive to the rider while still keeping its natural spirit and character. In my view, this is possible through patience, soft handling and gradual training.

What should good movement in a Kurdish Horse look like under saddle?

Good movement should be lively, quick, regular and well coordinated. The front action should be active and attractive, but simply lifting the forelegs high is not enough for me. The whole body must work together. Rhythm, balance, power and coordination must all be present. When those qualities come together, the movement becomes not only beautiful but also enjoyable and functional for the rider.

What place do tail carriage, head carriage and neck set have in the Kurdish Horse?

I often say that "the tail is the horse's sword." Good tail carriage can greatly enhance a horse's presence, but it must be natural. Head carriage, neck set and tail carriage are beautiful only when they are in harmony with the horse's body and movement. When they are natural, the horse's pride and character become more visible in motion. For me, it is not just the height of the tail that matters, but the way it is naturally carried while moving.

What does courage and readiness feel like in a good Kurdish Horse under saddle?

A good Kurdish Horse should move without fear or hesitation. Under saddle it should feel soft, yet always ready to move forward and launch into action. I like a rider to feel that the horse moves with full courage and commitment and does not become frightened of its surroundings without reason. Fearlessness and heart are very important qualities in a good Kurdish Horse.



Why is the Kurdish Horse well suited to arena performance and exhibition riding?

This comes from its power, courage, energy and agility. The style of riding and the movements we ask for in the arena require a horse that is quick, alert and ready, and that can work with strength and concentration for several minutes at a time. If it has been trained correctly, the Kurdish Horse can show its energy and character in the arena while still remaining under the rider's control.

What qualities should a horse have to perform well in a festival?

For festivals, the horse must be well trained and mentally mature. It should enter the arena without hesitation and be able to maintain itself in a new and exciting environment. At the same time, while showing presence and energy, it must trust its rider and remain controllable. A horse that has excitement but no control is not ready for a festival.

How do music and a crowded environment affect the Kurdish Horse?

From my experience, music often makes the Kurdish Horse more energetic and more ready to move. But this is only beautiful when the horse has already been trained properly. The horse must be able to handle the excitement of the environment while still staying connected to the rider. In that case, music can add to the horse's expression without causing a loss of control.

What kind of Kurdish Horse is most suitable for traditional ceremonies?

In traditional ceremonies, the horse should have an attractive type and a well-balanced body. The action of the front legs and the way the horse walks are very important to me. Correct coordinated action, natural head carriage and natural tail carriage all help the horse capture the attention of spectators. But a good ceremonial horse is not only beautiful. It must also be properly trained and remain manageable in the environment of the event.

What is the difference between a truly trained horse and a horse that has only learned a few display movements?

A truly trained horse does not simply perform a few memorised movements. It must understand the rider's commands in different situations, keep its concentration, and be able to move from one exercise or command to another without losing balance or composure. Real training means the horse is physically and mentally prepared, and that there is a genuine connection between horse and rider. Performing a few show movements alone does not mean a horse is fully trained.

Have you ever had an experience that showed you the courage of a Kurdish Horse in a striking way?

When I was younger, I had a very spirited and courageous young horse. During one ride, we were moving toward an obstacle, and I assumed the horse would stop as it approached. Instead, it continued forward with courage and tried to go over it. That moment was not only a display of bravery; it was also a lesson for me. A rider should never underestimate the courage and decision of a horse. Courage is precious, but it is the rider's responsibility to guide it with sound judgment and in safe conditions.

Among the horses you have known, which one came closest to your ideal image of the Kurdish Horse?

For me, Rakhsh was one of the most special horses. I was involved in both his development and his riding, and sadly he died of colic at around five years of age. In terms of conformation, power, movement, courage, riding quality and tail carriage, he was very close to what I look for in a good Kurdish Horse. But what remains strongest in my memory is the feeling of riding him. The energy and pleasure he gave under saddle made me wish the ride would never end.

In the end, what is the most important quality a good Kurdish Horse should offer to its rider?

For me, no single quality is enough on its own. A good Kurdish Horse must combine intelligence, courage, power and readiness. It should be able to connect with the rider, move without fear, and while keeping its energy and character, still remain trainable and controllable.

THE KURDISH HORSE THROUGH THE EYES OF A RIDER

Interview with Rasoul Mohammadi



Rasoul Mohammadi with a Kurdish Horse. His experience has led him to value the breed for its power, intelligence, courage and rapid response to the rider.

Rasoul Mohammadi, from Isfahan, has more than 20 years of experience with horses and riding. His interest began with horses in general, before years of practical experience deepened his understanding of different breeds. What has drawn him most strongly to the Kurdish Horse is its combination of power, intelligence, courage and responsiveness under saddle.

"The Kurdish Horse learns very quickly when it is trained clearly and without haste."

"A good Kurdish Horse should be powerful, courageous and quick to respond to the rider."

"Patience is essential. Rushing a young horse can damage the whole training process."

INTERVIEW

What first drew you to the Kurdish Horse?

At first, my interest was simply in horses and I did not know much about the differences between breeds. With time and experience, what stood out to me most in the Kurdish Horse was its power and intelligence. It is physically strong, but it is also mentally sharp and quick to understand the rider.

What qualities does the Kurdish Horse show under saddle?

For me, power, courage and intelligence are three of its most important qualities. A good Kurdish Horse should have confidence under saddle, should not be easily frightened, and should respond quickly to the rider's aids.

How would you describe the temperament of the Kurdish Horse?

The Kurdish Horse is often energetic, intelligent and courageous. It can show a great deal of spirit and fearlessness. That energy, however, needs to be guided through correct training so that the horse keeps its character while remaining responsive to the rider.

How quickly does the Kurdish Horse learn?

In my experience, the Kurdish Horse learns very quickly. When the training is clear, consistent and not rushed, it usually understands and remembers commands well.

How important is trust between a Kurdish Horse and its rider?

It is extremely important. When a proper relationship develops, the trust can become very strong and mutual. The horse learns to trust the rider, while the rider becomes better able to understand and anticipate the horse's reactions. That trust is a major part of good riding.

How responsive is the Kurdish Horse to the rider's aids?

One of the qualities I value is the speed of its response. A good Kurdish Horse can react very quickly to the rider's signals. When this responsiveness is combined with intelligence and courage, it creates a very rewarding feeling under saddle.

What do you look for when assessing a young Kurdish Horse?

I pay close attention to the legs, facial structure, coat and skin, the expression and alertness of the eyes, and the horse's overall energy. A young horse should be physically balanced and should already show signs of alertness, vitality and character.

When should the education of a Kurdish Horse begin?

Basic education can begin while the foal is still with its dam. At that stage, the aim is simply to accustom the foal to people, gentle handling, being led and other basic routines. This does not mean early riding or physical pressure. More demanding work should only begin when the horse is physically and mentally ready.

What is the biggest mistake people make when training a young horse?

Rushing. Applying pressure too early or riding before the horse is ready can cause problems. Some people want quick results, but developing a horse properly takes time and patience.

What matters most when teaching a Kurdish Horse to respond to the rider?

Patience. If the horse is constantly rushed or pressured, the result will not be good. The Kurdish Horse is intelligent, and when it is handled patiently and trained correctly, it learns well and develops a stronger connection with the rider.



SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY IN THE SERVICE OF THE KURDISH HORSE



Interview with Dr Seyed Hossein Moaddab on reproduction, genetic preservation and breed improvement

INTERVIEW

What led to the establishment of a specialised equine reproduction laboratory?

The idea arose after the loss of several outstanding Kurdish Horse stallions and mares. It became clear that when a valuable horse dies, a part of its genetic capital may also be lost forever. The laboratory was therefore established to help preserve these genetic resources and make them available for future generations through scientific methods.

Which reproductive technologies are currently being used in this field?

The main technologies in use include semen freezing, the transport of semen in both chilled and frozen form, and embryo transfer. One of the important advantages of these methods is that the movement of mares and stallions is not always necessary.

Semen from a valuable stallion can be collected, preserved and used elsewhere at the appropriate time. Embryo transfer also allows more efficient use of valuable mares.

“The death of a valuable horse should not mean the permanent loss of its genetics.”

Dr Seyed Hossein Moaddab

Dr Seyed Hossein Moaddab

began his veterinary studies in 1998.

In 2005, he entered the specialist



programme in Large Animal Internal Medicine at the University of Tehran, where he ranked first. Since 2010, he has worked in Kermanshah with a specialist focus on equine medicine, and since 2017 he has been active in the specialised equine reproduction laboratory at the Larti centre, working alongside veterinary laboratory staff. His work centres on modern reproductive methods, including semen collection and freezing, cold and frozen semen transport, embryo transfer and the preservation of valuable genetic resources in the Kurdish Horse.

Why is the freezing of semen from outstanding Kurdish Horse stallions so important?

A high-quality stallion represents valuable genetic capital. If a stallion is able to pass on desirable characteristics to its offspring, preserving its semen means preserving part of its genetics for the future. Death, injury, illness or ageing should not mean the complete loss of that horse's breeding value.

What makes a stallion suitable for semen collection and long-term preservation?

Physical beauty alone is not enough. A suitable stallion should have a strong phenotype, a known pedigree and clear evidence that it can transmit desirable traits to the next generation. The greatest value lies in preserving the genetics of a horse whose quality is visible not only in its appearance, but also in its offspring.

What opportunities does embryo transfer create for the Kurdish Horse?

Embryo transfer is one of the most important technologies in modern equine reproduction. Under natural conditions, a mare will usually produce only one foal per year. With embryo transfer, however, the genetics of highly valuable mares can be used much more effectively. In ideal conditions and under specialist management, it may be possible to obtain several foals from one mare in a year; in some cases this may reach around five. The exact number depends on the mare, the reproductive management, the laboratory conditions and the quality of the recipient mares.

What should a recipient mare be like?

A recipient mare must be in good general and reproductive health and should be examined by a veterinarian. The condition of the uterus, the mare's reproductive cycle and proper synchronisation with the donor mare are all essential. Success in embryo transfer depends not only on the embryo itself, but also on the correct selection and preparation of the recipient mare.



Can the use of modern reproductive technologies increase inbreeding or reduce genetic diversity?

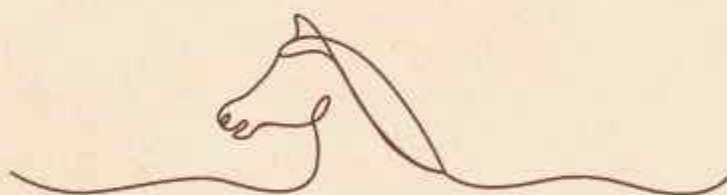
In my view, the correct and planned use of frozen semen and embryo transfer should not be seen as a threat under current Kurdish Horse conditions. The breed still has considerable genetic diversity. If breeding decisions are made on the basis of pedigree knowledge, bloodline awareness and careful planning, these technologies can be used effectively. The greater concern is not the technology itself, but unplanned breeding and non-scientific selection.

Has the time come for Kurdish Horse breeding to rely more on science?

Yes. Much of Kurdish Horse breeding has so far been carried out in a traditional way. Traditional experience is extremely valuable, but without scientific tools there is a greater risk of repeating poor choices. Today there are horses within the population whose phenotype is not of the desired quality. This is the right time to make more deliberate use of pedigree information, reproductive technology, genetic evaluation and the careful assessment of breeding animals.

How important is a DNA bank and a structured genetic database for the Kurdish Horse?

They are essential. If there is to be a serious long-term programme for the preservation and improvement of the Kurdish Horse, there must be reliable parentage verification, pedigree recording, accurate identification and the storage of genetic information. Without such a structure, knowledge can gradually be lost or become impossible to verify.



“The goal of reproductive technology should not simply be to produce more foals, but to preserve and direct valuable genetics.”

Dr Seyed Hossein Moaddab

How can technology improve the Kurdish Horse without harming its authenticity?

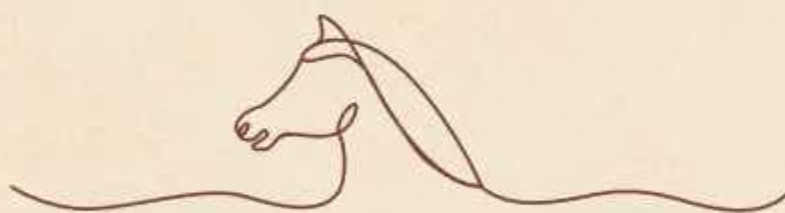
Technology neither protects authenticity on its own nor destroys it on its own. Everything depends on how it is used. If stallions and mares are selected according to pedigree, phenotype, health, production quality and key breed characteristics, reproductive technology can help preserve and direct valuable genetics. The goal should not simply be to increase the number of foals, but to produce better horses while preserving the identity of the Kurdish Horse.

Which scientific structures are necessary for the future and for the international recognition of the breed?

Precise pedigree registration, microchipping, DNA-based parentage verification, a genetic database, a semen bank, reproductive records and clear breed standards are all important. If the Kurdish Horse is to be introduced seriously at international level, its identity, pedigree and breeding information must be documented in a reliable and professional way.

How can traditional breeder experience be combined with veterinary science and modern reproductive technology?

Traditional breeder knowledge is a major asset. Many breeders have lived for years with bloodlines, mare families, production traits and the practical realities of the breed. At the same time, they are often the people who hold the financial resources and facilities of the sector. Real progress therefore requires cooperation between breeders, investors, veterinarians, laboratory specialists and genetic experts. The future of the Kurdish Horse depends on joining practical experience with modern science.



“The future of the Kurdish Horse lies not in a conflict between tradition and science, but in their cooperation.”

Dr Seyed Hossein Moaddab

THE KURDISH HORSE THROUGH THE EYES OF A BREEDER

Interview with Ahmad Ebrahimi



Ahmad Ebrahimi discusses the Kurdish Horse through the practical lens of breeding, conformation, movement, mountain adaptation, training and long-term breed preservation.

Ahmad Ebrahimi's perspective on the Kurdish Horse is grounded in practical experience and close observation. He places particular emphasis on the breed's endurance, nobility, intelligence, beauty and riding qualities, while arguing that sound breeding decisions must go beyond appearance alone. For Ebrahimi, pedigree, phenotype, movement, temperament, functional ability and responsible selection must all be considered together.



"Beauty alone does not determine a horse's breeding value."

"Tail and head carriage are important, but they are not proof of purity on their own."

"The Kurdish Horse is highly intelligent and trainable; professional training can reveal much more of its ability."

INTERVIEW

What first drew you to the Kurdish Horse?

My interest came from practical experience with the breed. Its endurance, nobility, beauty and riding qualities are among the features that made the strongest impression on me.

How do you view the historical background of the Kurdish Horse?

There are different historical accounts, so I do not think it is wise to reduce the breed's history to a single story. What is clear is the long relationship between horses, Kurdish communities and the geography in which the breed has been raised over many generations.

Should the Kurdish Horse be associated with one single geographical point?

No. I see the breed as having developed across Kurdish regions rather than in one isolated place. Local environments and breeding traditions have also helped shape regional types and characteristics.

How important are areas such as Sanjabi and Kalhor in understanding the breed?

They are part of the broader geographical and cultural picture of the Kurdish Horse. Climate, terrain and local breeding traditions have all influenced the horses raised in different parts of the region.

Which qualities best distinguish the Kurdish Horse?

Endurance, nobility, beauty, intelligence and riding ability are among the qualities I value most. Courage and a strong individual character are also important parts of the breed.

What should breeders look for in the overall conformation of a Kurdish Horse?

The whole horse must be assessed in balance. The head, neck, chest, back, croup, limbs and feet should work together in proportion. Strength and breed type matter, but so do soundness and functional structure.

How should movement be judged?

Movement should be judged together with conformation, training and the horse's natural ability. I do not believe every Kurdish Horse should be forced into one identical pattern of movement.

Should the movement of the Kurdish Horse be compared directly with a specialist racing breed?

No. Different breeds have been selected for different purposes. The Kurdish Horse should be judged according to its own structure, function and traditional qualities rather than by copying the movement or speed of a specialist racing breed.

How important are head carriage and tail carriage?

They are important elements of beauty, identity and presence, especially when the horse is moving. But they should be considered as part of the whole horse, not as the only standard by which quality is judged.

Can tail carriage alone prove that a horse is a pure Kurdish Horse?

No. Tail carriage can be an important breed characteristic, but it is not proof of purity by itself. Pedigree, overall phenotype and the broader characteristics of the breed must also be considered.

Why is the Kurdish Horse so closely associated with mountainous terrain?

The environment in which horses are raised influences their development over generations. Mountainous conditions, difficult ground and the need for endurance have all contributed to the practical qualities associated with the Kurdish Horse.

How would you describe the breed's intelligence and trainability?

I consider the Kurdish Horse highly intelligent and very capable of learning. With good training, its mental ability and responsiveness can become one of its strongest qualities.

Is the full training potential of the breed being used today?

Not yet. One of the problems is the shortage of professional trainers who truly understand how to develop these horses. Too much attention can go to feeding, appearance, shows or breeding, while systematic training receives less attention than it deserves.

What qualities should a breeding stallion have?

A stallion should combine nobility, energy, correct phenotype, a good pedigree and useful riding qualities. Just as importantly, it should have the ability to pass desirable characteristics to its offspring.

What qualities do you value in a breeding mare?

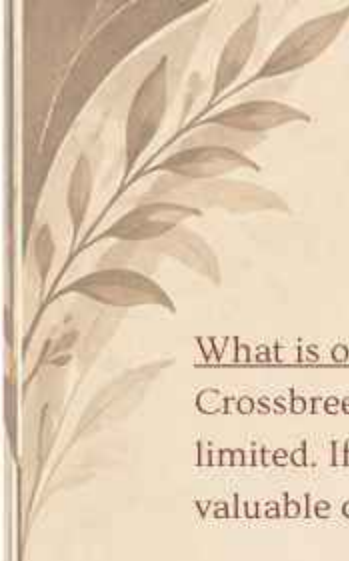
I want a mare with energy, nobility, good phenotype and a strong pedigree. Her reproductive and production qualities also matter because the mare has a major influence on the future foal.

At what age do you begin forming a more serious opinion about a young horse?

From my own experience, around one year of age can provide useful indications. A young horse is still developing, of course, but by then certain structural and breed characteristics can be assessed more meaningfully.

Does a beautiful horse automatically have high breeding value?

No. Beauty is not the same thing as genetic or production value. A breeding horse should be judged through pedigree, phenotype, performance and, when possible, the quality of what it produces.



What is one of the greatest risks facing pure Kurdish Horse breeding?

Crossbreeding is a serious concern, particularly when the pure population is limited. If breeders are not careful about parent selection and breed identity, valuable characteristics can be diluted or lost.

What broader problem can weaken the future of the breed?

Breeding without enough knowledge or a clear long-term purpose is a major risk. When short-term market demand becomes more important than breed improvement and preservation, breeding decisions can lose direction.

What does the Kurdish Horse need for stronger long-term preservation?

It needs an organised structure: reliable registration, clear identity records, professional evaluation, ranking where appropriate, and agreed standards. Preservation should be based on knowledge, accurate records and responsible selection rather than personal preference alone.