

The Kurds

A struggle for a state

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Quick Facts

Overview

Most of the world's 20-25 million Kurds live in Turkey, although an unofficial region called "Kurdistan" also includes parts of Iraq, Iran, Syria, Armenia, and Azerbaijan. The Kurds are the largest ethnic group in the world without their own state, and for much of the century, Kurdish separatists have sought to establish an independent Kurdish homeland. In 1984, the Kurdish Workers Party (PKK) began an armed insurrection against the Turkish government; 15 years of guerrilla war have claimed approximately 30,000 lives. After the capture of PKK leader Abdullah Ocalan in March—and his later conviction for treason—the PKK announced its willingness to negotiate an end to the conflict. Kurdish factions have also been active in other countries, most notably Iraq. In the late 1980s, Saddam Hussein engaged in the brutal "Anfal" campaign, in which chemical weapons were used to put down a Kurdish uprising. A revolt also followed Iraq's defeat in the Gulf War, but the Iraqi military—aided by divisions among rival Kurdish factions—eventually squelched this uprising.

Statistics

Iran:

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|--------------------------|--|
| Population (1998) | :61,531,000 |
| Government Type | :Islamic republic |
| Ethnic Groups | :Persian (51%), Azerbaijani (24%), Gilaki/Mazandarani (8%), Kurd (7%), other (10%) |
| Major Religions | :Shi'i Muslim (93%), Sunni Muslim (6%), Other (1%) |
| Major Languages | :Farsi, Azerbaijani, Kurdish |
| Casualties | :N/A |

Turkey:

| | |
|--------------------------------|---|
| Population (1998) | :64,567,000 |
| Government Type | :Republic |
| Ethnic Groups (1994) | :Turks (80-88%), Kurds (10-20%), Arabs (2%) |
| Major Religions (1994) | :Sunni Muslim (80%), Shi'i Muslim (20%) |
| Major Languages | :Turkish, Kurdish, Arabic |
| Casualties (since 1984) | :20,000-30,000 dead |

Iraq

| | |
|--------------------------------|--|
| Population (1998) | :21,722,000 |
| Government Type | :Republic |
| Ethnic Groups (1993) | :(1983): Arab (77%), Kurd (19%), Azerbaijani (2%), Assyrian (1%), Other (1%) |
| Major Religions (1994) | :Shi'i Muslim (63%), Sunni Muslim (35%), Christian (2%) |
| Major Languages | :Arabic, Kurdish, Azerbaijani, Assyrian, Persian |
| Casualties (since 1987) | :more than 200,000 dead (Kurdish areas only; excludes Gulf War casualties) |

General Information



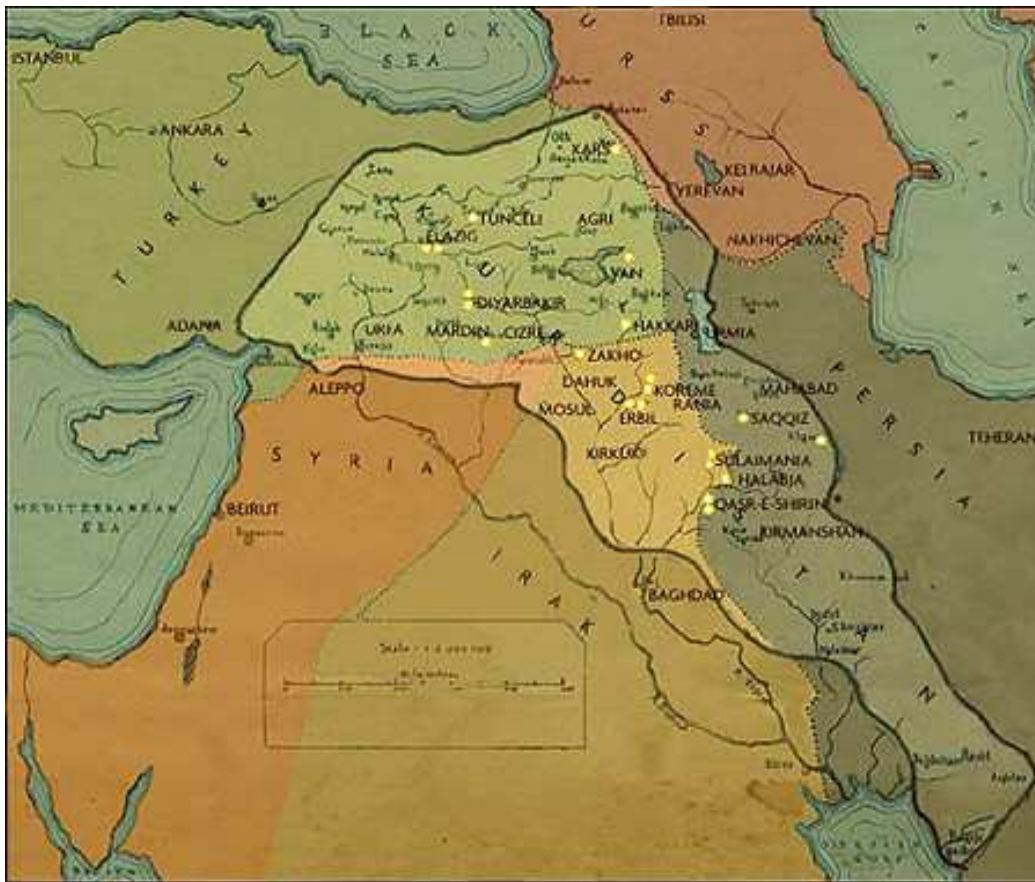
Kurds are considered the largest ethnic group without a state, the population of the Kurds ranges between 20-30 million people.

Kurds are persecuted in many ways, In general they are forbidden to speak their language. And they cannot maintain their culture because of the constraints put by other countries like Iran, Iraq and Syria.

Most of the Kurdish areas now are full of Poverty and Corruption to a very big extent, this is because they are persecuted so they cannot modernize or make their financial status any better, and because they cannot learn in their own language.

Kurds have been persecuted from a long time ago, back in the 10th century they were massacred by Arabs. And in 1920 they were bombed by the RAF, and also in the 'Anfal' Campaign approximately 200000 Kurds were murdered.

Kurds in general have first hand experience in using Chemical weapons.



Kurds define their nation as a country bigger than France that goes from Iran through Iraq and to Syria. These areas are full of natural resources such as Oil, Water and minerals which are all valuable.

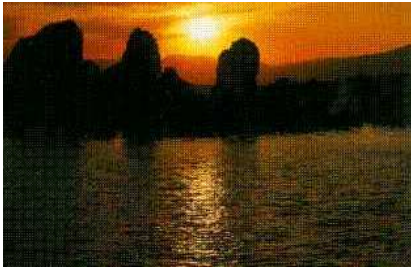
Going back to history the Kurdish state was considered one of the most civilized nations.

Kurds cover about 2000000 km² from Turkey, 125000 km² of Iran and 74000 km² of Iraq (Southern Kurdistan)

Hard Living conditions, remoteness of the mountain, lack of communication and information are all reasons that prevented the Kurds from establishing their private state.

Kurds in Turkey

As mentioned before, Kurds cover an area that is estimated to be 200000 km² of Turkey, which is considered to be the biggest area the Kurds cover.



Kurds in Turkey are called "Mountain Turks".

Turkey's Policy towards Kurds is extremely harsh and cruel because the importance of the national unity of Turkey.

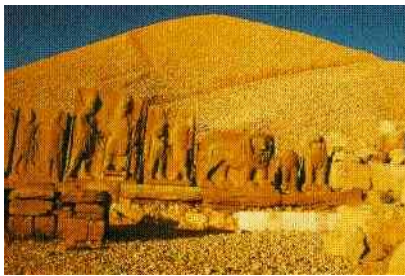
Military Actions had been taken against the Kurds by the Turks back in 1992 in an attempt to get rid of Kurds.

The International Community had condemned the policy used by the Turks against the Kurds. And encouraged Turkey to change its' policy towards a better policy which is approved by the International Community.

Kurds in Iraq

Kurds make up 1/3 of the Iraqi Nation, which considered **Al Mulla Mustafa Al Barazani** to be their leader.

After the Iraq-Iran war, Saddam Hussein took his revenge from the Kurds of Iraq for helping Iran during the war by killing almost 6000 people, 2 million Kurds



fled from Iraq to Iran because of this.

Kurds had the ability to fight a traditional war, but when it comes to a chemical war they

stand helpless.

Kurds established a kind of an independent state in northern Iraq, The part of Iraq where 2/3 of it is considered a No-Fly Zone , The thing which helped the Kurds maintain this small independent state.

'Anfal' Campaign

In the **Anfal** Campaign it was estimated that 50000-



100000 Kurds were killed from women, children and men; also in the campaign more than 4000 villages were destroyed and schools and mosques were burnt. The use of chemical weapons during the campaign was widely used as they didn't harm the infrastructure and

buildings but kill people.

Kurds in Iran

▲ About one fourth of the Kurds live in Iran, as it was the least country to persecute the Kurdish people. But still



Iran banned Kurdish dress & language and limited their political movements.

The Kurds of Iran tried over a long period of time to achieve piece with Iran, but unfortunately all attempts failed for some reason.

Kurds in Syria

▲ About 1.5 million Kurds live in Syria alone. In Syria there have been always attempts to ▲ arabise the areas n which the Kurdish population is concentrated inside Syria.



Persecution of Kurds

Persecution of *the Kurdish Language*

In most of the countries that Kurds live in they are persecuted by not being able to speak or use their own language,



Turkey, Iraq and Iran all made it forbidden for Kurds to speak their language. This right that they do not have had made them below the poverty line because they cannot be educated in their Kurdish language, the thing that made them uneducated people

and contributed to the illumination of the possibility of modernizing the Kurdish people and being able to establish their own private state.

Persecution of *the Kurdish Natural Resources*

Oil, water and minerals are extremely important factors which affect the situation of the Kurds in the region, since all the natural and valuable exists in areas where Kurds exist they are persecuted greatly in this matter, not forgetting the importance of the Kurdish state strategically and geographically, as it is the link between Turkey, Syria, Iran and Iraq. The biggest proof that they are being persecuted through not allowing them to use their resources is that although they have these valuable resources they are still below the poverty line. Most of the Iraqi Oil exists in Kurdish Areas, so is the Turkish oil, As for water, Turkey controls all the water of the region.

The Kurdish area has also another valuable land resource besides oil, water and minerals, which are Crops, Their crops can be a good income source, but unfortunately they are persecuted agriculturally too.

Persecution of the Kurdish Culture and Traditions

Like Language Kurds are forbidden to maintain their culture and traditions, in each of the countries they live in, the Kurds cannot wear their own traditional clothes, and they can't perform their customs, the thing which is greatly affecting the cultural aspect of the Kurds, because in order to maintain their culture they must be able to perform their customs, wear their clothes and perform their traditions and pass it on to their children.



Persecution of the Kurdish Natural Rights Persecution of Kurds in Syria has another type, which is that marriages between Kurdish men and Syrian women is forbidden thing to do.

▲ Al Hussami, a Syrian official in the ministry of internal affairs says: "Kurdish women can marry Syrian men and become citizens. But marriages between Syrian women and Kurdish men are prohibited. "This is a right that we reserve to protect the nationality of our women"

Quotations



"The Committee declared that it was "profoundly alarmed about widespread and systematic violations of human rights inflicted on people because of their ethnic or national origin."

"The Committee, made up of 18 independent experts, has the mission of overseeing implementation of the International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination."

"However, the situation in Turkey's prisons is not as bad as in police stations there, she added. According to Bernath, the problem in Turkey is that "there is no political will for change."

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