

# **It's time to allow the Kurds to speak of their own destiny**

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After the First World War the Imperialist powers of Great Britain and France decided to realize the Sykes-picot agreement in relation to the distribution of Middle East area which included Kurdistan too. They had agreed to divide the Kurdish territory among the new and old regional countries. They did that without asking the Kurds as native residents of Kurdistan. Even they were aware about the Kurdish people's right to self-determination, and promised an independent Kurdistan in Sevres-agreement in 1920, but they ran away from that promise and divided the Kurdish land after their political and economical interests. They left the Kurds between the new occupier countries without any protection. That meant, the Kurds were left to an unknown destiny. As we had witnessed the Kurds had experienced the most brutal treatment by the occupier states and they were subject to different kinds of oppression and violation of human rights.

In Southern Kurdistan which has been under Iraqi control the last 82 years, the Kurds were subject to a systematic ethnic cleansing and arabization by the different Iraqi regimes. Under Saddam's regime the Kurds became victims of the use of chemical and biological weapons. The massacre of Halabja and the genocide of Anfal in the late 1980's are clear proof of Iraq's ethnic cleansing policy against the Kurds.

Now after the fall of Saddam's regime, Iraq is undergoing a rebuilding process which in some way similar to the beginning of the 1920's when Iraq became established. Under this new circumstance, where there is a presence of the American troops, there is a good possibility not to make the same mistake as the English did in the twenties. There is a good opportunity to adjust that unreasonable mistake and give the Kurds the chance to determine their own future and destiny.

There are many clear factors which support the Kurds to refuse joining Iraq again. They are a nation and they have all the conditions a nation needs. The Iraqi historical evidence is not in favour of reunification between Kurds and Arabs in a new Iraq. All that and especially the past brutal experience under different Iraqi regimes give the Kurds the right not to accept to be forced in Iraq again.

The Americans have a mission of democratization which is started after the fall of Saddam Hussein and there is no doubt that it's in favour of the Kurdish issue. According to democratic principles the people has the right to be asked concerning their destiny. In a democracy people has power and has an opportunity to influence the political decisions. If there is a real intention of democratization, there should be a space to Kurdish self-determination through a referendum. The Kurds have considerable difficulties to accept to be forced in Iraq again. Because of that, they will not look at the situation passively; therefore they require to be asked about their destiny. Actually there is a movement among the Kurdish people, which is working to realize a referendum under an international observation.

As I said, The Kurds has the right to decide what they want and how they will live in the future. I think it's time to allow the Kurds to speak freely of their own destiny, it's time to give the Kurdish people a chance to determine their political future in a free referendum.