



About the Kurdistan Regional Government

The Kurdistan Region is a federated region in Iraq. Its main institutions are the Kurdistan Regional Government, the Kurdistan Region Presidency, and the Kurdistan National Assembly (parliament). As stipulated in Iraq's federal constitution, Kurdistan's institutions exercise legislative and executive authority in many areas, including allocating the Regional budget, policing and security, education and health policies, natural resources management and infrastructure development.

Kurdistan Regional Government

The Kurdistan Regional Government (KRG) exercises executive power according to the Kurdistan Region's laws as enacted by the democratically elected Kurdistan National Assembly.

The current government, led by Prime Minister Nechirvan Barzani, assumed office on 7 May 2006. The government coalition consists of several political parties and reflects the diversity of the Region's people, who are Chaldeans, Assyrians, Turkmen, Yazidis, Kurds and others living together in harmony and tolerance.

The parties in the coalition government are the Kurdistan Democratic Party (KDP), Patriotic Union of Kurdistan (PUK), Kurdistan Toilers Party, Kurdistan Socialist Democratic Party, Kurdistan Islamic Union, Kurdistan Communist Party, the Islamic Group and the Turkman Brotherhood Party. Among the cabinet members are a Chaldean, an Assyrian, a Yezidi, a Faili (Shia Kurd) and an independent Turkman.

Until the unification agreement of 21 January 2006, the governorate of Suleimaniah was governed by a PUK-led administration, while the governorates of Erbil and Dohuk were governed by a KDP-led administration. In line with the wishes of the people and their own desire for a more efficient and united government, the political parties of the Region signed the historic Unification Agreement.

The broad-based coalition government is made up of 27 ministries and nine ministers without portfolio.

The government is based in Erbil, the capital of the Kurdistan Region. It administers the governorates of Erbil, Suleimaniah and Dohuk.

The KRG's vision and policies are outlined on page 4 below.

For press releases and news from the Kurdistan Regional Government, please see www.krg.org

Kurdistan Region Presidency

The Kurdistan Region Presidency (KRP) was promulgated as an institution by the Kurdistan National Assembly in 2005. The President of the Kurdistan Region has the highest executive authority. He or she is elected by secret ballot in a popular vote every four years and can stand for election for a second term.

Mr Masoud Barzani was elected as the Kurdistan Region's first president on 31 January 2005 by the Kurdistan National Assembly. Subsequent presidential elections will be by secret popular ballot by the people of the Kurdistan Region. The Deputy President is Mr Kosrat Rasul Ali. The President's secretariat, called the Diwan, is headed by the Chief of Staff.

The President represents the people of Kurdistan at national and international levels and oversees relations and coordination between the Region and the Iraqi federal authorities. He also represents the people of Kurdistan at Iraq's Political Council for National Security, and in negotiations and consultations with other parties in Iraq.

He is responsible for approving the KRG Prime Minister's special appointments and promotions, and for ratifying all laws passed by the Kurdistan National Assembly. He has the power to return once only for further debate and amendment any law passed by the Assembly.

For KRP news and press releases please see www.krp.org

Kurdistan National Assembly

The Kurdistan National Assembly (KNA) is the Kurdistan Region's democratically elected parliament. The KNA consists of one elected chamber. Its three main functions are:

- to examine proposals for new laws
- to scrutinise government policy and administration
- to debate the major issues of the day.

The founding principles of the KNA are liberty, pluralism, accountability, openness and the representation of all peoples in the Kurdistan Region.

Assembly members

There are 111 seats in the KNA. Currently women hold 29 seats, making up 27% of the Assembly. The legal requirement is that at least 25% of the parliamentarians must be women.

The KNA is lead by the Speaker, Mr Adnan Mufti, who is assisted in his duties by the Deputy Speaker, Dr Kamal Kirkuki.

In the current parliament elected in January 2005, the members represent 14 different political parties, including Turkmen, Assyrian and Chaldean parties, and one member is independent. Three members of the KNA are Yezidis belonging to different political parties.

The Kurdistan Democratic Party (KDP) and the Patriotic Union of Kurdistan (PUK) are the two largest parties in parliament, with 40 and 38 seats respectively.

The KNA's beginnings

In the aftermath of the 1991 Gulf War, Saddam Hussein withdrew his forces and administration from parts of the Kurdistan Region. Faced with an administrative vacuum and a double embargo, the Kurdistan Front, an alliance of diverse political groups opposed to the Ba'ath dictatorship, organised a general election. Their goal was to establish an administration and fulfil the population's strong desire to choose its representatives.

The election on 19 May 1992 was the first free and fair parliamentary election in the history of Iraq. Voter turnout was very high and the elections were deemed to be free, fair, and democratic by international observers. After decades of dictatorship, the people in Kurdistan were able to choose their representatives.

This regional election led to the formation of the first Kurdistan National Assembly and the establishment of the KRG. The leadership and the people of the Kurdistan Region decided to remain part of Iraq, and to adopt and abide by all national laws except for those that violated human and universal rights.

Elections

Elections for the KNA are held at least every four calendar years, the last one was held on 30 January 2005 to coincide with Iraq's national and provincial council elections.

Elections for the KNA are based on a closed party-list proportional representation system. To ensure representation of all groups, if no party or person representing a minority (such as Turkmen, Chaldeans or Assyrians) gains a seat, one seat will be allocated to a party or person from that minority.

The KNA's powers

As stipulated in Iraq's federal constitution, the KNA has considerable power to debate and legislate on a wide range of policy areas, such as health, education and training, policing and security, the environment, natural resources, agriculture, housing, trade, industry and investment, social services, roads and transport, tourism and historic monuments.

The KNA shares legislative power with the federal authorities in the following areas, but priority is given to the KNA's laws: customs, electric energy and its distribution, general planning and internal water resources.

In addition, under Article 121 of the Iraqi constitution the KNA has the right to amend the application of Iraq-wide legislation that falls outside of the federal authorities' exclusive powers.

The KNA has passed several laws that have contributed to the Region's social and economic progress. These include:

- passing a modern and open investment law
- passing a progressive hydrocarbons (oil and gas) law for the Kurdistan Region.
- significantly increasing the prison sentence for those committing so-called honour killings, which were previously given minimum sentences

Other legislation and issues that the KNA is considering are:

- a constitution for the Kurdistan Region; the KNA has established a committee to look into this and produce a draft
- limits to or a ban on the practice of polygamy.

The Kurdistan Region's provincial authorities

The Kurdistan Region comprises the three northern-most governorates or provinces of Iraq: Erbil, Suleimaniah and Dohuk. Each governorate has a democratically elected 41-seat Governing Council. The provincial Governors are Mr Nawzad Hadi in Erbil, Mr Dana Ahmed Majeed in Suleimaniah, and Mr Tamar Ramadan Fattah in Dohuk.

As well as receiving funds from the Kurdistan Region's own budget, the governorates also receive directly from Baghdad funds for provincial capital investment and infrastructure projects.

The KRG's programme: A bright future for all

The mission driving the new cabinet's programme is to secure a bright future for all people at all socio-economic levels living in the Region, through greater efficiency and more openness.

The KRG is determined to establish strong constitutional institutions to further support the democratic process. Its main task is forming a system of good governance through the participation of all groups, with transparency and accountability, which means a modern, professional government.

- Greater efficiency
- Openness and accountability
- Focus on programmes and services
- Meeting the difficult challenges

A government that cares about its citizens

The cabinet works for all socio-economic levels of Kurdistan society. The cabinet recognises that it needs considerable effort, time and resources to meet the requirements and expectations of the people in all sectors.

- Improvements in the education system
- Focus on youth
- Improved water and electricity
- Helping those who cannot help themselves
- Special attention to families of martyrs
- Improvements in fuel availability and pricing

A government that protects its citizens

The rule of law is the KRG's supreme guiding principle. It is above every individual. Laws shall be drafted in a modern way and they shall be based on the principles of democracy and human rights.

- Security is the foundation for economic growth
- Better organisation of law enforcement agencies
- More training for security personnel
- Steadfast commitment to safety and security
- Legal and judicial reforms

A government that provides opportunities

The regional government shall work to reduce unemployment through development of the private sector. The economy cannot progress without major developments in the private sector.

- Better vocational training
- Focus on growth in the private sector
- Improved agricultural production
- New agro-industries
- Micro-credit programme for small enterprises
- Major focus on direct foreign investment
- Modernized banking system
- Greater use of information/communication technology
- Energy self-reliance
- Expanding tourism
- English language training

A government that respects its citizens

It is vital that confidence and trust be established between government and the people. Confidence is established when government runs its affairs in a transparent manner and is prepared to be held accountable and subject to examination.

- Encouragement of diverse cultures and languages
- Greater protection for women's rights
- New focus on human rights
- Efficiency and respect in government operations and programmes
- Special commission on corruption
- Protection for the environment

Relations with Federal Iraq

The KRG is making every effort to put in place a democratic federal system in Iraq, based on agreement and respect for all nationalities and religions. It therefore supports democratic consensus in the political process.

- Recover Kirkuk and other areas peacefully through the democratic process and rule of law Support the establishment of other federal regions in Iraq
- Implement constitutional articles that make Kurdish the second official language in Iraq
- Implement provisions within the constitution regarding the Iraqi budget
- Organise KRG offices abroad within the framework of the Iraqi constitution
- Fight terrorism and violence in any form
- Work shoulder-to-shoulder with the federal government to bring peace and stability
- Work to rebuild and develop Iraq