



## 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 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 democratically elected Kurdistan Regional Government (KRG) exercises executive power according to the Kurdistan Region's laws, as enacted by the Kurdistan Parliament.

The current cabinet, led by Prime Minister Nechirvan Barzani, assumed office on 5 April 2012. His Deputy is Mr Imad Ahmad Sayfour.

The government coalition consists of several political parties, reflecting the diversity of the Region's people, who are Kurds, Turkmen, Chaldeans, Assyrians, Syriac, Yazidis and others living together in harmony and tolerance.

The cabinet is made up of members of the Kurdistan List coalition, which won the region's parliamentary elections in July 2009, together with other parties. The coalition government consists of the Kurdistan Democratic Party (KDP), Patriotic Union of Kurdistan (PUK), Kurdistan Islamic Movement, the Chaldean Assyrian Syriac Council, Turkmen representatives, Communists and Socialists. The government has 19 ministries.

The KRG 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](http://www.krg.org)

### **Kurdistan Region Presidency**

The Kurdistan Region Presidency (KRP) was promulgated as an institution by the Kurdistan Parliament 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, the current president, was elected as the Kurdistan Region's first president on 31 January 2005 by the Kurdistan Parliament, and re-elected by secret popular ballot by the people of the Kurdistan Region in July 2009, with 70% of the vote. 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 Parliament. He has the power to return once only for further debate and amendment any law passed by the Parliament.

For KRP news and press releases please see [www.krp.org](http://www.krp.org)

### **Kurdistan Parliament**

The Kurdistan Parliament is the Kurdistan Region's democratically elected legislature. The parliament 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 parliament are liberty, pluralism, accountability, openness and the representation of all peoples in the Kurdistan Region.

#### Structure of the Parliament: Ensuring broad representation

There are 111 seats in the Assembly (as stipulated in Law No. 1 passed in 1992). The Kurdistan Parliament is lead by the Speaker, Dr Arslan Bayez, who is assisted in his duties by the Deputy Speaker, Dr Mohammed Hassan.

In February 2009 several amendments were made to the Kurdistan election law to increase inclusiveness of all groups. The minimum age of parliamentary candidates was lowered from 30 to 25. While seats had already been reserved in previous elections for minority communities, for the Christian and Turkmen communities this was increased to five seats each. The legal minimum quota of women MPs was increased from 25 percent to 30 percent of the legislature. In the current parliament, 36 of the 111 MPs are women.

#### Parliament'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 (later renamed the Kurdistan Parliament) 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.

#### Parliamentary elections

Elections for the Kurdistan Parliament are held at least every four calendar years, (as stipulated in Article 8 of the Kurdistan Electoral Law). The last parliamentary elections were held on 25 July 2009.

Anyone aged 18 or over who is a citizen of the Kurdistan Region and is on the electoral register is eligible to vote in a direct, universal and secret ballot. Elections for the Kurdistan Parliament are based on a closed party-list proportional representation system. Electors vote for a party's list of candidates, rather than for an individual candidate. After the election results are announced, each party is allocated seats in proportion to the number of votes it received, using the ranking order of candidates on its list.

#### Powers of the Kurdistan Parliament

As provided in the federal constitution of Iraq, parliament has considerable power to debate and legislate on policy in a wide range of areas: health services, education and training, policing and security, the environment, natural resources, agriculture, housing, trade, industry and investment, social services and social affairs, transport and roads, culture and tourism, sport and leisure, and ancient monuments and historic buildings

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

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

#### Members of the Kurdistan Parliament

The 111 MPs in the Kurdistan parliament represent the following political lists and parties:

- Kurdistan List: 59 MPs. (Kurdistan Democratic Party and Patriotic Union of Kurdistan)
- Change List: 25 MPs
- Reform and Services List: 13 MPs (Kurdistan Islamic Union, Islamic Group in Kurdistan, Kurdistan Socialist Democratic Party, Future Party)
- Islamic Movement List: 2 MPs
- Freedom and Social Justice List: 1 MP (Kurdistan Communist Party, Kurdistan Toilers Party, Kurdistan Independent Work Party, Kurdistan Pro-Democratic Party, Democratic Movement of Kurdistan People).

Parliamentary seats reserved for minority groups:

- Turkoman Democratic Movement: 3 MPs
- Turkoman Reform List: 1 MP
- Turkoman Erbil List: 1 MP

- Chaldean Assyrian Syriac Council: 3 MPs
- Al-Rafidain List: 2 MPs
- 1 Armenian independent MP: Mr Aram Shahin Dawood Bakoyian.

#### Landmark legislation passed by the Kurdistan Parliament

The Kurdistan Parliament 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.
- placing limits on the practice of polygamy.
- prohibiting and punishing by law the practice of female genital mutilation.
- passing a law against domestic violence

The Kurdistan Parliament approved by a large majority a constitution for the Kurdistan Region, and intends to put it to a referendum in the future.

#### **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 Behrouz Mohamed Saleh 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: Renewal and reconstruction**

The seventh cabinet has the responsibility to:

- protect and expand upon the achievements of the previous cabinet,
- maintain several critical initiatives of the previous cabinet in terms of administrative and financial reform, and
- resolve the shortcomings that we have not yet been able to tackle.

#### Transparency and reform

The seventh cabinet will fight against corruption, through the rule of law and transparency in government activity. The Minister of Justice will also shoulder the duty of Public Prosecutor; ensuring that dossiers of corruption and mismanagement of public funds will be sent to court.

The KRG will put an end to political party interference in governmental affairs. It will also work to create the necessary atmosphere for political activity and the development of multi-party traditions, by amending the laws pertaining to parties and communities, and also by issuing a law regarding political party funding.

#### Unifying institutions

The KRG plans to unify the Erbil/Dohuk and Suleimaniah institutions of the Asayish (intelligence and security), Peshmerga forces and finance, to complete the process of unification started in 2006, and to end once and for all the legacy of the era of dual administrations.

#### Public spending

The KRG will build on the Kurdistan Region's considerable economic progress and improved living standards by further developing education and higher education, health, agriculture, irrigation and roads, and by resolving the housing problems for low-income citizens, increasing the income level of the individual and the living standards of the lower class.

The public budget will be allocated according to the principles of balance and fairness, to meet the needs and requirements of the entire Kurdistan Region without prejudice. The KRG will work for precise transparent monitoring through the Parliament Audit Committees, and will strive to diversify the sources of income and disclose its expenditure. The KRG aims to establish an integrity commission for monitoring and investigation, and to pass a law requiring properties of officials to be made public. This will improve financial policy, help to tackle corruption and establish better transparency in government activity.

#### Pending issues between Baghdad and Erbil

The KRG remains committed to the democratically approved Iraqi Constitution, which guarantees coexistence among the Iraqi factions. The issues of Kirkuk, Khanaqin, Sinjar and other disputed areas; federal oil and gas and revenue sharing laws; and power sharing can only be resolved through commitment to the Constitution.

The political situation in Iraq and the challenges that the Kurdistan Regions demand that we all work hand in hand, both government and opposition, to protect our experience, development and progress. We must work together to regain unachieved rights for the people of Kurdistan and to guarantee a bright future for the democratic and constitutional experience in Iraq.

#### Kurdistan Region's relations with its neighbours

The KRG will continue its policy of having good stable relationships with its neighbours, based on the principles of mutual interest. Faithful to the Kurdistan Region's friends and supporters, the KRG will strengthen its already strong ties with our allies in Operation Iraqi Freedom as well as the wider international community, with the aim of achieving our mutual goals.

#### Recognition of the Anfal genocide

The victims of the Anfal genocide and the Halabja bombardment should never be forgotten. The KRG will lobby international decision makers for official recognition of the Iraqi Special Tribunal's ruling that these crimes were acts of genocide. We will also endeavour to implement the decision to compensate the victims of the Anfal campaign and those who were affected by chemical weapons. The KRG will continue to bring back to Kurdistan the remains of the Anfal victims found in the mass graves in the middle and the south of Iraq, and to build deserved monuments of remembrance to them.

#### Participation of the young and women in political life

The government will promote political freedom and public determination. We will encourage civil society and the media to play a greater and more constructive role in promoting public opinion and expanding the circle of democracy.

Young people and women will be given the encouragement and space to participate in the Kurdistan Region's political decisions. The KRG sees young people as valuable assets. The future of Kurdistan will be guaranteed through their development and provision of opportunities for them, whether within government or within society. The KRG will create space for capable and qualified youth.