



## The Kurdistan Region in Brief

- With a population of over 4 million and rapidly increasing, the three governorates of Dohuk, Erbil and Suleimaniah cover approximately 40,000 square kilometres - larger than the Netherlands and four times the area of Lebanon.
- The Region is geographically diverse, from hot and dry plains to cooler mountainous areas with natural springs and snowfall in the winter.
- Since March 2003 not a single coalition soldier has died nor a single foreigner been kidnapped in the areas administered by the Kurdistan Regional Government (KRG). With the cooperation of ordinary people, the Kurdistan Region's security forces have kept the area safe and stable. Security responsibility was formally transferred from the Multinational Forces to the KRG in May 2007.
- The capital and seat of the Kurdistan Regional Government is Erbil, a city known locally as Hawler. The Citadel in Erbil is one of the world's oldest continually inhabited settlements.
- The Kurdistan Regional Government exercises executive power according to the Kurdistan Region's laws as enacted by the democratically elected Kurdistan Parliament. The current government, led by Prime Minister Barham Salih, assumed office on 28 October 2009.
- Iraq's Constitution recognises the Kurdistan Regional Government, the Kurdistan Parliament as the region's institutions, and the Peshmerga guard as the legitimate regional forces.
- The current coalition government consists of several political parties that reflect the diversity of the Region's people, who are Chaldeans, Assyrians, Syriac, Turkmen, Yazidis and Kurds living together in harmony and tolerance.
- Since the Anfal genocide campaign by Saddam Hussein's Regime in the 1980s, more than 65% of the razed villages have been rebuilt.
- The Kurdish language is distinct and is in the family of Iranian languages, such as Persian and Pashto. There are two main dialects, Sorani and Kurmanji.
- The Kurdistan Region has seven universities, including the English language University of Kurdistan-Hawler in Erbil which opened in September 2006, and the American University of Iraq in Suleimaniah, which started its first programme in autumn 2007.
- A new, liberal foreign investment law was ratified in June 2006, providing incentives for foreign investors such as the possibility of owning land, up to 10-year tax holidays and easy repatriation of profits.
- The Kurdistan Region has international airports in Erbil and Suleimaniah, with direct flights to and from Europe and the Middle East. Erbil International Airport has expanded considerably, adding a large new terminal in 2010. IATA scheduled carriers that fly to the Kurdistan Region include Austrian Airlines, Lufthansa, Royal Jordanian, Gulf Air and Middle East Airlines (MEA), and more IATA members are planning to start flights to Erbil. Several charter companies also fly to the Kurdistan Region from Europe and the Middle East.