



## Kurdish Election Lists

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Campaigning is underway in the Kurdish Region ahead of elections for the Kurdish regional assembly on July 25. Twenty four political groups, including five alliances, have declared their participation in the election, competing for 111 seats (11 reserved for ethnic and religious minorities). In total, 507 candidates have registered to compete in the elections and more than 2.5 million people have registered to vote.

### KURDISH ELECTION LISTS

#### KURDISTANI LIST:

The Kurdistan List is composed of the two main political parties in the region: the Kurdistan Democratic Party (KDP) led by Regional President Massoud Barzani, and the Patriotic Union of Kurdistan (PUK) led by Iraqi President Jalal Talabani.

The head of the Kurdistan list is Dr. Barham Saleh, a PUK official and the current Iraqi deputy Prime Minister. There is talk among KDP and PUK officials that Saleh will be the next regional Prime Minister.

The PUK and KDP have been controlling the Kurdish Region since 1991, prior to which they were the main forces of rebellion against the regime of Saddam Hussein.

The Kurdistan list says it will preserve all the political, economic and social achievements which the region has gained since 1991.

The Kurdistan Democratic Party (KDP): Founded in 1946 under the leadership of Mullah Mustafa Barzani, father of Massoud Barzani.

"The KDP's intent is that people in Kurdistan should live with honour, peace, safety, freedom, and democracy on our Kurdistan soil, our own soil which belongs to us. This is our national aspiration" says the party. The KDP says it is working for a strong Kurdish Regional government and parliament. Although the KDP believes that an independent state is a natural right of the Kurdish people, it says it prefers to remain within a federal, plural and democratic Iraq.

The KDP says the oil rich city of Kirkuk and other disputed areas in northern Iraq belong to the Kurdish Region and should be annexed accordingly. Although the KDP believes that an independent state is a natural right of the Kurdish people, it prefers to remain with a federal Iraq.

Massoud Barzani is the current leader of the KDP; Fadhil Mirani is the head of KDP politburo; Nechirvan Barzani is a member of politburo and regional Prime Minister; Hoshiyar Zebari is a member of politburo and Iraqi Foreign Minister.

The Patriotic Union of Kurdistan (PUK): Founded in June 1975, two months after the collapse of the Kurdish rebellion of 1974-1975.

The PUK proclaims that it struggles for democracy, freedom and equality and against dictatorship, war, occupation, as well as national, class and religious oppression.

The PUK wants to attain the right of self-determination for the people of Kurdistan and says it wants to establish a democratically elected Kurdistan National Assembly, which would be the highest power in Kurdistan. The Assembly will be elected in free, direct, and secret elections. The Executive authority of Kurdistan will be elected and dissolved by the Kurdistan National Assembly. The PUK says it will establish an independent judiciary, not subordinate to any power except the law.

The PUK supports a federal region for Iraqi Kurdistan calls for Kirkuk and other disputed areas should be returned to the Region. The party facilitates the return of Kurdish deportees to their original homes.

The current Iraqi President, Jalal Talabani, a former student leader, lawyer, journalist and resistance leader, has been Secretary General of the PUK since its founding in 1975. Kosrat Rasul, the Kurdish Region's Vice-President is considered number two in the PUK; and Dr. Barham Saleh, Iraq's deputy Prime Minister is number three in the PUK.

## CHANGE LIST:

The Change List is headed by Nawshirwan Mustafa; a former PUK party leader who left the party in December 2006 in protest at the lack of internal reform.

The List is considered as one of the main lists in the upcoming parliamentary elections and there is expectation that those who are not happy with the PUK and KDP will vote for the Change list.

Most of the leaders of the Change List are former members of PUK. They say they are working to separate the government from political parties and to create a parliament which is not controlled by the political bureaus of the political parties. They also want to strengthen an independent, non-corrupt and just judiciary. The Change List wants to limit political interference in the regional economy and supports a more transparent budget.

The List believes that problems between Baghdad and the Kurdish Region can be solved through dialogue on the basis of the Iraqi constitution. Regarding the conflict with Turkey, the Change List says that only a political solution in Turkey can resolve the issue.

The List supports federalism for the Kurdish region.

Nawshirwan Mustafa heads the Change List. Born in 1944, Mustafa is a prominent Kurdish politician and academic. He was a co-founder of the PUK and deputy secretary general until December 2006.

## THE SERVICE AND REFORM LIST:

The Service and Reform List is composed of four political parties: the Kurdistan Islamic Union, the Islamic Group of Kurdistan, the Kurdistan Socialist Democratic Party and the Future Party.

The Service and Reform List says it will fight against corruption in the Kurdish Region and will give women a real role in regional life.

Kurdistan Islamic Union: Describes itself as "an Islamic reformative political party that strives to solve all political, social, economic and cultural matters of the people in Kurdistan from an Islamic perspective which can achieve the rights, general freedom, and social justice." The party secretary is Salah al-Din Baha al-Din. The group is closely tied to the Muslim Brotherhood.

Islamic Group of Kurdistan: Established by Ali Bapir in May 2001. Bapir is a former member of the Islamic Movement of Kurdistan.

Bapir says: "Our policy is that we enter into fraternity and cooperation with all Islamic groups. We seek such fraternal relations with Islamic parties and organizations, Islamist figures, and groups that follow a Salafi tradition or a Sufi or a scientific tradition. In the Komele Islami, we believe that the group must be open-minded and seek fraternity with all those who call or act for Islam. If we see a mistake, we will try to correct it through dialogue and by creating a fraternal atmosphere."

Local newspapers in the Kurdish Region say the Islamic Group of Kurdistan has a strong relationship with Iran.

Bapir was imprisoned by American forces in July 2003 and released in April 2005. The Americans accused him of planning attacks on coalition forces, assisting extremist Islamist group Ansar al Islam and maintaining relations with Saddam Hussein's government and with Iran.

The Kurdistan Socialist Democratic Party (KSDK): Led by Muhammad Haji Mahmud, the KSDK is a left-wing nationalist party. The party has one seat in the Kurdish Regional Parliament - Mahmud holds the seat.

Aynda (Future) Party: Led by Qadir Aziz, who until recently was head of the Kurdistan Toiler Party (KTP). Aziz was forced out of the party by the KTP central bureau "because he didn't commit to the party's internal system."

Aziz says the KDP and PUK have failed to return Kirkuk and other disputed areas to the Kurdish Region.

## THE KURDISTAN CONSERVATIVE PARTY LIST:

The Kurdistan Conservative Party List is led by Zaid Surchi. The List represents tribal leaders and is dominated by the Surchi family. In 1996 KDP forces clashed with fighters from the Surchi family's home villages, killing Hussein Surchi, Zaid's uncle. The PUK supported the Conservative Party during the short-lived conflict. The Surchi tribe is found in Erbil, Duhok and Mosul.

## THE ISLAMIC MOVEMENT OF KURDISTAN LIST:

The Islamic Movement of Kurdistan List was founded in 1979 by Shaykh Uthman Abdul-Aziz and several other Sunni mullahs who were part of the non-political "Union of Religious Scholars." The party's main support comes from in and around that town of Halabja, which was

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bombed with chemical weapons by Saddam Hussein. In regions controlled by the Islamic Movement in Kurdistan, the party has established its own infrastructure but has not sought to apply Islamic (Sharia) law. The head of the Party is Sidiq Abdul Aziz, but the head of the Islamic Movement of Kurdistan List is Dr. Ahmed Warte.

The Islamic Movement of Kurdistan List says Islamic Law must be the main source for the Kurdish Region's constitution. It also calls for greater government transparency.

## SOCIAL JUSTICE AND FREEDOM LIST:

The Social Justice and Freedom List is composed of six leftist parties: the Kurdistan Communist Party, the Kurdistan Toilers Party, the Kurdistan Independent Work Party, the Kurdistan pro-Democratic Party and the Democratic Movement of Kurdistan People.

The list demands equal rights for men and women, promises to solve housing problem and gives priority to the rights for farmers. The list says it works for a secular Kurdistan.

## INDEPENDENT YOUTH LIST:

The Independent Youth List is headed by Hiwa Abdul-Karim Aziz (known as Hiwa Fryad Ras), a 30 year old journalist. The list consists of 10 people, made up of lawyers, university teachers and journalists who promise to make the Kurdistan Regional Parliament more active and give more attention to youth issues.

## KURDISTAN REFORM MOVEMENT:

The Kurdistan Reform Movement is headed by Abdul-Musawwar al-Barzani, a cousin of the incumbent regional and KDP president Massoud Barzani. Abdul-Musawwar al-Barzani says he is against corruption and the list focuses on human rights and rule of law.

## PROGRESSION LIST:

The Progression List is headed by Halo Ibrahim Ahmed, Iraqi President Jalal Talabani's brother in law. Halo Ibrahim is also a candidate in the presidential election.

The Progression List says it will work to improve the standard of living of the Kurdish people and that its candidates will resign from parliament after six months if they do not fulfil their promises.

Ahmed, who has lived in Sweden and Britain, used to be a PUK member but was dismissed last year for creating a bloc inside the Union.

## THE KURDISTAN DEMOCRATIC NATIONAL PARTY LIST:

The Kurdistan Democratic National Party List (YNDK) was founded in 1995 with the aim of creating a Greater Kurdistan including Kurds and territory from Iraq, Turkey, Iran and Syria. YNDK worked closely with the Kurdistan Workers' Party (PKK) in the late 1990s. Today the party remains hostile towards Turkish regional policy but has moved away from the PKK to cooperate with the KDP.

In this election, the party is campaigning to solve the housing problem and also to work on youth and women's issues. Ghafur Makhmuri is the party's general-secretary and holds the party's only seat in parliament.

## KURDISTAN TOILERS AND WORKERS PARTY LIST:

The Kurdistan Toilers and Workers Party List proclaims that it will work to improve justice and the rule of law in the region. The Party has been working as an organization for 14 years.

## IRAQI CONSTITUTIONAL PARTY:

The Party was founded by Iraqi Interior Minister, Jowad Bolani, in 2005. Although Bolani officially stepped down as party leader when he was named interior minister he retains considerable power.

## KURDISTAN BRIGHT FUTURE LIST:

The Kurdistan Bright Future List is led by Dr. Muhammad Saleh Hama Faraj, who lived in exile in the UK from 1980 to 2008. Dr. Faraj says he works to separate government from the political parties, strengthen an independent, non-corrupt and just judiciary and that if he becomes a member of parliament he will demand a rewriting of the constitution.

The Kurdish Parliament has set aside five seats for the Turkmen community. Four Turkmen lists are competing for these seats. (Turkmen only live in Erbil province.)

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ERBIL TURKEMN LIST: This list is led by five well-known Turkmen persons in Erbil: Sherdil Tahsin Arsalan, Ta'fa Rostam Qasab, Thaura Saleh, Nafeh Rostam and Ahtham Abdul Karim. The List wants Kirkuk to be part of the Kurdish region and they are against Turkey's interferences in Turkmen affairs.

TURKMEN REFORM LIST: This list is led by Abdul Qadir Zangana and its main goal is to strengthen the political role of the Turkmen. The list is against Turkish interference.

TURKEMEN DEMOCRATIC MOVEMENT IN KURDISTAN: The party is headed by Karkhi Alti Barmak, who wants to unite all Turkmen. The list wants Kirkuk to become part of the Kurdish Region and is against Turkish interference.

INDEPENDENT TURKMEN LIST: This list is headed by Kanhan Shakir Aziz; the list says Turkmen are the majority in Kirkuk and that it should be an independent region.

Five seats have also been set aside for the Christian community. Four Christian lists are competing for these seats.

UNIFIED CHALDEAN LIST: This list is composed of the Chaldean Union Party and the Chaldean National Council.

### CHALDEAN SYRIAC ASSYRIAN AUTONOMY LIST

AL-RAFIDAIN LIST: This list is headed by Yunadam Kanna, a member of the Iraqi Parliament. The list says it works to employ Christians in the security forces in the Kurdish region.

NATIONAL COUNCIL OF CHALDEAN SYRIAC ASSYRIANS: Headed by Sarkis Aghajan Mamendo, an Iraqi Assyrian politician who was appointed Minister for Finance and Economy in the cabinet of Iraqi Kurdistan on 2006. The List wants to unite all Christians in Iraq.

The Kurdish parliament has set aside one seat for the Armenian community. There are about 200 Armenian families living in Zakho, near the Turkish border in Duhok province. Three people are competing for this seat: Aram Shahine Dawood Bakoyan, Eshkhan Malkon Sargisyan and Aertex Morses Sargisyan.

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