

Perspectives on Kurdistan's Economy and Society in Transition

Perspectives on Kurdistan's Economy
and Society in Transition:
Volume II

Edited by

Almas Heshmati, Alan Dilani
and Serwan M.J. Baban

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P U B L I S H I N G

Perspectives on Kurdistan's Economy and Society in Transition: Volume II,
Edited by Almas Heshmati, Alan Dilani and Serwan M.J. Baban

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SPEECH OF PRESIDENT MASSOUD BARZANI

**At the 2nd World Kurdish Congress, Saad Palace
Conference Centre, Erbil, 13 October 2012**



بەناوی خۆی گهڕه و مهزهبان

خۆشک وێرانیی بێڕێز
میوانه بێڕێزێک
ئامادهبوونی بێڕێز

زۆر خۆم به به‌خێوێ دزانم که به‌نداریان له دوو هه‌مین کۆنگره‌ی زانستی جیهانی
کورد که ئهمه هه‌نگاوێکی زۆر بێ‌ڕۆزه و ئومێدبه‌ده‌شه ، داوای سه‌رکێش بۆ
کۆنگره‌مه‌کان ده‌کهم و ئومێده‌وارم کانتێکی خۆش له‌مالی خۆمان، له‌ولای خۆمان
له‌شاری مێروو له‌هه‌ولێری بابنه‌خت به‌ده‌سه‌.

بۆ ئێمه جێگهی سانا زییه ، جێگهی ئومێده که ده‌بین زماره‌یه‌کی زۆری پۆله‌ی
کوردستان و دۆستانی گه‌له‌که‌مان لهم هۆله‌دا ئاماده‌ن بۆ ئهمه‌ی ئهمه‌وه‌ن و زانستی
خۆیان به‌ده‌سه‌ خه‌ریکی بێ‌سه‌کێشێ ئهمه‌وه‌ی هه‌ریه‌می کوردستان.

پێڕ به‌دڵ سوپاسێ ده‌کهم، سوپاسی هه‌موو ئه‌مه‌رێکه ده‌کهم که هه‌ولێانه‌وه ئهم
کۆنگره‌یه‌ سازبکێت .

بێ‌گومان ئێوه‌ی بێ‌ڕێز مانه‌وه‌یه‌وه‌ی زۆریان بێ‌وه و زنجاران کۆشاهه و
سه‌رخۆشێان کردوه نا خۆمان بێ‌گه‌له‌ندوه ، من بێ‌ڕۆزبا بێ‌زان ئهمه‌وه‌ی ده‌کهم
سه‌لارێان بێ‌وه ده‌کهم.

سۆڕێش و خه‌بهر هه‌ر سۆڕێش و خه‌بهری بێ‌یه ، ئێوه‌ن بێ‌سه‌رگه‌یه‌یه‌ن
کردوه به‌لام به‌ستواری خۆمان و له‌شوێنی خۆمان . کوردستان ئهمه‌وه‌یه‌که له‌سه‌ر شانی
هه‌موومان وه‌هه‌ر هه‌رناغه‌یک بێ‌وه‌ستی به‌که‌سانێکی گونجاو و ساره‌زا و زانی ئهمه‌
هه‌رناغه هه‌یه‌.

ئەمە قەتئەن بۆلۈشكەن بولمىغان، بىز بىر ئائىلە ئىكەن. بىز بىر دۆلەت ئىكەن. بىز بىر مىللەت ئىكەن. بىز بىر دىيار ئىكەن. بىز بىر ئۆزگەرتىش ئىكەن. بىز بىر ئۆزگەرتىش ئىكەن. بىز بىر ئۆزگەرتىش ئىكەن.

بەلەم خەلق ئىچىدە بولغان بولسا، بىز بىر ئائىلە ئىكەن. بىز بىر دۆلەت ئىكەن. بىز بىر مىللەت ئىكەن. بىز بىر دىيار ئىكەن. بىز بىر ئۆزگەرتىش ئىكەن. بىز بىر ئۆزگەرتىش ئىكەن. بىز بىر ئۆزگەرتىش ئىكەن.

بەلەم سولاس بۆ خا سولاس بۆ ئۆزگەرتىش، سولاس بۆ گەلى كوردستان كە باش خەلق ئىچىدە بولغان بولسا، بىز بىر ئائىلە ئىكەن. بىز بىر دۆلەت ئىكەن. بىز بىر مىللەت ئىكەن. بىز بىر دىيار ئىكەن. بىز بىر ئۆزگەرتىش ئىكەن. بىز بىر ئۆزگەرتىش ئىكەن. بىز بىر ئۆزگەرتىش ئىكەن.

خوشك ورايانى بەرگەز

كەتتە ئۆزگەرتىش بولغان بولسا، بىز بىر ئائىلە ئىكەن. بىز بىر دۆلەت ئىكەن. بىز بىر مىللەت ئىكەن. بىز بىر دىيار ئىكەن. بىز بىر ئۆزگەرتىش ئىكەن. بىز بىر ئۆزگەرتىش ئىكەن. بىز بىر ئۆزگەرتىش ئىكەن.

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لەبارەی هەرتێی کوردستانەوە، ئێمە بارودۆخە بەکاسانی ئەهاتۆته دەست بەڵکو دوا
 هۆرانییەکی بەخجل زۆر، ئێستاش زیاتر لە 180 هەزار پۆلە ئێمە وڵاتە لە
 بیابانمانی خواروی عێراق بێسەرویتێن، ئێستاش خەڵکی خۆمان بەدوا جەنارێ
 ئێمە ئازیزانە دگەڕێن لەخواروی عێراق وەر بەجێمانێن زۆرمان بێک لەجەنار کانیان
 دەزۆرێتێوه ومانهێشتێوه بۆ کوردستان، ئابەستێوه بە 5 خۆلەک شۆڕکی وکو
 هەلبەجە خاپوورکراو هەرجی ژی و مندێ و بیباو و گەرمی ئێدا بوو بە 5 خۆلەک
 شەهیدکران و سەرکاسری کوردستان کۆتە بەر شالۆی کێماباران وئەفقال، ئنجا
 ئێمە زۆر و دەستکۆتە هاتتە دەست، بۆیە ئێمە دەستکۆتە هێ هەمووئێه و
 ئێمانهێتکە لەسەر شانی هەمووان وئەمرۆ ئێمە هێن سەبی نین، بەلام ئێمە مێلەنە
 دەستێت، گەنجان دەتێن و دەتێ ئێمە ئەزموونه بێتە روونلێک، چرایەک بۆ هەموو
 خەڵکی کوردستان.

[illegible]

دېويە من دەلەم بۆ ئالغىدى خۇمان وىكو نەمەيەك ھېچ سىنىك مەھال نېيە بەلام دەجى
ئىكمە بزانن چۆن ھەنگاۋى دۆ داوتىن.

لەكو ئابىدا چارەكى دېگە بەخت ھەلتى ھەمىوان دەكم ، زۆر سويانان دەكم بۆ
ھاتنان وداوى سەرگەننان بۆ دەكم وزۆر سويان .

SPEECH OF PRIME MINISTER NECHIRVAN BARZANI¹

**At the 2nd World Kurdish Congress, Saad Palace
Conference Centre, Erbil, 13 October 2012**

Ladies, gentlemen and distinguished guests, good morning.

I wanted very much to be here with you today, but unfortunately I have had to change my plans due to some unforeseeable circumstances.

In any event, I would like to welcome you to the second day of this important forum and assure you that this initiative has my full support.

This congress has been designed to draw on your expertise in order to help address the many challenges that we face, and I have no doubt that this is a project that will continue to benefit all of us for many years to come.

1. Challenges facing the Kurdish nation

Never before in our history have the Kurds seen as much opportunity, nor as much at risk as we do today. The challenge for all of us is to find ways through the current uncertainties to build a bright future for all generations of Kurds, wherever they may live.

In all of the different places we live, we each have our unique challenges. Here in the Kurdistan Region we enjoy a greater level of political and economic freedom than we have ever had before. Yet, we find ourselves locked in a struggle to see the implementation of the constitutional guarantees that give the greatest hope for the future of all Iraq's peoples.

Our brothers in neighbouring countries each face their own unique challenges, and those of you who are living in the Diaspora have faced the difficulties of relocation and starting over, as well as the ongoing struggle to remain connected to your family and culture.

¹ The speech was read by Minister Ali Saeed, as the Prime Minister was unable to attend.

However, whatever difficulties there may be, there has never been a time that holds more promise for our people than now. Major developments and changes are taking place throughout the Middle East and the broader region, and the progress that we have achieved here in the Kurdistan Region of Iraq has opened many new opportunities. We find our brothers and sisters moving into new areas of professional and political life throughout the developed world, and families that have fled persecution are now finding peace and prosperity in their new homes.

2. Developing common views

We live in changing and uncertain times, and it is not clear what the future may hold for any of us. However, the greatest single issue facing the Kurdish nation now is that we find ourselves pulled apart by issues that are specific to our own unique circumstances, and these divisions keep us from realizing our full national potential.

We need to develop common objectives and strategies which support our people wherever they might live. We need to reach an agreement to rally support around broad principles:

a. The legitimacy of the culture, history and heritage of our people must not be denied, or undermined.

We have begun major initiatives to preserve and explore our heritage through cooperative archeological projects, through restoration projects on significant historical sites, and through beginning to establish museums and cultural centres in areas throughout the Region.

From the restoration of the Erbil citadel and the museums in this city, to the ancient stone carvings in Duhok, Shanidar cave, the three tanks marking the limit of Saddam's advance at Kore, the Red Prison in Slemani, and the Halabja memorial, we are working to ensure that future generations do not forget where we have come from or what it has cost us to get here.

Along with many other government institutions, the Kurdistan Regional Government (KRG) Ministry of Martyrs and Anfal Affairs has done a great deal to raise awareness and help gain recognition for the genocide against our people, and your support and contributions to this effort could have a significant impact on the lives and mental wellbeing of those who have paid the greatest price for the freedoms that so many of us now enjoy. You can help on every level, from talking to your friends, to organising petitions and information campaigns or leveraging political connections to draw attention to this issue.

The relevant KRG ministries are both working to build on other efforts in this sector as well. Archeological projects continue to progress in partnership with major universities abroad, and efforts are under way to increase public access to the many historic sites here in the Region through better maps, guides and literature on them and through initiatives to protect the sites themselves.

Even with all of this, there is still much that can be done in these areas as well. Regardless of your level of access to funding or experts in a specific field, you can get involved through helping organise events to celebrate our national holidays in your communities abroad or further improve and expand the preservation of our history and culture here through pursuing your own support initiatives.

b. Kurds everywhere are entitled to participate in their own decision-making within democratic, federal, and pluralistic state structures.

As John Locke articulated more than 300 years ago, governments are an extension of the people that they govern. Accordingly, our relationship with government is such that we each, individually give our consent to be governed in order to ensure our greater good and overall security. Because we all enjoy the freedom of this choice, the right to just representation in government is a basic human right that has been given to us by nature itself.

The 1992 elections which established our Parliament and led to the creation of our government, and the elections that we now hold to determine its makeup are the primary means by which we recognize and exercise this natural right.

The protection of this natural right is also why we have worked so hard to ensure the implementation of the Iraqi Constitution, the rule of law and equal representation in the Federal Government. The atrocities of our past have taught us that this is a right we cannot take for granted. We will never again accept a Federal Iraqi Government that does not recognize our rights through including us as active participants in its operations.

As our brothers and our natural representatives abroad, you are perfectly situated to support us in this effort. You can help to preserve all of our rights by ensuring that the excesses of the Federal Iraqi Government do not go unnoticed. You can articulate the circumstances and realities of Kurdistan to your friends and colleagues abroad, and you can help build partnerships to expand and improve the strength and effectiveness of our civil society here in Kurdistan.

c. Our objective must be a peaceful and democratic transformation to a more modern and pluralistic environment where our people can pursue their hopes and dreams free from fear and persecution.

The struggle to ensure one's rights is often very tough, and there have been many times in human history when armed resistance was required in order to exercise these rights. However, we do not live in one of those times. The resistance movements of Mahatma Gandhi, Martin Luther King, Nelson Mandela all revealed that major political victories can be achieved through peaceful means.

We must continue to struggle for our right to use our language, to celebrate our heritage, to have a voice in our governance and to be treated as equal citizens. These are all reasonable and defensible rights; however, we must not allow our actions in protection of them to overshadow or remove our dignity as we continue the struggle. We must agree to continue achieving recognition of these rights through peaceful means.

Many peaceful avenues are now available to us. Through the opening of Kurdistan to the international community since the fall of the former regime, our story is now being told all over the world. We now have 26 foreign representatives here in Erbil and 14 KRG representations abroad that all help bring international attention to these issues.

Hundreds of NGOs and other civil society institutions are already operating here in the Region. We have members of our Diaspora in democratic institutions and positions of influence around the world. Universities, academic institutions and international courts are open to us, and we have an active press corps, though it admittedly needs better training and an oversight body to ensure adherence to international standards of journalism.

All of these provide channels for action that will not undermine our struggle for international recognition and sponsorship of our rights.

d. Kurds everywhere need to work together as one to achieve rights and liberties for all our people, regardless of where they may live.

One of the oldest and most proven factors of political success is the strength of unity behind a common cause. As the old saying goes, "United we stand, but divided we fall."

We must take this ancient but simple truth to heart. We must look beyond our own private circumstances, and even beyond those of our immediate community. If we can all learn to reach for something bigger, if we can learn to subject our own private ambitions for the good of our greater cause, then I believe we will find our goals to be both manageable and well within our grasp.

No matter what field you are in or what your expertise may be, I encourage you to be a force for unity. Lead the way through being an example of how we can work together, and challenge others to do the same.

3. Value and help from the Kurdish Diaspora

We have of course made much progress, but there is still much more that needs to be done, and we need your varied education and experience to achieve our goals.

We cannot do this alone, and this is why we have given such broad-based support for this congress. This is an excellent opportunity for us to explore how we can all learn and benefit from each other in order to move forward.

With this important event as an example, the KRG can and is doing much to ensure our collective progress. However, public resources are limited and our future growth will be guaranteed by the strength of the free market and the success of the civil society in Kurdistan.

We can use your assistance in both the public and private sectors, but the private sector is where the greatest impact can be made. There is an old saying that, “necessity is the mother of invention,” and there is nowhere that creativity and invention are given more freedom to evolve than in the private sector.

We are surrounded by “necessities” in nearly every sector. You do not need to wait for someone to tell you where you can make a difference; find an area that you can improve, and take the initiative to make it happen.

4. Specific areas of interest

Many of you have experience in vital areas of our economy, and we encourage you to utilize your talents for our greater good.

Education

At a congress involving academics from a wide variety of sectors and backgrounds, it would be unforgivable of me if I failed to mention the significant efforts that can be made in this important field.

From spreading awareness through your daily involvement with students and colleagues, to writing papers, conducting research programmes and building links between our respective universities, the

sky is the limit to how effective you can be in promoting unity and progress in a wide variety of sectors.

We are now partnering with a great number of international universities through our HCDP scholarship programme, and you could also help to contribute in this either through encouraging the participation of your own institutions, or through mentoring scholarship recipients as they live and work abroad, or both.

Agriculture

Though I will leave the details of this topic Minister Baban here, this sector is one of the most important areas that needs improvement both here in the Kurdistan Region and for the rest of Kurdistan as well. In addition to the tremendous political benefit of providing food security for our people, this sector also has the potential to provide a renewable source of income as well as many new jobs for our people.

As you all know, our people have a rich agricultural history, and our land and water resources indicate that we could easily be a net exporter of many food products.

Your expertise in any part of this field could be tremendously useful, from helping establish functional packaging and distribution networks, to introducing new practices and technology, to helping establish research centres and partnerships with agricultural programmes in foreign universities. We could also benefit greatly from the development of aquaculture and the introduction of many new crop varieties to the Region.

Healthcare

Many of you are probably aware that the limits of our local healthcare system have been receiving a great deal of attention lately. From concerns over the quality of medicine to the availability of professional care, much has been made of the areas that need improvement in our system.

The KRG has responded to these concerns by launching a number of programmes, including a major quality control programme for pharmaceuticals in the Region which was launched just a few weeks ago. However, many of you have obtained expertise in this field during your time abroad, and your assistance through providing training workshops, telemedicine consultation, hospital partnerships and other initiatives would be very helpful.

Archeology and tourism

Another area that is of particular importance to our future is the preservation and public display of our national historic treasures. The full development of this sector would provide a wealth of information on our history and heritage, but it would also facilitate further international awareness of our needs and struggles, as well as create a significant additional source of annual revenue.

As part of the ‘birthplace of civilization’, the Kurdistan Region alone has over 3,000 known archaeological sites, several of which will likely soon become UNESCO World Heritage Sites. Many other sites exist just across our borders, and there is no question that this is an area of significance for all of Kurdistan.

Though our Region is still largely undiscovered by many in the international community, we are now hosting around 2 million annual tourists, and this number has grown by more than 30% for several years in a row.

Your input in this sector by providing additional links to self-funded research teams abroad or organizing professional artifact preservation, museum development or tourism promotion projects would be a significant contribution.

Other opportunities

As I mentioned before, there are literally limitless opportunities for your efforts to make a difference here in Kurdistan, and choosing where you will get involved is likely far less important than the fact of your involvement itself.

You could make significant contributions to the fields of industry, finance, health, communications, and many more.

However, whichever sector and in whatever capacity you choose, please remember that unity must be our foundation if we want to achieve overall success. Personal ambition and private gain must not be allowed to continue driving a wedge of separation between us.

Regardless of your area of expertise or your level of success in your field, you can help to spread awareness and build connections within the communities where you work and live.

You can work with our KRG Representatives abroad to promote solidarity amongst the Kurdish communities abroad and to keep our language and culture alive.

You can help to form partnerships in the industries and institutions where you work in order to expand our local capacity and build bridges for our people.

And finally, you can lead by setting an example of how to build unity and cooperation in working toward our collective goals and encourage others to do the same.

I would like to take this opportunity to thank you all for coming, and I would like to extend a special thanks to all of those who worked to help organise this important event.

I wish you all a productive congress.

Nechirvan Barzani
KRG Prime Minister
Erbil, 13 October 2012

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