

# The Kurdish Movement in the Arab World: The Syrian Kurds as a Case Study<sup>(1)</sup>

Mohannad Al-Kati <sup>(2)</sup>

This study examines Kurdish discourse within the Arab World through the lens of the discourse of the Kurdish movement in Syria. This group was selected due to its organic relationship with the other Kurdish movements in the region, and because it is heavily influenced by the discourse of the Kurdish movements of neighboring countries, particularly Iraq. The author attempts to provide a comprehensive guide to the various Kurdish parties and divisions. In his analysis of Kurdish discourse, he focuses mainly on the demands and perceptions of the Kurdish issue in Syria throughout various periods of the history of the movement.

Syrian Kurds Barzani Talabani Kurdistan Workers Kurdish National Council

Interest in the Kurdish project within the Arab World has seen a marked development since the sixties, when fighting broke out between the Kurds and the Iraqi army, culminating in the famous March 1970 agreement between Saddam Hussein's regime and Mustafa Barzani. Despite this, the Arabic literature addressing the Kurdish matter within the Arab world is still relatively poor, beyond material written by the Kurds themselves. This is especially true with respect to the Syrian Kurds. Mohamed Jamal Barout's "The Modern Historical Formation of the Syrian Jazira" was perhaps the first work to analyze the Syrian Kurds in great detail from outside the Kurdish framework. Through this study, the researcher seeks to answer questions related to the nature of the Kurdish political movement in Syria, its segments, its authorities, and the factors that influence its discourse. The researcher also provides an overview of the circumstances that

contributed to the reinvigoration of the Kurdish political movement in the Arab World, and the forms of support that were offered to them by some Arab regimes.

Four research sources were utilized in this paper: official documents and political statements issued by the Kurdish parties in Syria; statements, interviews and memoranda from prominent figures in the Kurdish movement; the researcher's own field work; and exposure to the progress of the Kurdish movement in Syria for over a decade.

The founding of the first Kurdish party in Syria was made public in 1957, and the majority of the other Kurdish parties can trace their roots back to it. Prior to this date, Kurdish activity was limited to elite Turkish Kurds who had taken refuge in Syria after 1925, establishing prominent Kurdish political and cultural centers in Damascus and Beirut.<sup>(3)</sup>

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<sup>2</sup> Researcher in Syrian social and political history, holds a master's degree in chemical engineering.

<sup>3</sup> Wadie Jwaideh, *The Kurdish National Movement: Its Origins and Development*, (Syracuse: Syracuse University Press, 2004). p. 352.

The most important achievement of this elite group was the establishment of the organization Xoybûn, which succeeded in holding its first conference in 1927.<sup>(4)</sup>

## The Kurdish National Movement Pre-Independence (1925-1946)

### The Sheikh Said Rebellion (1925) and its Impact on the Arab World

The Sheikh Said Rebellion, which erupted in 1925, was suppressed by the Kemalists using violent measures. The region witnessed events that Captain Armstrong described as brutal. Mustafa Kemal Atatürk established "independence tribunals" that sentenced thousands to exile, imprisonment or execution.<sup>(5)</sup> The Turks succeeded in crushing the rebellion,<sup>(6)</sup> forcing the rebels to escape to the mountains or to seek asylum in Iran, Iraq or Syria.<sup>(7)</sup> A contemporary scholar, Safrastian, describes a "great flow of Kurds into Syria at this time".<sup>(8)</sup> These Kurds, who worked as farmers and cattle herders, settled along the length of the Syrian side of the border.<sup>(9)</sup> The French also encouraged the reception of refugees in Jazira, and the number of Kurds in the region increased from 6000 in 1927 to 56,340 in 1939.<sup>(10)</sup> It is clear that the Arab World was greatly influenced by the events that took place at the time, and that its demographics were shifted by these waves of migration.

### The Xoybûn Movement of 1927, and its Discourse in the Arab World

Xoybûn launched its founding conference in Bhamdoun, Lebanon in 1927. This conference included the (educated) sons of tribal leadership as well as some Kurdish tribal leaders, all of whom were refugees in Syria. The efforts of this assembly were mainly focused on the Kurdish refugees in Syria.<sup>(11)</sup> Its objectives were to formulate a national language to help fight against the Kemalists,<sup>(12)</sup> to organize themselves against the Turks,<sup>(13)</sup> to liberate Kurdistan from the Turkish yoke,<sup>(14)</sup> and to vow that their revolution would only end with the expulsion of the Turks from or the firing of the last bullet in Kurdistan.<sup>(15)</sup>

Syria thus did not play a part in Kurdish political ambitions as articulated by Xoybûn,<sup>(16)</sup> and the Kurds who sought refuge in Syria were viewed by their clans as outside their homeland of Kurdistan.<sup>(17)</sup> Xoybûn did not include them in the total population of Kurdistan,<sup>(18)</sup> and nor did other studies.<sup>(19)</sup>

4 David McDowall, *A Modern History of the Kurds*, David McDowall, (London: I.B. Tauris, 2004) p. 203.

5 H.C. Armstrong, *Grey Wolf: Mustafa Kemal: An Intimate Study of a Dictator*, (New York: Methuen Publishing, 2016), p. 267.

6 Balh Sherko, *al-Qaḍiyya al-Kurdiyya: Māḍī al-Kurd wa-Ḥādiruhum*, (Beirut: Dār al-Kātib, 1985), p.95.

7 Ibid.

8 Arshak Safrastian, *Kurds and Kurdistan*, (London: Harvill Press, 1948), p. 169.

9 Ibid.

10 Muhammad Jamal Barut, *at-Takwīn at-Tārīkhī al-Ḥadīth li'l-Jazīrah as-Sūriyya: As'ila wa-Ishkāliyyāt at-Taḥawwul min al-Badwana ilā'l-'Umrān al-Ḥadārī*, (Beirut: al-Markaz al-'Arabī li'l-Abḥāth wa-Dirāsāt al-Siyāsiyyāt, 2013), p. 264.

11 Jordi Gorgas, *Le mouvement kurde de Turquie en exil: Continuités et discontinuités du nationalisme kurde sous le mandat français en Syrie et au Liban (1925-1946)*, (Bern: Peter Lang, 2006), p.148.

12 Gorgas, p.147.

13 Gorgas, p.352.

14 Sherko, p.113.

15 Sherko, p.123.

16 Sherko, p.108.

17 Osman Sabri, *Mudhakkirāt Ōṣmān Ṣabrī*, Translated by Murami Yazdi and Dilawer Zengī, Revised by Tawfiq al-Ḥusaynī

18 Shakir Khasbak, *al-Akrād: Dirāsa Jughrāfiyya Ithnogrāfiyya*, (Beirut: Dār al-Kutub al-'Ilmiyya, 2005), P.519.

19 Barut, P. 798.

## Section II: The Kurdish Movement in the Era of Independence

### The First Stage: Kurdish Discourse in the Era of Independence (1946-1956)

Xoybûn's stipulations respecting Iran's sovereignty began to disappear with the announcement of the establishment of a Kurdish Republic in Mahabad, Iran in 1946.<sup>(20)</sup> With the appointment of Mustafa Barzani and three other local leaders as Marshals in the forces of Mahabad,<sup>(21)</sup> the Kurdish struggle expanded to include Iran and Iraq.

Kamuran Bedirxan, in his lecture before the Royal Asian Society in London in 1949, described the results as follows: "Three nations have dominated the Kurdish people, and therefore, Kurdistan has become divided between the three nations of Turkey, Iran and Iraq."<sup>(22)</sup> Nur al-Din al-Durismi also expressed the same concept stating that "ruthless ambition has divided Kurdistan into three parts. The first part belongs to Turkey, the second part belongs to Iran, and the third part belongs to the State of Iraq."<sup>(23)</sup> Syria still, as yet, played no part in Kurdish ambitions.

### The Second Stage: The Kurdish Movement before Assad's Rise to Power

Records indicate that the idea for a Kurdish party originated in 1956 with Osman Sabri,<sup>(24)</sup> who had received political asylum in Syria in 1929.<sup>(25)</sup> Nûredîn Zaza, who had taken refuge in Syria in 1930, was selected as the first president of the party. The aim of the party, as Zaza noted, was to "preserve the identity of the Kurdish people, and to develop themselves in

order to pave the way for their national liberation within the framework of the Syrian State".<sup>(26)</sup> Jalal Talabani describes a meeting with Abdel Hamid al-Sarraj, who urged Talabani to focus the activity of the Syrian Kurds on Turkey given that the majority of Syrian Kurds were of Turkish origin. He also expressed his willingness to support them in forming the party and to provide them with whatever they required.<sup>(27)</sup>

Abd al-Hamid Darwish states that he was one of the three founders of the party, alongside Sabri and Hamza Narayan, with the assistance of Talabani who was a refugee in Damascus.<sup>(28)</sup> He also notes that the party's original name was the "Party of Syrian Democratic Kurds", and that it was renamed to the "Kurdish Democratic Party in Syria" (KDP-S) when its foundation was announced publicly on 14 June 1957.<sup>(29)</sup>

### Kurdish Discourse on the Eve of the Establishment of the First Kurdish Party

According to Zaza, the cadres of the newly formed Kurdish party were arrested in 1960 because of pamphlets produced by the party opposed to Nasser's policies.<sup>(30)</sup> While in prison, the first signs of disagreement appeared regarding the party's program.<sup>(31)</sup> The first group, represented by Zaza, wanted the party to present itself as a Kurdish Syrian cultural association.<sup>(32)</sup> The second group, led by Sabri, wanted it to focus on the subject of Kurdistan, and considered three regions that fell within the Syrian territory (Jazira, Afrin and Kobane) to be part of the

20 McDowall, p. 241

21 Ibid

22 Group of Researchers, *Mas'alat Akrād Sūriyah: al-Wāqī' - at-Tārīkh - al-'Astara*, (Beirut: Arab Center for Research and Policy Studies, 2013).

23 Freedom magazine, Issue 10, 21/05/1957, Al-Ayyam Al-Arabi newspaper, issue 96, 23/06/ 1957. See: Dîlawer Zengî and Ahmad Shihâb, *Min Adab al-Qadîyya: Wathâ'iq*, Special Edition, (Berlin: n.p. 2011), p. 67.

24 "Nadwa li'l-Muthaqqafîn al-Akrād fi'l-Qāmishlî ", from: *Jarîdat ad-Dîmuqrātî, Welate Me*, 09/08/2007, <https://bit.ly/2u6EEXx>.

25 Sabri, p.79.

26 Nur al-Din Zaza, *Hayātî ka Kūrdî*, Translated by Khosrau Butani, (Erbil: Dār 'Arās li'ṭ-Ṭibā'a, 2008), p. 176.

27 "Jalāl aṭ-Ṭalabānî Yatadhakkaru Qişşat al-'Uthûr 'alā Muşţafâ al-Barzānî fi Moskô", *al-Waşat*, Issue 357, 30/11/1998.

28 Abdulhamid Darwish, *'Adwâ 'alâ al-Ḥarakah al-Kurdiyya fi Sūriyyah: Aḥdāth Fatrat 1956-1893*, (1st ed. n.p. n.d, 2nd ed. al-Sūlaymāniyya, n.p., 2003), p.14.

29 Darwish, p. 20.

30 Zaza, p. 177.

31 Dîlawer Zengî, 'Uthmān Sabrî: *Hayātuhū - Niḍālühū - 'A'mālühū al-'Adabiyya*, (Beirut: Matba'at 'Amîral, 2012), p. 24.

32 Barut, p.798.

State of Kurdistan. Sabri was thus the first to develop the idea that Kurdistan extended to parts of Syria.<sup>(33)</sup>

### The Influence of the Kurdish Experience in Iraq

After Barzani's return from exile, Syrian Kurds were influenced by the experience of the Iraqi Kurdish revival.<sup>(34)</sup> The 1959 name change replacing "Kurds" with "Kurdistan" seems to have occurred under Iraqi influence.<sup>(35)</sup> The addition of the slogan of the liberation and unification of Kurdistan to the political program was also a byproduct of this influence.<sup>(36)</sup> From 1963, however, the party returned to its original name. The slogan of the liberation and unification of Kurdistan remained in place until the third party convention in August 1964,<sup>(37)</sup> when the Central Committee removed it from its political program.<sup>(38)</sup>

The divisions between Sabri and Zaza manifested in a split led by Sabri. Two wings subsequently formed in 1966: a left wing group led by Sabri called the Kurdish Democratic Party in Syria (al-Parti), and a right wing group led by Darwish called The Kurdish Democratic Progressive Party in Syria. The Right wing group added the word "progressive" to its party's name at the fourth conference in 1977 in order to distinguish itself from its Left counterpart. Talabani is seen as the political and intellectual authority and spiritual father of the Progressive Party, just as Barzani and Öcalan are the authorities for the rest of the Kurdish parties in Syria. Osman Sabri led the so-called left wing, which adopted nationalist and

ideological slogans and considers its "right" counterpart to be the worst of the worst.<sup>(39)</sup>

### Conflict between the Left and Right

Salah Badreddin states that the dispute between the two parties stems from the content and extent of national demands in Syria. Does the party express the aspirations of an indigenous people that are settled on their native land, as expressed by the Left, or are they an immigrant ethnic minority, as the Right claim? Should the party be a revolutionary intellectual political organization, as it is for the Left, or a reformist organization as the Right sees itself?<sup>(40)</sup> Does the party stand with the secessionist revolution led by Mustafa Barzani, or does it stand against it, as the Syrian regime and the Right would have it?<sup>(41)</sup>

Darwish, on the other hand, accuses the Left of receiving support from Idris Barzani.<sup>(42)</sup> He states that they were able to play a major media role by advocating for two major causes: support for Barzani, a legend among Kurds at the time, and Leftist and Marxist-Leninist ideology.<sup>(43)</sup>

Finally, the Kurdish Democratic Party in Syria (al-Parti) was formed in 1970 under the patronage of Mustafa Barzani. The aim of the conference was to unite the Right and the Left, and resulted in a transitional leadership, which became an independent party commonly referred to as "al-Parti" ("the Party").

## Section III: The Kurdish Movement during the Assad Era, 1971 - 2011

The activity of the Kurdish parties in Syria during the Assad era enjoyed a freedom unprecedented for

political forces operating outside the framework of the so-called Progressive National Front (*al-Jabha*

33 Ibid.

34 Salah Badreddin, *al-Ḥaraka al-Qawmiyya al-Kurdiyya fī Sūriyah: Ru'ya Naqdiyya min ad-Dākhil*, (Beirut/ Erbil: Rābiṭat Kāwā li't-Ṭibā'a wa'n-Nashr, 2003), pp.25-26.

35 Salah al-Khurasan, *at-Tayyarāt as-Siyāsiyya fī Kurdistān al-'Irāq: Qirā'a fī Malaffāt al-Ḥarakāt wa'l-Aḥzāb al-Kurdiyya fī'l-'Irāq 1946-2001*, (Beirut: Mu'assasat al-Balāgh li't-Ṭibā'a wa'n-Nashr, 2001), p. 83.

36 Darwish, p. 72.

37 Ali Shamdin, *al-Ḥaraka al-Kurdiyya fī Sūriyah wa Zāhirat al-Inshiqāqāt (1916-2016)*, (Sulaymaniyah: Markaz al-Abḥāth at-Tārikhiyya, 2016), p.47.

38 Darwish, p. 73.

39 Shamdin, p. 25.

40 Badreddin, p. 29.

41 Salah Badreddin, "Fī'dh-Dhikrā al-Khamsīn li-Kanferāns al-Khāmsīn min Āb, al-Ḥiwār al-Mutamaddīn," 04/08/2015, Accessed on: 10/07/2018, <https://bit.ly/2KITAfD>.

42 Darwish, pp. 97-98

43 Darwish, p. 101.



*al-Waṭaniyya at-Taḡaddumiyya*). Assad encouraged this, and formed close relationships with the Kurdish leaders (Talabani, Barzani and Öcalan) with the goal of using them to put pressure on Turkey and Iraq.

## The al-Parti Group

Several parties emerged from al-Parti, which was founded in 1970. For example, there was the Kurdish Democratic Party in Syria (Kamal Ahmed, Nasruddin Ibrahim). Hamid Sino, the secretary of al-Parti, viewed al-Parti as an extension of Barzani's thought, and therefore claimed that it should take political instructions from him.<sup>(44)</sup> Kamal Ahmed has led the Party since 1978, and will soon become a member of the Syrian parliament.<sup>(45)</sup>

The party witnessed several splits that can be summarized as follows:

First split: On June 15, 1975, led by Mohammed Baki Sheikh Mahmud, who believed that the party's decision-making should be independent of Barzani.<sup>(46)</sup>

Second split: In August 1981, led by Mohiuddin Sheikh Ali.

Third split: Ismail Omar split from Ahmed Kamal Agha in 1988, under the pretext that Agha was a follower of Barzani.

Fourth split: Following a dispute at the al-Parti conference in 1998, the party split into two wings, a wing led by Nasruddin Ibrahim and a wing led by Mohammad Nazir Mustafa, who was supported by Barzani. After the death of Nazir Mustafa, Abdul Hakim Bashar assumed the leadership of the party.

Fifth split: This split between the Si'ud Mala bloc, Abdul-Hakim Bashar and Abdul Rahman Alouji<sup>(47)</sup> resulted from disagreement over the election results prior to the al-Parti Conference in 1998. The party secretary issued a decision to disregard the election results, which was rejected by Alouji. He then formed a party separate from al-Parti, but under the same name.

Sixth split: Abdul Karim Seko led the split from the Alouji wing in 2012, and joined the Autonomous Administration project.

Seventh split: Khalil Ibrahim led a split in April 2015, separating from the Nasruddin Ibrahim wing.

### Al-Parti's Discourse in 1980

The third conference, held in 1980 during Kamal Ahmad Darwish's tenure as Secretary-General, adopted several new policy lines. The most important were:

1. To protect and strengthen Syria's resistance in the face of imperialist, Zionist and regressive plots.
2. To achieve popular democracy within the country and strengthen national unity.
3. To build a comprehensive progressive national front.

The final communiqué issued by the Party Conference also stated:

"The need to continue to support Syria's unwavering position at the forefront of resilience and confrontation in the face of imperialism and Zionism."<sup>(48)</sup>

### al-Parti's Discourse in 2007

The 10th conference held in 2007 represented a paradigm shift in al-Parti's discourse. Article 5 of the conference's stipulations states that: "al-Parti's struggle is founded on the existence of a Kurdish people living on their native land of Syria. The matter is therefore one of land and people. At 15% of the population, they constitute the second largest ethnic group in the country."<sup>(49)</sup>

## The Parties of the Left: The Kurdish People's Union Party

An extension of the left-wing KDP in Syria, led by Salah Badreddin until 2003. It has witnessed several splits since 1975:

The first split was led by Ismat Sida and Yusuf Dibu in 1975, months after the failure of Barzani's rebellion.

44 Darwish, p. 240

45 “’Ā’ilat ash-Shahīd Kamāl Tazūr Darīh al-Munāḡilayn Kamāl ‘Ahmad Darwish wa Shaykhmūs Mūsā”, [www.welateme.net](http://www.welateme.net), 11/03/2018, accessed 29/04/2009, <https://bit.ly/2NGpzUH>.

46 Darwish, p. 240.

47 Abdul Rahman Alouji, the son of Mullah Hassan Alouji, took refuge in Mosul with his family after the failure of Sheikh Said's rebellion in 1925. He later moved to the town of Amuda in Syria. *PĒNŪSA NŪ*, Year 3, Issue 35, March 2013. Pp. 14 - 16.

48 Alī Sālih Mirānī, “al-Ḥizb ad-Dīmuqrātī al-Kurdī fī Sūriyah (al-Partī) .. min at-Ta’sīs ilā’th-Thawra”, *Madarat Kurd*, 28/03/2016, accessed on 29/04/2018, <https://bit.ly/2N3Mato>.

49 Ibid.

They accused Salah Badreddin of taking a position against the Barzani rebellion.

The second split began in the summer of 1982, following the split of Sibghatullah Sida and Abdul Basit Sida (former head of the Syrian National Council)<sup>(50)</sup> from the party led by Ismat Sida. This group became the Kurdish Workers' Party in Syria.

The third split was formed after Khayr al-Din Murad split from Muhammad Musa in 1993 and formed a party under the same name.

The fourth split occurred when Khayr al-Din Murad's wing of the Kurdish Left party merged with a dissident group from the Kurdish Popular Union Party in 2005 to form the Kurdish Azadi (Freedom) Party in Syria.

The fifth split occurred when a group led by Mustafa Jum'a split from the Azadi party, forming the Azadi Party – Jum'a Wing.

The sixth split happened when the cadres that remained with the Azadi separated from Khayr al-Din Murad and became the Azadi – Mustafa Oso Wing.

## The Parties of the Right

These are the parties that split from the Kurdish Democratic Progressive Party in Syria, led by Darwish. The splits occurred as follows:

The first split was led by Aziz Dawe in the mid-1990s, taking the name Kurdish Democratic Equality Party in Syria.

The second split occurred in 1998 when Tahir Sfook split from the Equality Party formed by Aziz Dawe.

The third split was led by Feysel Yusuf, a member of the Central Committee of the party. In 2008, he formed a group called Reform (*al-Iṣlāḥ*) within the Party.

The fourth split occurred when Amjad Osman split from Feysel Yusuf's wing in the mid-2014. Osman participated in the Autonomous Administration, and became a member of the Syrian Democratic Council.<sup>(51)</sup>

## Group of Unity Parties (Yekiti)

### The Kurdish Democratic Unity Party in Syria (Yekiti)

In 1988, a group led by Ismail Omar split from al-Parti and allied itself with the Labor Party led by Sheikh Ali, a Leftist group led by Siddiq Sharnakhi, and the Kurdish Workers' Party. Following this agreement, the Kurdish Democratic Unity Party (*Ḥizb al-Waḥda ad-Dimuqrāṭī al-Kurdī*) was founded in Syria in 1990. Ismail Omar led this group from its inception until his death in 2010, and was succeeded by Sheikh Ali. This party experienced several splits:

The first split occurred in 1999 when a new extremist wing was established under the name Kurdish Yekiti Party, rather than the Unity Party. The political program of the 7th conference in 2013 included racist remarks targeted at Arabs resettled in predominantly Kurdish regions after the construction of the Euphrates Dam in the 1970s, the so-called “submerged Arabs” (*al-‘arab al-maghmūrūn*), describing them as “settlers” and likening their villages to Israeli settlements in Palestine. The program also described the party as part of the Kurdish liberation movement, and committed to a new name: Syrian Kurdistan. It also considered the non-Kurdish population to be residents in “Syrian Kurdistan”.<sup>(52)</sup> The party secretary, Ibrahim Biro, has held that position since 2014, and is also the president of the Kurdish National Council. Fuad Aliko is also a prominent party member, and a former member of the Syrian parliament.

The second split occurred when Abdul Basit Hamo split in 2009. He amended the official Yekiti party name by replacing the word “Kurdish” with “Kurdistani”. One of his major contributions was to propose federalism in Syria as a solution to the Kurdish problem.<sup>(53)</sup> He also adopted the term “Syrian Kurdistan” as a part of Greater Kurdistan.

50 Abdul Basit Sida is the grandson of Ubaydullah Jinckir Qasim al-Hizani (Hizan is a region of the Turkish province of Bitlis, in whose Külat village he was born). Ubaydullah continued his studies in the Islamic sciences first in Diyarbekir and then in Dari (Dara), and was granted the title of “Sida”, which is a title bestowed upon graduates of religious schools; it subsequently became his surname. He moved to Amuda with his brother Fathullah in the 1920s and was authorized to open a religious school there. Source: Personal communication with Abdullatif HUsayni, the author of the book “*Amuda*”, (Damascus: Matba'at Sūmar, 2003).

51 ‘A‘dā’ al-Hay’atayn al-Ri’āsiyya wa’s-Siyāsiyya li Majlis Sūriya ad-Dīmuqrāṭiyya, official page of the Syrian Democratic Council, 16/04/2016, accessed on 28/04/2016. <https://bit.ly/2KTxCzd>

52 “Submerged” is in reference to those whose lands were flooded by the Euphrates Dam. Some of them were given land in the Syrian Jazīra (Hasakah).

53 Hawzān Amīn, “‘Abdul-Bāsīt Hamo: Kānat Ru’yatunā Sabbāqa wa-Athbata at-Tārīkh wa’t-Thawra bi-anna Kḥiṭābanā kāna Mutaqaddiman ‘alā Aqrānīnā min al-Aḥzāb al-Kurdiyya”, Madarat Kurd, 01/10/2012, accessed on 28/04/2018, <https://bit.ly/2m89fQk>.

The third split took place when a new wing, led by Kamiran Haj Abdu, emerged after he announced his withdrawal from the Unity Party led by Sheikh Ali in January 2015.<sup>(54)</sup> During a special conference, the new wing announced that its name and banner had been changed, as they had replaced the word "Kurdish" in the name with "Kurdistani".<sup>(55)</sup>

The fourth split took place when Kamiran Haj Abdu's wing split into two wings in 2015. One wing remained under the leadership of Kamiran, while the other wing was led by Hajar Ali. The latter wing retained the word "Kurdish" in its name, rather than changing it to "Kurdistani". It also remained within the Kurdish National Council after Kamiran's withdrawal.

### The Kurdish Future Movement in Syria

Meshal Tammo founded the Kurdish Future Movement on the 29th of May, 2005. It is a nationalist Kurdish party that adheres to a nationalist discourse that began a rapid rise to prominence after the death of its founder Meshal Tammo. A split occurred in May 2014, leading to the rise of a Syrian wing led by Narin Matini and a European wing led by Siamend Hajo. Each wing considers itself to be more legitimate.<sup>(56)</sup>

#### The Discourse of the Future Movement in 2012

After the Revolution began, the discourse of the Future Movement was characterized by a type of escalation that featured a separatist tone. During its meeting in July 2012, the party announced a series of principles and tenets in its party vision, including the following:<sup>(57)</sup>

A -The Kurdish people in Syria are an indigenous people living on their land and in their state, and coexist with the Arab people and other nationalities.

B -The Kurdish people in Syria are an extension of the people of Kurdistan, and their land is a region of Kurdistan. Its territory was divided under colonial agreements into four parts, and one of those parts was annexed to modern Syria during French rule, entailing

two separate affiliations: a patriotic affiliation with the country of Syria, and an ethnic affiliation with Kurdistan.

The vision included other objectives, such as:

- The recognition of the Kurdish language as an official language alongside Arabic.
- The removal of settlements and all forms of Arabization and racial discrimination.
- Guaranteeing the Kurds' right to self-government in their regions.

#### The Discourse of the Future Movement in 2015

At the conclusion of the third conference held in June 2015, the Future Movement issued a working paper and a political vision that displayed further escalation. It included the following points:

Syrian Kurdistan is the Kurdistan region annexed to Syria under the Sykes-Picot colonial agreement, and the Kurdish people are those who live on this land.

Based on its vision of the transitional period, it demanded the following:

- The right of the Kurds to autonomy in the Syrian regions in which they live. This region should be named in the future Syrian constitution as Syrian Kurdistan, and should consist of the Hasakah, Afrin and Kobanî (Ain al-Arab) provinces.
- To designate the Arabic and Kurdish languages as official languages in the area called Syrian Kurdistan.
- The right to economic independence in order to guarantee autonomy in the Kurdish regions, as well as the right to collect taxes on resources such as oil.

### The Democratic Union Party (PYD)

The PYD (*Partiya Yekîtiya Demokrat*) is the abbreviation of the Kurdish name for the Democratic Union Party (*Ĥizb al-Ittiḥād ad-Dimuqrāḥī*). It is the Syrian branch of the Kurdistan Workers' Party (PKK) sponsored by Damascus from the 1980s until the end

54 Hāj ' Abdū: "Hunāk Ĥizbān bi'sm (al-Waḥda) Aḥaduhumā Takhallā 'an an-Nahj wa'l-'Ākhar Multazimun Bihī", Rudaw, 14/01/2015, Accessed on: 28/04/2018, <https://bit.ly/2KHuB5A>.

55 "Ĥizb al-Waḥdah ad-Dīmuqrāḥīyya Yughayyiru Shi'ārahū wa'smahū ilā'l-Kurdistāni fi Ijtimā' Khāṣṣ", Yekīti Media, 10/09/2016, Accessed on: 28/04/2017, <https://bit.ly/2Kla0hu>. (Problem w/ link).

56 "Tātshir al-Kurdiyya, Narīn Matīnī li Būyer: Sa-Abqā fi Kurdistan Rojavā li'stikmāl al-Masīra," Būyer Press, 03/05/2015, Accessed on: 28/04/2017, <https://bit.ly/2L0nWC>.

57 Al-Barnāmaj al-Siyāsī li-Tayyār al-Mustaqbal al-Kurdī fi Sūriyyā. Official Page of the Kurdish Future Movement Party in Syria, Accessed on 28/04/2018, <https://bit.ly/2m9rWTE>.

of the 1990s, when training camps were set up to be utilized against Ankara.<sup>(58)</sup>

The Kurdistan Workers' Party came to an end due to the departure of Öcalan from Syria in 1998 and the Adana agreement with Turkey. After it was placed on the terrorist list, the Syrian branch adopted a new name in 2003 amid suspicions that the Kurds in Turkey were the actual leaders of the party.<sup>(59)</sup>

The Syrian regime re-activated and used the Syrian branch of the Kurdistan Workers' Party led by Saleh Musallam at the start of the Syrian revolution. It began its public activity with the support of the regime, and formed the so-called People's Protection Units (YPG) in 2012.

The PYD's updated by-laws in 2015 state that "the Democratic Union Party considers the leader Abdullah Öcalan – the founder of the theory of democratic civilization and the democratic nation – to be its inspiration."<sup>(60)</sup> Before the modification, the paragraph read as follows: "The PYD accepts the leader of the Kurdish people, Abdullah Öcalan, as its commander."

In conjunction with the 2013 Syrian opposition's declaration of the formation of the transitional

government, the PYD announced the formation of the "Transitional Civil Administration". In a statement to Reuters, Musallam stated: "The announcement of the establishment of a temporary administration seeks to establish self-government in the Syrian Kurdish region only until a lasting solution is found to the Syrian Civil War."<sup>(61)</sup> However, this move was rejected by the opposition coalition,<sup>(62)</sup> Barzani,<sup>(63)</sup> and Turkey. Britain also expressed concern about the announcement, while France stated that the decision "belonged to the national opposition coalition, as it is the legitimate representative of the Syrian people."<sup>(64)</sup>

On the eve of the Geneva II Conference, while the PYD was excluded from the opposition delegation, self-rule was declared on the 21st of January, 2014 in three districts called cantons (i.e. provinces): Syrian Jazira, Afrin, and Ayn al-Arab (Kobane).<sup>(65)</sup>

The PYD militias have committed war crimes against civilians under the guise of fighting ISIS. They were condemned by several local and international organizations, and their actions were described by Amnesty International as amounting to war crimes against humanity.<sup>(66)</sup>

## Section IV: The Kurdish Movement after the Start of the Syrian Revolution

### The Kurdish National Council (KNC)

Founded in the city of Qamishli by the Kurdish parties close to northern Iraq, the founding conference was held on 26/10/2011, and adopted several points:

1. Work towards a democratic, pluralistic parliamentary state that guarantees the national rights of the Kurdish people.

2. Constitutional recognition of the Kurdish people as a key component community of the country.

The Conference also issued several resolutions:

A- Regarding Syria:

That Syria is witnessing an escalating national "crisis" that the regime is responsible for. The

58 Chris Kutschera, *The Long March of the Kurds: 40 Years of History in the Making*, ([N.P], [N.D]), p. 253.

59 Hūshink `Ūst: "Hizb al-`Ummāl al-Kurdistānī wa Akrād Sūriyā... wa al-`Alawiyya as-Siyāsiyya", *Al-Ḥayāt*, 21/11/2016, accessed on: 28/04/2018, <https://bit.ly/2NDGIhS>.

60 "An-Nizām ad-Dākhilī", Official Site of the PYD, Accessed on: 28/04/2017, <https://bit.ly/2NFdDCX>.

61 "Za`īm Kurdī Yu`lin Tahqīq Makāsib `Askariyya Didd al-Islāmiyyīn, Reuters, 14/11/2013, Accessed on: 28/04/2018, <https://bit.ly/2N1YiuQ>.

62 "al-Mu`āraḍa as-Sūriyya: Hizb al-Ittiḥād al-Kurdī `Mu`ādin` li`th-Thawra, Riyadh: 14/11/2013, Accessed on: 28/04/2017, <https://bit.ly/2KJ8bkg>.

63 Şafā` `Abdul-Hamīd, "al-Barzānī Yarfuḍ at-Ta`āmūl ma` al-Idāra al-Mu`aqqata fi Kurdistān Sūriyā. Alsumaria News, 14/11/2013, Accessed on 28/04/2018, <https://bit.ly/2umpOLS>.

64 "Faransā: al-Akrād sa-Yakūn Lahum Makānuhum fi Binā` Sūriyā, DP News, 13/11/2013, Accessed on: 28/04/2017, <https://bit.ly/2zmzgeI>.

65 Aldār Khalīl, *Safahāt min Thawrat ash-Sha`b fi Rojāvā*, (Hasakah: Dār ash-Shahīd Harkūl li at-Ṭibā wa An-Nashr, 2017), p. 166.

66 "Sūriyā: Tadmīr al-Qurā `alā Aydi Ḥulafā` al-Wilāyāt al-Muttaḥida Yu`add bi Mithābat Jarā`im Ḥarb", *Munazzamat al-`Afw ad-Duwaliyya*, 13/10/2015, Accessed on: 28/04/2018, <https://bit.ly/2N3Z5eP>.



solution is to change the authoritarian regime with its organizational, political and intellectual structure, and to build a secular, democratic and pluralistic state based on political decentralization.

### B) Regarding the Syrian Kurds

1. The Kurdish people in Syria are an indigenous people, living on their native land.
2. Constitutional recognition of their existence as the country's second-largest ethnic group.
3. To find a just solution to its national cause, ensuring its right to self-determination within a united nation.

Effective May 2012, the Kurdish National Council expanded to include 16 parties.<sup>(67)</sup>

#### The KNC's Political Program

The "transitional" program adopted by the Kurdish National Council on 21/04/2012 represented a retreat from previous aspirations, as it omitted the paragraph relating to self-determination, and included the following program:<sup>(68)</sup>

1. For the constitution to recognize the existence of the Kurdish people and their national identity in Syria, consider its language as an official language in the country, and give them their legitimate national rights.
2. The Kurdish people in Syria are part of the Syrian people, and they are an indigenous and essential population of the country.

The KNC joined the SNC on 07/09/2013, after the latter agreed to sign a draft including the terms of an agreement for the future relationship with the Kurds. This was after the SNC announced its commitment to the General Assembly's decision that all agreements entered into by the coalition with any Syrian political entity are to be ratified by the first parliamentary council, which has the right to either approve or disregard it.<sup>(69)</sup>

#### The Growing Scope of KNC Demands

The scope of the KNC's demands have fluctuated according to the strength of the opposition. At every

international gathering it has held the threat of its withdrawal from the SNC over the opposition's heads. In a statement submitted to the President of the General Authority for Negotiations (Riyad Hijab) on 06/09/2016, it protested against the resolutions of the London Conference representing the opposition's vision of a solution. Their protest included the following points:<sup>(70)</sup>

A - The document disregards national pluralism by considering Syria to be part of the Arab fatherland (*al-waṭan al-`arabī*).

B - The document erases the contribution of other ethnic groups to the construction of Syria, as it states that Arab-Islamic culture will be adopted as a "productive aid" to intellectual production and social relations.

C - The document recognizes the Arabic language as the only official language in the country, disregarding the Kurdish language.

D - The document makes no mention of recognition and protection of the national, linguistic, cultural and political constitutional rights of the Kurdish people.

E - The document's plan for administrative decentralization of the state is no more than an attempt to reproduce the existing system of local councils implemented by the regime.

The Kurdish National Council declared that it was not bound by this document and refused to participate in the London conference.<sup>(71)</sup>

#### The KNC and the Constitution of Syrian Kurdistan

While objecting to the London conference, the Kurdish National Council produced a new draft constitution for Syrian Kurdistan independently from the opposition. This represents the most dangerous escalation in its discourse. The Constitution consists of 115 articles, and states that:<sup>(72)</sup>

- Syrian Kurdistan is a Syrian territory.

- The territory participates in all of the general decisions of the Syrian state according to the Syrian

67 "al-Majlis al-Waṭanī al-Kurdī fī Sūriyya", Carnegie Middle East Center, Accessed on: 28/04/2018. <http://ceip.org/2ugTFFC>.

68 "Taqrīr Ḥawl al-Ijtimā' al-I'tiyādī li'l-Majlis al-Waṭanī al-Kurdī," Welate Me, 09/08/2007, Accessed on: 03/01/2017, <https://bit.ly/2u6EEXx>.

69 "al-I'tilāf Ya'tabir Ittifāq Jinīf "Munāwara": Rafd `Ayy Ḥall Siyāsī bi Mushārahāt Rumūz an-Nizām," al-Ḥayāt, 17/09/2013, Accessed on: 28/04/2017, <https://bit.ly/2N0Hd4L>.

70 "Bayān min al-Majlis al-Waṭanī al-Kurdī fī Sūriyā Ḥawl `I'lān Wathīqat al-Iṭār at-Tanfīdhī fī Mu'tamar London", Rojava News, 10/09/2016, Accessed on: 28/04/2017, <https://bit.ly/2u44qfd>.

71 Ibid.

72 Ibid; "Rudaw Tanshur Naşş Muswadda Dustūr al-Majlis al-Waṭanī al-Kurdī li Idārat Kūrdistān Sūriyā", Rudaw News, 06/01/2017, Accessed on: 28/04/2017, <https://bit.ly/2u9QwrL>.

Constitution. It is represented in all centralized state institutions.

- The rights, obligations, territory, and wealth of the region are protected by the constitution. This cannot be altered without the region's consent.

Article 8 mentions that the Kurdish flag used in Iraqi Kurdistan is its symbol.

### The Kurdistan Democratic Party - Syria

The KDP-S was formed by four parties affiliated with the Kurdish National Council. They announced the party's existence in Erbil in April 2014, and gave it an identical name to Barzani's party. The party's internal regulations state that its struggle is an extension of the general heritage of peoples' struggle, and in

particular, Barzani's immortal way of struggling. The party works to:

- Abrogate chauvinistic edicts targeting the Kurdish people.
- Reconsider the administrative divisions in order to achieve a national, political and administrative unity of the Kurdish areas of the Kurdistan region of Syria.
- Ensure the Kurdish issue is understood to be an essential national issue, whose solution is the constitutional recognition of the Kurdish people in Syria and their national rights embodied by federalism within the framework of national unity.
- Rename the state to the Syrian Republic [without "Arab"].
- Change the Syrian flag so that it reflects the state's constituent communities appropriately.
- Unite the Kurds of Syria politically.

## Section V: The Reinvigoration of the Kurdish Movement in the Arab World

The most important reasons for the reinvigoration of the Kurdish movement in Syria during the era of independence, and specifically since the mid-fifties, may be summarized as follows:

1. The political conditions in Syria during the independence period were very suitable for the revival of the political and cultural movement, including the Kurdish movement. During this time, cultural associations were founded and Kurdish books, political programs and publications printed in Damascus.<sup>(73)</sup>

2. The internal Arab conflict between Nasser's bloc and the Baghdad Pact encouraged him to support the Kurdish movement.<sup>(74)</sup> Nasser's famous Voice of the Arabs (*Ṣawt al-'Arab*) Radio launched a special channel broadcasting programs in Kurdish.<sup>(75)</sup> This increased Iranian fears that Nasser's influence might spread to Iran's Kurds too.<sup>(76)</sup>

3. The Kurdish movement was reinvigorated with Abd al-Karim Qasim's successful coup against the monarchy. The exiled Barzani gave his support to the move through a telegram, describing himself as a soldier in the service of the revolution. He was allowed to return in 1958<sup>(77)</sup> after passing through Cairo and meeting with Nasser. When he arrived in Baghdad, he was received warmly by the state and housed at state expense. He and the 755 people accompanying him were given monthly salaries and generous financial benefits.<sup>(78)</sup>

4. All of these circumstances generally affected the collective Kurdish national consciousness. Barzani became the leader of all the Kurds, including the Syrian Kurds, as his return had a significant positive impact on them.<sup>(79)</sup>

73 "Nadwa lil Muthaqqafin al-Akrād fī al-Qāmishlī", from: Jarīdat ad-Dīmuqrāfī, Welate Me, 09/08/2007, Accessed on: 28/04/2018. <https://bit.ly/2u6EEXx>.

74 Sa'd Nāji Jawwād, al-'Irāq wa al-Mas'ala al-Kurdiyya (1958-1970), (London: Dār al-Lām, 1990), p. 173.

75 Mr. Adnan Ibrahim Haqqi was a Kurdish language program host. He was from the city of Qamishli, and belonged to a well-known Naqshbandi family. He participated during his studies at al-Azhar University in Cairo.

76 McDowall, p. 251.

77 McDowall, p. 73.

78 al-Khurasan, p. 73.

79 Darwish, p. 27.

## Kurdish Leaders' Testimonies regarding the Position of the Arab Regimes on the Kurdish Movement

Abd al-Hamid Darwish mentions that Abdel Nasser was not at all hostile towards the Kurdish issue, and describes him as both realistic and objective, noting the communications that took place between their party and Kamal el-Din Rifaat, Minister of State in the unity government.<sup>(80)</sup> Jalal Talabani was the most vocal of the Kurdish leaders regarding the support he was offered by the Arab regimes, and never denied the support they provided the Kurdish movement. He stated that Gaddafi was in favor of the movement, and that he was in favor of the idea of the opposition toppling the Baghdad government. He was always supportive of the Kurdish question, and was prepared to offer various forms of support to the Kurdish movement in Iraq.<sup>(81)</sup>

As for Syria, Abd al-Hamid al-Sarraj, the head of Syrian military intelligence in the 1950s, expressed his readiness to support the Iraqi Kurds in armed action. He also agreed to Talabani's request to supply him with weapons in order to increase pressure on Nuri al-Said.<sup>(82)</sup>

Regarding Assad's support, Talabani was equally clear: "We will not forget Syria's support for us. We will not forget that Syria has supported us since the establishment of our party. There was a time they provided us with arms, funds and shelter. In other periods they provided us with political support. We will never forget President Hafez al-Assad's support."<sup>(83)</sup>

Documents published by the Iraqi historian Salah al-Khurasan confirm Syrian support for the Kurdish movement. This support took various forms at various times, and may be summarized as follows:<sup>(84)</sup>

1 - Talabani founded his party in the neighborhood of Abu Rummaneh, Damascus, on 22/05/1975, after the collapse of the Barzani revolt. The media broadcasted the founding statement on the Voice of Iraq radio station from Damascus for three consecutive days.

2. Damascus allowed Talabani to engage in all communications inside and outside of Iraq, and allowed him to establish a radio station based in the northern Syrian city of Qamishli.

3. Talabani stated that Hafez al-Assad gave the opportunity to the Kurds to re-organize their ranks and revive the Kurdish movement.

4. After the collapse of the Kurdish revolution in Iraq in 1975, Syria opened its doors to large numbers of Peshmerga. The Syrian regime facilitated this process by establishing a camp near the city of Qamishli to re-mobilize and organize them after they settled in the Qamishli, Hasaka and Derik regions.

5. A Coordination Committee, led by the Iranian Abdul Razzaq Aziz Mirza, was formed in the city of Qamishli, with the mission of securing communication between the founding body and the field leaders within Iraqi Kurdistan. This was after a number of Kurdish and Turkish Kurdish militias - such as Komala, the Ali Sangari militia, the Kurdistan Socialist Movement, and other forces - trained in Syria to re-ignite the revolution in northern Iraq.

6. Talabani negotiated with the Iranians in 1980 to release a shipment of weapons impounded in Iranian ports. This shipment comprised three thousand units presented as a gift from the Syrian regime, and ten thousand other units gifted to them by the Libyan regime.

The Barzani leadership in turn recognized the good relationship it had with the Syrian regime. The final communiqué of the tenth conference of the Barzani Party in 1989 praised the Syrian Arab Republic and the Libyan Jamahiriya for their support of the Kurdish liberation movement and of the Iraqi opposition in general. The statement also saluted the Islamic Republic of Iran for its support and assistance to the Kurdish movement.<sup>(85)</sup>

80 Darwish, p. 30.

81 Khurasan, p. 325.

82 Ibid.

83 Khurasan, pp. 469 - 470.

84 . Khurasan, p. 317, p. 470.

85 Khurasan, p. 276.

## Conclusion

The Arab World has been a relatively politically and socially amenable space for Kurdish political entities of various ideological characters, specifically in Syria and Iraq as opposed to Iran and Turkey. Inter-Arab disputes have had a clear impact on attempts to influence the Kurds. Kurdish discourse has escalated or de-escalated in Syria depending on the power of the central state – aligning with it closely during periods of state power, as evident in the Third Conference in 1980, and differentiating itself slightly when the state's power decreased, as evident in the Party's address at the Tenth Conference in 2007.

Kurdish discourse in Syria has also been highly influenced by its counterpart in northern Iraq and its continuous association with the Kurdish leadership of Barzani and Talabani. The escalation of Syrian Kurdish discourse after the US invasion of Iraq in 2003 is evidence of this, as well as their attempt to replicate the Kurdish experience in Iraq despite the geographical, historical and demographic differences between the Kurds in the two countries.

The Kurdish political discourse has also undergone changes during the Syrian revolution, as most of the demands of the rebellious Kurdish protestors during the first months of the revolution were limited to the general demands of the revolutionaries, as in other Syrian cities. When the revolutionary forces' victory was not so quick in coming and with Kurdish parties joining the demonstrations, Kurdish national discourse escalated at the expense of the discourse of patriotic Kurdish coordination with other Syrian forces. The latter discourse declined even further with the fragmentation of the Syrian revolutionary forces, and their failure to realize the aspirations of the people who had revolted. This change in the KNC's discourse is clearly demonstrated by their declining interest in the national discourse due to the weakness of the revolutionary and opposition forces. This then led to the unilateral formation of a constitution for the areas they called Syrian Kurdistan.

The scope of the demands made by the Democratic Union Party (PYD), the political front of the PKK in Syria, increased more clearly and in inverse proportion to the strength of the Syrian regime, which had been providing them with weapons

and other sources of funding since the beginning. It thus initially limited its demands to restricted government in certain areas of the cities of Hasakah and Aleppo. However, as the Syrian regime grew weaker and lost control over a large area of the province of Hasakah, their demands became more ambitious, and in January 2014 they declared what they called the Democratic Autonomous Administration. As the Syrian regime's control over the regions around the cities of Qamishli and Hasakah became even more limited, the PYD announced its federal project for Syria. It has also been helped by its alliances with major powers such as Russia and the United States, who have allowed them to move forward with their project. With these alliances, they were able to replace the Syrian logistic and military support. US support given as part of their declared war on ISIS has allowed them to control other areas in northern Aleppo and rural areas of Raqqa where there was no previous Kurdish presence. They have quickly come to consider this part of their greater project in Syria, which has increased opposition towards them from both Arabs and Kurds alike.

The internal vertical and horizontal splits that have beset the Kurdish movement in Syria reflect its weakness. This is because most of these movements are linked to authorities outside of Syria, such as Iraq and Turkey. Thus, since its establishment, the Kurdish movement has not succeeded in finding suitable Kurdish leadership within Syria. It also seems that the escalation of the Kurdish discourse in Syria will make dealing with the Kurdish movement inside Syria more difficult in the future, as a large segment of the Syrian people believe that the Kurdish parties in Syria are opportunistic, and that they have exploited the weakness of the Syrian front during the revolution and begun to advocate separatist projects. This is because the Kurdish political programs, demands and projects after the revolution completely contradict the open statements of many Kurdish politicians and intellectuals – that the Kurds do not seek to secede, and that the Kurds' desire for separation is nothing but an accusation popularized by the Syrian regime in order to sow suspicion in the hearts of the Syrian people towards them.



## Appendix

**A table of the Kurdish parties since the establishment of the first Kurdish political party in Syria to this day:**

Period	#	Name of the Party	President (Secretary) of the Party	Year of establishment	Main Reference
<b>Pre-Assad</b>	1	The Kurdish Democratic Party	Nûredîn Zaza	1957	-
	2	The Kurdish Democratic Progressive Party	Abd al-Hamid Darwish	1966	Talabani
	3	The Kurdish Democratic Left Party in Syria	Osman Sabri Salah Badr al-Din	1965 1968	Barzani
	4	The Kurdish Democratic Party (al-Parti)	Daham Miro Hamid Sino Kamal Ahmed Nasruddin Ibrahim	1970	Barzani
<b>Hafez al-Assad</b>	5	The Kurdish Democratic Party (al-Parti) of Syria	Muhammad Baki Sheikh Mahmud	1975	-
	6	The Kurdish Democratic Labor Party in Syria	Mohiuddin Sheikh Ali	1981	Barzani
	7	The Kurdish Workers' Party	Sibghatullah Seda Abdul Basit Sida	1982	Barzani
	8	The Kurdish Equality Party in Syria	Aziz Dawe Nimat Dawud	1990s	Talabani
	9	The Kurdish Democratic National Party in Syria	Tahir Sfook	1998	Talabani
	10	The Kurdish Democratic Unity Party in Syria (Yekiti)	Ismail Omar Mohiuddin Sheikh Ali	1988	-
	11	The Kurdish Yekiti party in Syria	Fuad Aliko Ibrahim Biro	1999	Barzani
	12	The National Kurdish Democratic Coalition	Marwan al-Zarki	1998	Barzani
	13	The Democratic Union Party	Salih Muslim	2001	Öcalan
<b>Bashar al-Assad</b>	14	The Kurdish Accord (Wifaq) Party in Syria	Kemal Shahin	2003	Öcalan
	15	The Kurdish Accord (Wifaq) Party in Syria	Fawzi Shingar	2009	Öcalan
	16	The Syrian-Kurdish Democratic Party (al-Parti)	Khalil Ibrahim	2015	Barzani
	17	The Azadi Kurdish Party in Syria	Khair al-Dien Murad.	2005	Barzani

<b>Bashar al-Assad</b>	18	The Azadi Kurdish Party in Syria	Mustafa Jumaa	2007	Barzani
	19	The Azadi Kurdish Party in Syria	Mustafa Oso	2007	Barzani
	20	The Kurdish Reform Movement	Feysel Yusuf	2010	Talabani
	21	The Kurdish Reform Movement	Amjad Othman	2014	Talabani
	22	The Kurdish Democratic Union Party in Syria	Hajar Ali	2016	Barzani
	23	The Kurdish Future Movement in Syria	Meshal Tammo	2005	Barzani
	24	The Kurdish Future Movement in Syria (External)	Siamend Hajo	2014	Barzani
	25	The Kurdish Future Movement in Syria (Internal)	Narin Matini	2014	Barzani
	26	The Yekiti Kurdistan Party	Abdul Basit Hamo	2009	Barzani
	27	Kurdistan Democratic Party – Syria	Si'ud Mala	2014	Barzani
	28	The Kurdistan Freedom Party	Adham Basho	2015	Barzani
	29	The Kurdistan Left Party in Syria	Muhammad Mulla		
	30	Vanguardist al-Parti	Ismail Hassaf	2011	Barzani
	31	Rasti Democratic Movement in Syria	Khalil Yusuf	2012	Barzani
	32	Kurdish Independence Movement in Syria	-	2013	Barzani
	33	Kurdish National Council	Ismail Hami Abdul Hakim Bashar Ibrahim Biro	2012	Barzani
	34	Kurdish Democratic Political Union	-	2012	Barzani
	35	Independent Syrian Kurds Association	Abdulaziz Temo	2016	Barzani
	36	Ronak Kurdish Organization in Syria	Nasrin Ali	2014	-
	37	National Organization Of Youth Kurds (SOZ)	Shabal Ibrahim	2013	Barzani
	38	Kurdish Youth Assembly in Syria	-	2012	Barzani
	39	Kurd Youth Movement	Mahmoud Lyani		
	40	The Kurdistan Democratic Unity Party	Kamiran Haj Abdu	2015	Autonomous Administration
	41	The Kurdish Accord (Wifaq) Party in Syria	Haji Afrini	2010	Öcalan

<b>Bashar al-Assad</b>	42	The Kurdish Democratic Accord (Wifaq) Party	Nash'at Muhammad	2010	Öcalan
	43	Syrian Kurds' Democratic Peace Party	Telal Mihemed	2013	Öcalan
	44	The Kurdistan Democratic Way Party	Ali Sheikho	2014	Öcalan
	45	Kurdistan Liberal Union Party	Ferhad Têlo	2013	Autonomous Administration
	46	Kurdistan Liberal Union Party	Ibrahim Hami	2013	Autonomous Administration
	47	Kurdish Democratic Change Movement - Syria	Rizgar Qasim	2006	Barzani
	48	Kurdish Leftist Party in Syria	Masum Feysal Umri	2011	Autonomous Administration
	49	Kurdish Democratic Left Party in Syria	Salih Gedo	2008	Autonomous Administration
	50	Kurdish Democratic Left Party in Syria	Shelal Gedo	2014	Barzani
	51	Kurdish People's Union Party	Omar Aquli	-	-
	52	Kurdistani People's Movement - Syria	Adnan Bozan	2012	Barzani
	53	The Kurdish National Current In Syria			Barzani
	54	Kurdistan National Congress in Syria	Jawad Mella	1985	-
	55	Kurdistan Democratic Party	Abdul Karim Sko	2012	Autonomous Administration
	56	Kurdistan Brotherhood Party	Muhammad Kro	2016	Barzani
	57	Kurdistan Brotherhood Party	Taz Mustefa Pasha	2016	-
	58	Kurdistan Democratic Unity Party	Kamiran Haj Abdu Faslat Yusuf	2015	Autonomous Administration
	59	Kurdish youth movement	Muhammad Mulla Rashid	2014	Autonomous Administration
	60	Communist Party of Kurdistan	Nejmeddin Mela Omer	2013	Autonomous Administration
	61	The Star Union Women's Organization	-	2013	Autonomous Administration
	62	SARA Organization for Eliminating Violence against Women	-	2013	Autonomous Administration
	63	Civil Society Organization	Razan Kamo	2013	Autonomous Administration
	64	Shoresh Women's Organization	-	2013	Autonomous Administration

<b>Bashar al-Assad</b>	65	Kurdish Students Confederation in Syria		2012	Autonomous Administration
	66	Free Patriotic Union Party in Syria	Tawfik Hamdoush	2014	Autonomous Administration
	67	The Kurdish Conscience Movement in Syria			Autonomous Administration
	68	Rights of Western Kurdistan			Autonomous Administration
	69	Organization for the Defense of Prisoners of Conscience in Syria (Rewangeh)			Autonomous Administration
	70	Kurdish Organization for Human Rights in Syria (DAD)			
	71	Kurdistan's Free Society			

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