

Why` don't the Kurds have their own state?
From Dersim, to Halabja, to Sinjar, to
Kobani, to Afrin, the mentality is same:
Genocide!

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Abstract

On the eve of World War I, the Kurds still had their autonomous regions and their legal right to speak their mother tongue, celebrate Kurdish traditions, and identify as a distinct ethnic community. However, after the war and colonial carve up of middle east, the Kurds have found their selves imprisoned, oppressed as a minority in these newly created states. That is to say that the Kurdish question has its origins in the era of British/French colonial rule. So, to understand why the Kurds don't have a state and have been massacred wherever they have asked for their right of self-determination, we need to grasp the history of Kurds between 1917 and 2017. One hundred years of misery: For right-wing factions dominated the government in these newly created states and consolidated their power, militarized the state, thus, political space become significantly reduced for Kurdish communities, just as it was the case in Ba'athist Iraq and Syria, Islamic Iran, and Kemalist Turkey. Therefore, this thesis will argue that the Kurds don't have a state because of the current dynamics of realism in international system which the Kurds are not part of. In doing so, it will use both the Realism and Securitization theories to explain the Kurdish misery in their Historic Land of Kurdistan. It will reflect on the history of Kurdistan and how the colonial carve up of Middle East have shaped the destiny of Kurdish people which should infer that Britain and France are ethically responsible and have to repair the damage that have been inflicted upon the Kurds. It will overview the Kurdish struggle after Sykes-Picot. Lastly, it will argue that Realism theory can fruitfully be applied to "intra-state security dilemma" and explain why the Kurds don't have a state.

Introduction:

The vast Kurdish homeland consists of about 200,000 square miles of territory. Its area is roughly equal to that of France, or the states of California and New York combined (Izady,1992, pp.1). Estimates of the number of Kurds in the world vary considerably, but the most realistic range from 35-40 million; of that number, about 19-25 million live in Turkey, 7-10 million in Iran, 5.6 million in Iraq, 3 million in Syria, 0.5 million in the former Soviet Union, and about 1 million in Europe (Knapp et al.,2016, pp.1). However, following the colonial carve-up of middle east after the WWI, Syria, Iraq, and even Turkey were invented out of the wreckage of the Ottoman Empire. As a result, Kurdistan become divided among five sovereign states, with the largest portion of Kurdistan territory in Turkey (43%), followed by Iran (31%), Iraq (18%), Syria (6%), and the former Soviet Union (2%) (Izady,1992, pp.3). This thesis will use both the Realism and Securitization theories to explain the rationale behind the misery of Kurds in their Historic Land of Kurdistan. This thesis will try to apply realism theory to ethnic conflict in order to understand why the Kurds have been massacred wherever they have demanded their natural right of self-determination. This thesis will, thus, focus on crucial policies which were adopted by central authorities of states which the Kurds were allocated to and their consequences upon ethnic Kurds between 1917 and 2017. In doing so, chapter one will outline Realism theory and its application to ethnic conflicts, as well as Securitization theory. Chapter two will reflect on the history of Kurdistan and the main international treaties which have shaped the destiny of Kurdish people. Chapter three will shed the light on the Kurdish struggle against fascism and forced assimilation. Chapter four will outline the massacres that have been inflicted upon the Kurdish people. Last chapters will discuss the proceeding and conclude our finding.

Chapter 1:

1.1 *A Brief Outline of the Literature on Kurds.*

The literature on Kurds is mainly composed of detailed historical analyses of the Kurds and histories of the development of Kurdish national identity and Kurdish nationalism. These studies are mainly constituted of historical and sociological account of the region and its people. Among these, the most significant and reliable sources have been written by Sharaf al-Dîn Bitlîsî, Muhammad Amin Zaki, Mehrdad Izady, David McDowall, Martin Van Bruinessen, Denise Natali, Wadie Jwaideh, Aliza Marcus, and Hussein Tahiri. Combined these works locate the longevity and power of Kurdish nationalism in the regional and local historical events, particularly the WWI, when the Kurds came closest to a possible Kurdish state in their history.

Martin Van Bruinessen's *Agha, Shaikh and the State* is a good book which examines the social and political structures of Kurdistan and deals with the role of tribal loyalties within Kurdish societies.

McDowall's *A Modern History of the Kurds* represents a comprehensive historical account of the Kurdish society in the Middle East and their interactions with the regional states they inhabit. In this book, McDowall traces the problems experienced by the Kurds back to the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries and the policies of the Ottoman and Iranian empires towards their Kurdish populations and provides useful insights in understanding the internal and external dynamics that shape Kurdish nationalism.

Natali's *The Kurds and State* provides an analytically sophisticated and comparative analysis of the Kurdish societies in the Middle East and the consequences of state formation processes on the development of the Kurdish identity in each state.

Wadie Jwaideh's *Kurdish national movement* presents a detailed analysis of the early phases of Kurdish nationalism and offers a framework within which to understand the movement later development.

Aliza Marcus' *Blood and Belief* offers an insightful reading of the PKK struggle inside Turkey by giving meaning and context to the grinding guerrilla war.

However, most of these studies have not attempted to analyze the Kurdish question based on theories of International relations which are mostly state centric and reflect western views. This thesis will attempt to bring the stateless Kurds in the game of powerful states by applying Realism theory to explain the Kurdish misery.

1.2 Realism

Political realism is a tradition of analysis that stresses the necessities states face to pursue a power politics of the national interest, Realpolitik. Sovereignty, anarchy and the security dilemma are crucial terms in Realism. Realists stress the constraints on politics imposed by human selfishness ('egoism') and the absence of international government ('anarchy'), which require 'the primacy in all political life of power and security' (Gilpin, 1986, p.305). However, the father of Realism, Hobbes, (1651, p.77) claims that the state of nature is a state of war "men live without a common power to keep them all in awe, they are in that condition which is called war; and such a war as is of every man against every man". Humans are self-interested and do not trust each other. Scarcity prevents each from having as much as he desires –which makes men enemies. Enmity is exacerbated by competition, diffidence and glory. "The first maketh men invade for gain; the second, for safety; and the third, for reputation" (ibid, para. 7). Thus, based on the first fundamental law of nature "to seek peace and follow it" and the

second "by all means we can, to defend ourselves", everyone should give up his right to everything by total submission of rights and liberties to an institution of the absolute sovereign, 'Leviathan' (ibid, p.80). Nevertheless, scholars have applied these principles to international relations where states are unites/rooms of the global house. But because there is no Leviathan to keep all states in awe, states live in a state of anarchy, a state of war. For instance, neo-realist and defensive realist Waltz assumes that the international system is anarchical, in the sense that it lacks a central authority to impose order; and that in such a system states are primarily interested in maximization of power and their own survival. Without a central authority, states constantly measure their power against that of other states. They constantly monitor whether their position in the international power hierarchy is stable, declining, or on the rise (cited in Reus-smit, 2005, p.190-1). Thus, Waltz argue that "the first concern of states is ... to maintain their positions in the system... states at minimum, seek their own preservation and, at maximum, drive for universal domination"(cited in Donnelly, 2005, p.42). Here the defensive realist argument is that nations defend the overall status quo to maximize its security and to protect its long-term interests. However, the conclusion of Waltzian structuralism is that in anarchy—where units are similar in nature but differ dramatically in capabilities— states 'balance' rather than 'bandwagon'. Whereas, in hierarchic political orders where units are organized under a clear line of authority, actors tend to 'jump on the bandwagon' of a leading candidate or recent victor, because 'losing does not place their security in jeopardy'. In a bipolar world, each superpower is the only serious threat to the security of the other (Donnelly, 2005, p.35). Waltz is offering a 'rational choice' version of the balance of power in which states are assumed to be self-interested egoists who determine their strategies by choosing that which maximizes their welfare (Ainley and Brown, 2009, p.44).

On the other hand, offensive Realist Morgenthau (1948, p.3) proposed that states determine their orientation and policy agendas from a principal 'will to power'. In contrast to defensive realism, offensive realism suggests that nations maximize their power to preserve their underlying security (Mearsheimer, 2001). A hegemon state in a region will aggressively defend his status by marginalizing all competing states in his neighborhood (Snyder, 2002). The ideal situation for a regional (or potential) hegemon is to be the hegemon in the system and incorporate adjoining nations in his band to protect the status quo balance of power and prevent any 'peer competitors' (Mearsheimer, 2001, p.41). That is why "the United States has rejected out of hand various Russian proposals to make the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe the central organizing pillar of European security (replacing the U.S.-dominated NATO)"(ibid, p.49).

Similarly, Shiping (2008, p.150) argued that an offensive realist state will 'seek security by intentionally decreasing the security of others'. Equally, Snyder (2002, p.153) argued that potential hegemons will 'always aspire to be hegemons, and they will not stop increasing their power until they succeed'. However, Mearsheimer argues that global powers will only expand their status and regional influence when opportunities arise and when benefits exceed the costs but If blocked by competitors, potential hegemons will wait for a 'more propitious moment'(2001, p.37). Thus, the primary objectives of offensive realists are to ensure national survival and security. Furthermore, Shiping (2008) argue that states pursue resolution through cooperation and diplomacy but resume to conflict as a last resort. This often is the case with US which has created the perception that wartime aggression is imminent, so leading other potentially affected nations to adopt a more passive, collaborative approach to policymaking and peacekeeping (Reich and Lebow, 2014). This approach is used to prevent global politics

descend towards anarchy and to avoid erosion of stability and consistency in international affairs. For example, Tominaga (2016) cites the aggressive efforts of Israel in the Middle East in the late 1960s to assume control of key contested territories through Palestine and Jordan (e.g. West Bank, Jerusalem) were a show of its strength and to establish a hegemonic position in the Middle east. However, the US de-escalated the tension and pushed for negotiations to establish a peaceful accord which would further limit Soviet influence in the region, encouraging Israeli leaders to stimulate intra-regional peace discussions and avoid regional insecurity and conflict (Tominaga, 2016). This shift from offensive stance to defensive negotiations is more of a tactic. It prevented regional war and provided both Israel and the US with a more robust footing for future diplomacy and alliance. However, Mearsheimer (2001) argued that cooperation is a strategy for those lagging powers with defensive positions. He argues that cooperative agreements cannot be maintained over the long term; offensive realist states must continue to expand their power and influence through opportunism and temporary alliances designed to maximize national security and improve the long-term power structure in the state's favor (Mearsheimer, 2001). United States and those democracies which have attained a hegemonic position, Chan (2004) argues, are less likely to engage in revisionist policies and practices because the international system itself is based upon their values and continued interests.

Realism vs. Morality and foreign policy

'Realists' sometimes complies with moral norms, but most frequently are against pursuing moral objectives in International Relations. Morgenthau argues that "the actions of states are determined not by moral principles and legal commitments but by considerations of interest and power" (1970, p.382). Similarly, Art and Waltz argue that "States in anarchy cannot afford to be moral. The possibility of moral behavior rests

upon the existence of an effective government that can deter and punish illegal actions" (1983, p.6). For "when the safety of one's country wholly depends on the decision to be taken, no attention should be paid either to justice or injustice" (Machiavelli, 1970, Book 1, Chapter 41).

Moreover, neo-realists argue that humanitarian claims would always "cloak the pursuit of national self-interest" and that authorizing a right of humanitarian intervention would lead to states abusing it (Wheeler, 2002, p.29). Franck and Rodley surveyed pre-1945 and post-1945 cases of possible humanitarian intervention and conclude that in "very few, if any, instances has the right been asserted under circumstances that appear more humanitarian than self-interested and power seeking" (cited in Wheeler, 2002, p.30).

Another criticism is that states will not intervene if it risks their soldiers' lives or incurs significant economic costs. Realists who argue this view might allow that humanitarian considerations can play a part in motivating the government to intervene, but "states will not use force unless they judge vital interests to be at stake" (Wheeler, 2002, p.30). For instance, Samuel P. Huntington, who stated in relation to US intervention in Somalia that "it is morally unjustifiable and politically indefensible that members of the [US] armed forces should be killed to prevent Somalis from killing one another". (cited in Wheeler, 2002, p.31)

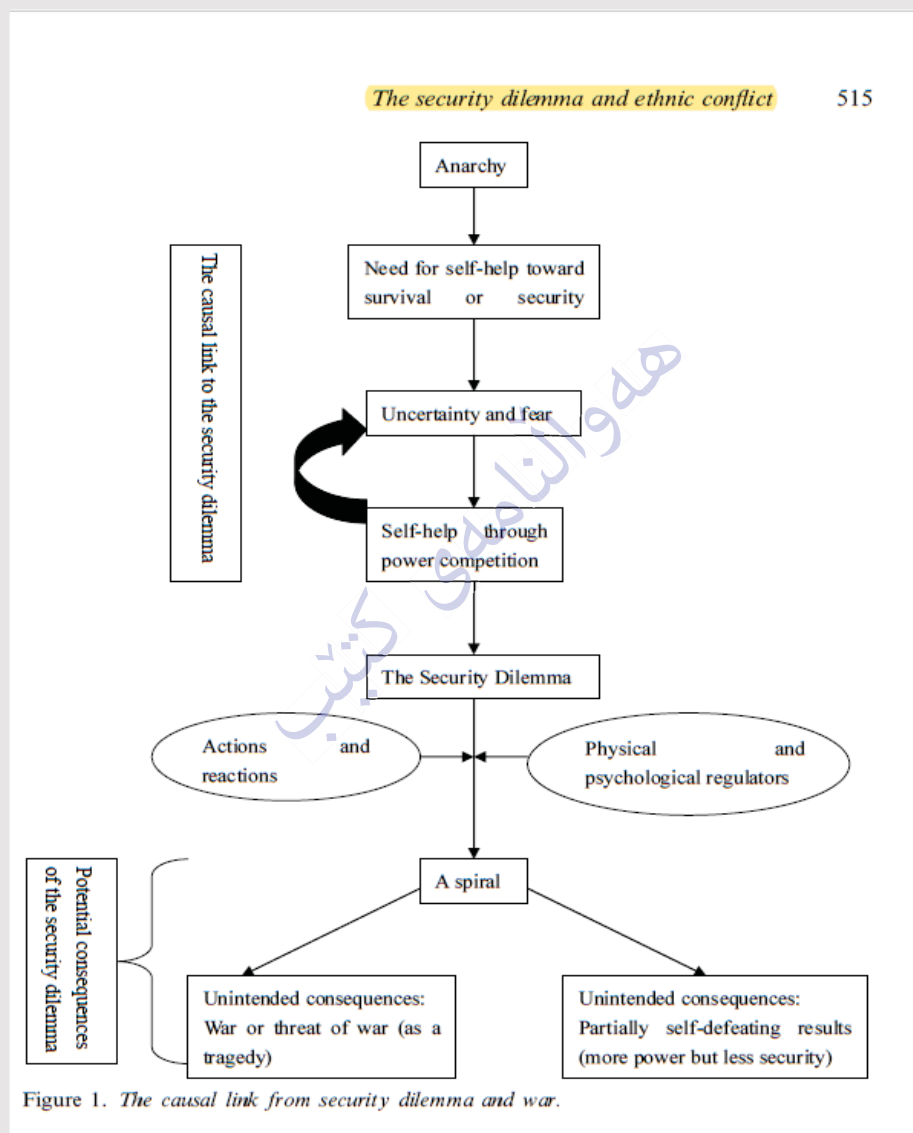
Lastly, Realist argue that states would apply principles of humanitarian intervention *selectively*. Realists argue that "one is not encouraged by the blatant failure of the international community or of states with the undeniable power to effect rescue to save Jews, Armenians. . . to rescue the Hutu of Burundi... to aid the Biafrans in their struggle for independence" (Wheeler, 2002, p.31).

1.3 The security dilemma and ethnic conflict

Barry Posen brought the security dilemma into the studies of ethnic conflict. Posen's initial venture was then taken up by Stuart J. Kaufman and topped by Paul Roe. Posen (1993, p.27) argued that "the collapse of imperial regimes [for example, the Soviet Union] can be profitably viewed as a problem of emerging anarchy". He defined the security dilemma as follows: "States can trigger these reactions even if they have no expansionist inclinations. This is the security dilemma: what one does to enhance one's own security causes reactions that, in the end, can make one less secure"(ibid, p.28). He noted that there was a security dilemma between the Croats and the Serbs in Croatia even when "there were plenty of signals of malign intent [on both sides]"(ibid, p.37). However, Shipping Tang have revised some error committed by Pose, Kaufman, and Roe concerning determining the major aspects of the security dilemma but agreed with them that the security dilemma can be fruitfully applied to understand ethnic conflict, but only if the application is done properly – by strictly observing his BHJ formulation which include eight major aspects of the security dilemma:

- (1) The ultimate source of the security dilemma is the anarchic nature of international politics.
- (2) Under anarchy, states cannot be certain about each other's present and future intentions. As a result, states tend to fear each other
- (3) The security dilemma is unintentional in origin: only between two states that merely want security without intending to threaten the other – that is, both are benign or defensive realist states– can a genuine security dilemma exist.
- (4) Due to the uncertainty about each other's intentions (hereafter, uncertainty) and fear, states resort to the accumulation of power or capabilities as a means of defense, and these capabilities inevitably contain some offensive capabilities;
- (5) the dynamics of the security dilemma is self-reinforcing and often leads to (unintended and bad) spiral-like situations, such as the worsening of relationships, arms race, and war;
- (6) the dynamics of the security dilemma tends to make some measures for increasing security such as accumulating

unnecessary offensive capabilities self-defeating: more power but less security; (7) the vicious cycle derived from the security dilemma can lead to tragic results, such as unnecessary or avoidable wars and, (8) the severity of the security dilemma can be regulated by both physical factors (for example, geography, asymmetric distribution of power) and social psychological factors (for example, ethnocentrism, nationalism, worst-case mentality)(Tang, 2011, p.514).



The security dilemma in ethnic conflict:

Tang (2011, p.530-2) argue that when the central authority is dominated by one group of two ethnic groups which used to live together peacefully but also had an unhappy history from time to time, the security dilemma develops, and it can go four ways:

- 1) Central authority restore control over security dilemma or by restoring balance between the two ethnics. Thus, conflict is avoided.
- 2) The two sides in a security dilemma are not able to reassure each other. Thus, the security dilemma worsens.
- 3) One side or both sides (especially the elite) strive to gain power by triggering ethnic tension and hatred even if not harbouring malign intention against the other group. Thus, the security dilemma is exacerbated by dynamics of group politics which would transform the initial security dilemma into a security threat.
- 4) One or both sides do harbour real malign intentions (especially the elite) against the other side, the security dilemma ceases to operate and becomes a genuine security threat.

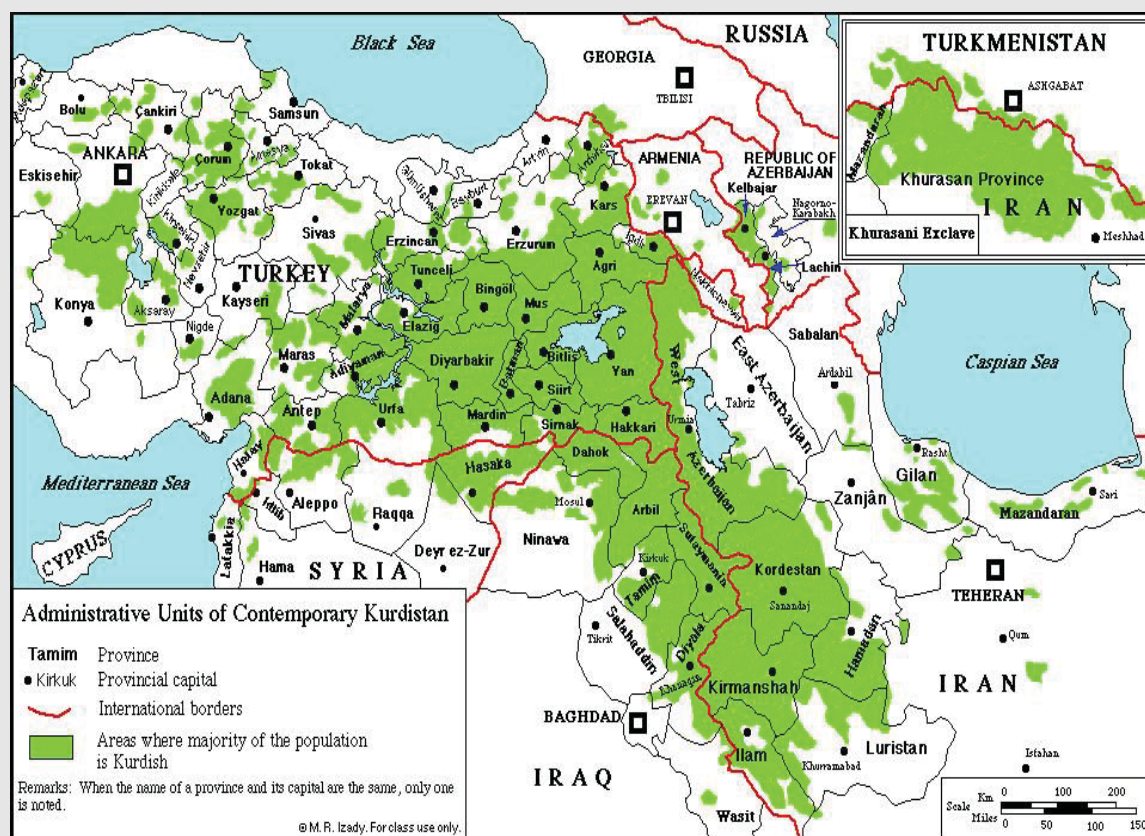
1.4 Securitization theory

The Copenhagen School has broadened the conception of security and analyzes how an issue becomes securitized or de-securitized. 'Security', according to them, 'is about survival. It is when an issue is presented as posing an existential threat to a designated referent object (e.g. the state, government, territory, and society) (Buzan et al., 1998, 21). The dynamics of each category of security are determined by securitizing actors and referent objects. The former is defined as 'actors who securitize issues by declaring something, a referent object, existentially threatened' (Buzan et al., 1998, 36) and can be expected to be 'political leaders, bureaucracies, governments, lobbyists, pressure groups' (Buzan et al. 1998: 40). The latter are 'things that are seen to be existentially

threatened and that have a legitimate claim to survival' (Buzan et al., 1998, p.36). For example, state, groups, national sovereignty, ideology, economy.

Moreover, The Copenhagen School considers the speech act to be the starting point of the process of securitization. An issue can become a security question through the speech act and the audience's acknowledgement that an issue is a threat. It claims that any specific matter can be non-politicized, politicized, or securitized. It argues that a concern can be framed as a security issue and moved from the politicized to the securitized. Buzan and Wæver, therefore, argue that securitization 'is the move that takes politics beyond the established rules of the game and frames the issue either as a special kind of politics or as above politics. Securitization can thus be seen as a more extreme version of politicization' (Buzan et al. 1998: 23). Whereas, de-securitization is the reverse process. It involves the 'shifting of issues out of emergency mode and into the normal bargaining processes of the political sphere' (Buzan et al., 1998, p. 4).

Chapter 2: Kurdistan and treaties which shaped its fate.

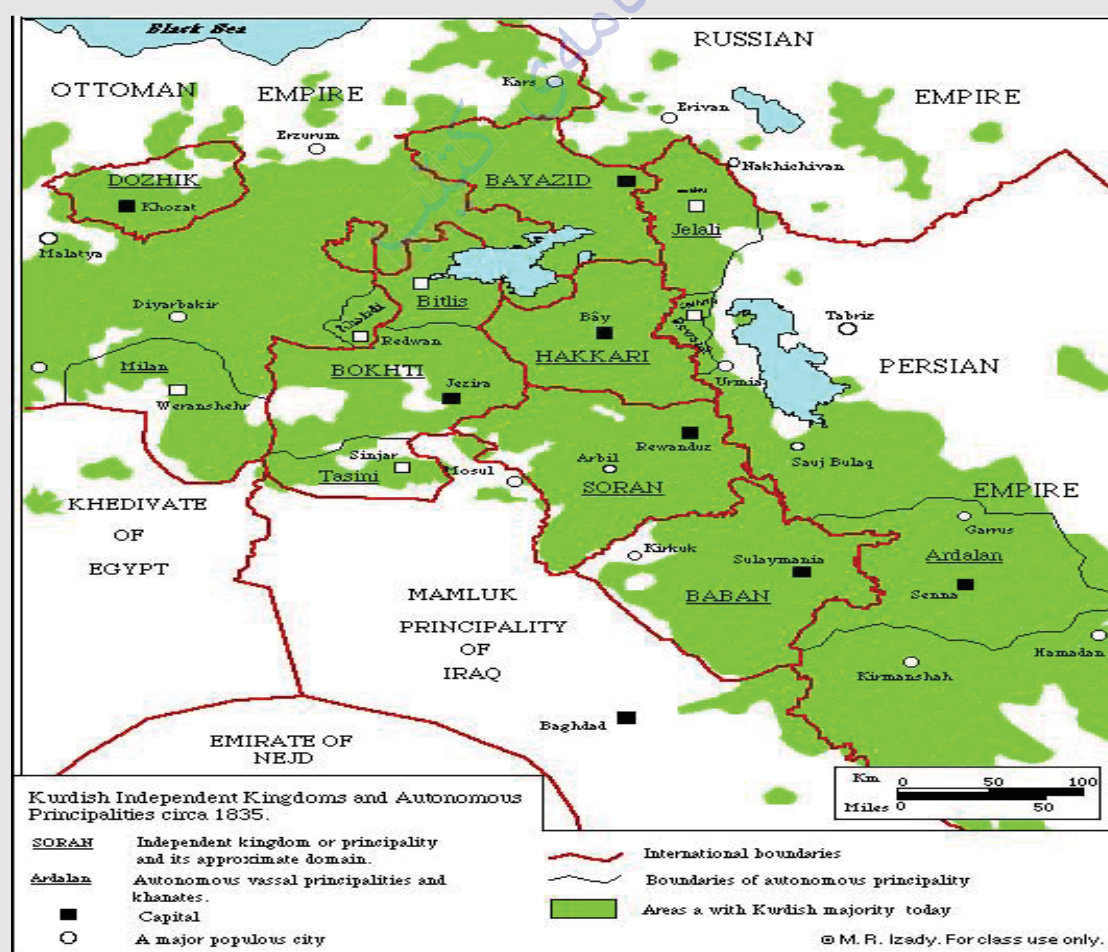


2.1 Brief Historical Background

The earliest reference to the Medes as possible Kurdish ancestors appears to have been made on linguistic grounds by Minorsky in the first edition of the Encyclopaedia of Islam (1913–36) (Houston, 2008, p.17). The earliest use of the term Kurdistan in historical documents goes back to the twelfth century when Selçuklu Sultan Sancar created a province (administrative unit) called Kurdistan in 1157 which did not encompass all Kurdish territories. It encompassed the *vilayets* of Sinjar, Shahrazur, Dinawer and Kermanshah which are parts of the territories of modern Iraq and Iran (Nezan, 1996, p.23; McDowall, 2010, p.23; Houston, 2008, p.19-20).

After the Mongol invasion throughout the twelfth and thirteenth centuries and Tamerlane's campaigns in the fourteenth century, Kurdish territories were devastated. From the mid-fifteenth century until the mid-sixteenth century the Ottomans and the

Safavids conflicted for the control of Kurdish lands in Eastern Anatolia. After the Ottoman victory at Çaldıran (1514) over the Safavid Empire, the Ottoman Sultan Selim gained control of most of the Kurdish regions (McDowall, 2010, p.8). To quote Imber, in 1515 Selim sent Kurdish notable Idris of Bitlis "to secure the allegiance of the Kurdish chieftains of south-eastern Anatolia and northern Iraq... [B]y the end of the year, all except one had recognized Selim's overlordship" (Imber, 2002, 45). Kurdish tribes benefited from this rivalry, and some tribal confederations even enjoyed semi-autonomous status during the competition between the Ottomans and Safavids until mid-seventeenth century. Diyarbakır province (1520-66) had nine autonomous Kurdish principalities and were administered and ruled by their holders, Kurdish *beys* or *emirs*. Main principalities were Botan, Hakkari, Badinan, Soran, and Baban. (McDowall, p.26-27; Houston, 2008. P.40-2).



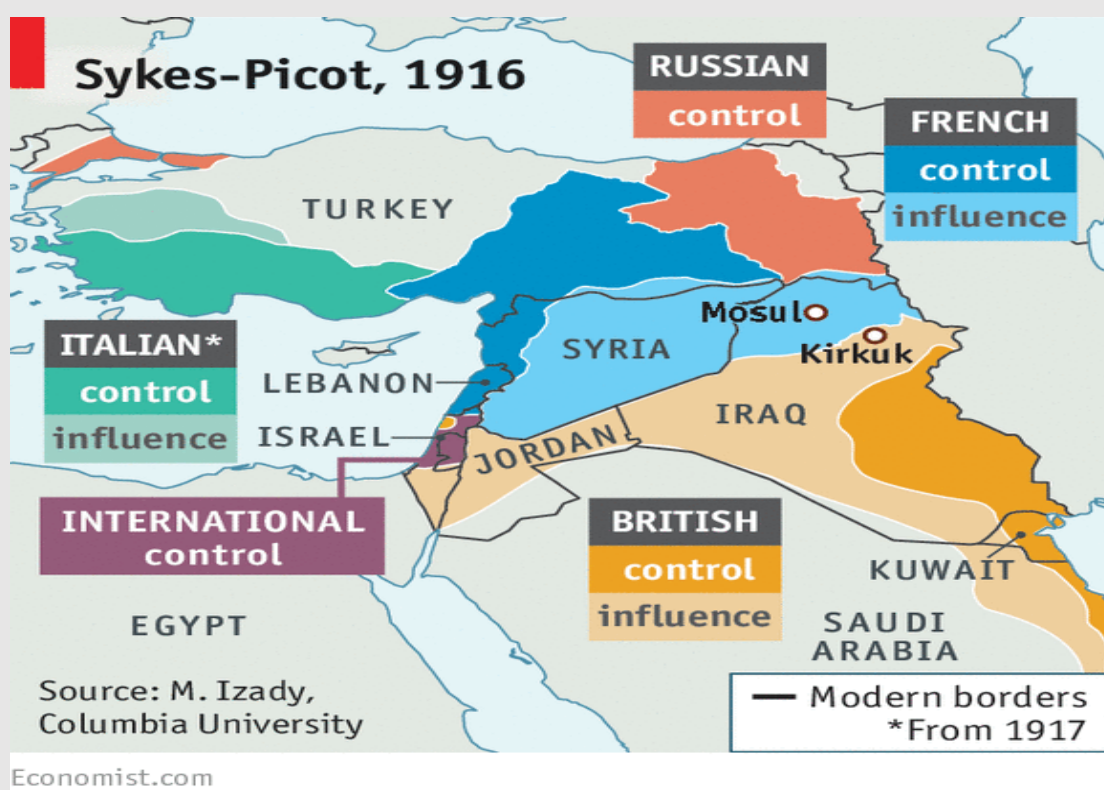
Treaties that shaped the fate of Kurdistan

2.2 Treaty of Zohab (Treaty of Qasr-e Shirin)

A treaty which was signed between the Safavid Empire and the Ottoman Empire on May 17, 1639. The accord ended the Ottoman-Safavid War over territorial disputes. Thus, a clear borderline was drawn between nowadays Iraq and Iran which persisted despite disputes and invasion until 1914. This was the first division of Kurdistan.

(McDowall, 2010, p.26)

2.3 Sykes-Picot agreement



A secret convention made during WWI between Great Britain and France, which defined their respective spheres of colonial interest—and the political divisions of the Middle East for the next century. Syria was to go to France and Iraq to Britain (Knapp et al., 2016, pp.11). "There could be no question of a peace conference until we had

conquered Iraq and Syria." wrote Lloyd George, the British Prime Minister of the time, in his war memoirs. (quoted in Chaliand, 1993, p.33)

According to this agreement, Vilayet of Mosul (Iraqi Kurdistan) should have gone to France but Britain had carried out many studies and investigation in this Kurdish territory and was well aware that it was rich in oil. Thus, decided to conquest Vilayet of Mosul and attach it to Iraq. France was persuaded to give up its rights to Mosul in exchange for Cilicia (Chaliand, 1993, p.50). But when the French learnt of the Mosul oil reserves, another agreement was signed. Accordingly:

The British government commits itself to grant the French government, or parties designated by the latter, a 25% share, at current market prices, in the net production of crude oil which his Majesty's Government may produce from the Mesopotamian oil fields should these be exploited as a Government venture; should the exploitation of the Mesopotamian oil Fields be carried out by a private company, the British government undertakes to provide the French government a 25% share of the said company" (cited in Chaliand, 1993, p.50).

The Americans protested the deal and later obtained a 20% share in Turkish petroleum, the company which held exclusive rights to the exploitation of Mosul and Mesopotamian oil fields. The main shareholder in this company was capitalist Lord Curzon, the head of British delegation of the Lausanne Conference. On 5 June 1926, Mosul was officially attached to Iraq and came under British mandate, despite the local population's desire for the establishment of an independent Kurdish state (ibid, pp.50).

2.4 Treaty of Sevres



Treaty of Sevres was signed by the allies and the Turkish government on the 10th of August 1920. It declared that the non-Turkish minorities of the Ottoman empire should be granted the right of 'autonomous development', section III, Article 62-63 (Kurdistan) (Sèvres treaty, 1920). The Kurdish delegation was led by General Şerif Pasha. The Pasha had prepared a *Memorandum on the Claims of the Kurd People*, which was accompanied by a map of Kurdistan. The request of the Kurdish delegation was as follows:

In virtue of the Wilsonian principle everything pleads in favour of the Kurds for the creation of a Kurd state, entirely free and independent ... Since the Ottoman Government has accepted Mr Wilson's fourteen points without reservation, the Kurds believe that they have every right to demand their independence, and that without any way failing in loyalty towards the Empire under whose sovereignty they have lived for many centuries, keeping intact their customs and tradition...' (Ahmad, 1994, p.14).

However, the 'independent Kurdistan' envisaged by Treaty was deeply unjust to the Kurdish people, a country from which two thirds of its territory would have been lopped off, including its fertile area; not to mention Persian Kurdistan which the colonial powers made it clear that Iranian Kurdistan was an integral part of Iran and that the Kurdish problem centred on Iraq and Turkey: One third would have been placed under French mandate: Territories with overwhelmingly Kurdish majority lying West of Euphrates, Djezira, Kurd-Dagh (Afrin), Arab Pinar (Kobani), Aintab, Kilis, Biredjik, Urfa, Mardin, Nusaybin, and Djaziret ibn Omar (Cizre). The other third would have been allocated to the Armenian state (which was to be placed under U.S. mandate) (Chaliand, 1993, p.33-35; Natali, 2007, p.118). Meanwhile, Britain had detached the overwhelmingly Kurdish Vilayet of Mosul from Turkey and attached it to Iraq, in order to seize control of the Mosul oilfields (Chaliand, 1993, p.6). However, the Treaty of Sevres was never implemented, instead another Treaty later was signed despite the absence of the Kurdish delegation:

2.5 Treaty of Lausanne

The Treaty of Lausanne, signed by Britain, France, Italy, Japan, Greece, Rumania, the Serbo-Croat-Slovene, and Turkey on 24 July 1923, gave international recognition to the Turkish state and carved up the national territory of the Kurdish people into four parts. "Oil was a central topic of discussions at Lausanne." No one presented himself as the champion of the interests and freedom of the Kurdish people (Chaliand, 1993, pp.49). *Curzon (the main shareholder of Turkish petroleum, and the head of British delegation of the Lausanne Conference) informed the Turks that the British government was ready to drop articles 62 to 65 of the Treaty of Sevres which called for the establishment of an independent Kurdistan. In return, Turkey would join the League of Nations in order to complete the isolation of Bolshevik Russia (Ali,1997).*

Though, the problem of oppressed minorities to preserve their own identity and 'Right to self-determination' are guaranteed by the international law but human beings as groups turned out to have fewer rights than individuals (UN charter article 1 and 55).

Chapter 3: Kurdistan after Sykes-Picot

3.1 Eastern Kurdistan

The Kurds manifested their opposition to Reza Shah's (who came to power through a coup backed by British) centralizing policies by series of revolts during the 1920s and 1930s. Simko Agha emerged as the most powerful Kurdish figure who planned to include the Persian Kurds in an independent Kurdistan but failed (Jwaideh, p.139; Chaliand, 1993, p.105). However, in 1941, the British and the Soviets invaded Iran to prevent Reza Shah's pro-Axis sympathies turning into military alliance and divided Iranian Kurdistan into three zones (Chaliand, 1993, p.6): The Soviet zone, the British zone and a buffer Kurdish zone between the two other zones. In 1945, Kurdistan Democratic Party of Iran (KDPI) was established with Soviet support, and the Kurdish Republic of Mahabad was declared in 1946 which was in the buffer zone. The Republic lasted for a year, until the Shah's troops overran it and executed its leaders. The most important reason for the collapse was the withdrawal of Soviet troops from Iran in 1946 under the terms of the treaty signed between the Iranians, the British and the Soviets which allowed for Soviet participation in the exploitation of oil in North of Iran (Jwaideh, p.243-44). Further, during the premierships of General Razmara (a Kurd from Kermanshah (1950–1951) and Mosaddeq (1951–1953), Mosaddeq tried to accommodate leftist and minority populations and administrative decentralization for

the Kurds but pressures from conservative groups in the Majlis and British and U.S. influences blocked their efforts. General Razmara was assassinated, and Mosaddeq was overthrown in a CIA-led coup d'état (Natali, 2007, p.132). Afterwards, Kurds remained fairly quiet until the Islamic revolution in 1979.

Moreover, when Khomeini "won" the referendum and consolidated his power, he terminated negotiations with Kurdish leaders, banned discussions of Kurdish autonomy, and removed Kurds from their political posts. Dr. Qasimlu (the Secretary-General of KDPI) was labelled seditious and expelled from the Council of Experts (McDowall, 2010, p.270-72). Between 1980-1983, a state of war between the Kurdish movement and Iranian authorities began when Khomeini called for jihad against the Kurds. By the spring of 1984, the Iranian government had brought Kurdish territory under control, and Iranian peshmergas were forced to retreat into Iraq. Negotiations resumed after 1988, but Qasimlu assassination by Iranian special service agents in Vienna in July 1989, followed by the killing of his successor in Berlin in September 1992, silenced the Kurdish opposition until today (Grojean, 2017, p.322). Ever since KDPI and Komala are waiting for the sun to shine in Iran.

3.2 Southern Kurdistan

Sulaymaniyah was created by the British in 1918 as a semi-autonomous Kurdish region. In March 1919, the Kirkuk and Kifri regions were detached from the South Kurdish Confederation of Shaykh Mahmud and established as a new division. The Halabja district, while remaining part of the Sulaymaniya division, was brought under direct British control. This act resented Sheikh Mahmud Barzinji who rebelled against the British in 1920 and declared himself the ruler of all Kurdistan, seized the treasury,

raised his own flag. Rebellion spread across into Iranian territory, and several tribes arose against the Persian Government, proclaiming themselves partisans of Shaikh Mahmud and of his scheme for a free and united Kurdistan. He rebelled again between 1924-32. However, the British had different plans for the region. After a short military operation Sheikh Mahmud was defeated, captured, and deported to Northern Kurdistan and only was allowed to return to his family in 1941 (Natali,2005, p.28-29; Jwaideh, 2006, 179-83). Further, Mustafa and Ahmed Barzani continued their activities in Kurdistan Iraq. They led several insurrections between 1930-33. Mustafa Barzani surrendered to the Iraqi forces in 1933 and was kept under control in Sulaymaniyah until 1943. In 1945, Mulla Mustafa Barzani instigated another rebellion to declare the autonomy of Kurdistan but was defeated and escaped to Iran (Jwaideh, p.239).

However, following the bloody overthrow of the monarchy in 1958, a republic was established but failed to grant the Kurds autonomy. In 1959, Qasim imposed martial law, Arabized the names of Kurdish localities, closed down Kurdish organisations (including the KDP), arrested leading Kurdish nationalists and communists, and started bombing rural areas (Natali, 2005, p.52). In response, in 1961, the Kurds launched a war of liberation under Barzani leadership to secure autonomy within the framework of the republic, which lasted until 1970. Between 1961 and 1968 the armed struggle waged by the Kurds caused the fall of Four Iraqi regimes, until the Baath came to power in July 1968. On the 11 February 1970, the KDP and the Iraqi Government reached an agreement to create an administrative region with a majority Kurdish population who could "exercise their full national rights and autonomy." The autonomy in northern Iraq was announced in 1974, but only for some parts of the region. Thus, Kurdish revolts began again in 1974 but were suppressed in 1975 because the Shah of Iran and its ally the United States withdrew their support for Barzani's movement in exchange for some

territorial concessions in the Persian Gulf. As a result, 150,000 to over 300,00 Iraqi Kurds fled to Iran (Chaliand, 1993, p.170-73; Edmonds, p.100-2). Shortly afterwards, the Iraqi government proceeded to implement a policy of Arabization in the oil-rich and frontier Kurdish areas such as Kirkuk, Khanaqin and Sinjar. Hundreds of thousands of Kurds were deported to the south or the shrunken 'autonomous region'. Towns and villages in parts of Kurdistan renamed (Chaliand, 1993, p.7). By late April 1976, some 200,000 Kurds had been uprooted from their land in Kurdistan, mostly to be deported to the south, where they were scattered, in groups of three or four families, amongst Arab villages (ibid, p.185). For instance, the population of Kirkuk prior to the central government's Arabization campaign that commenced in the early 1960s, the Kurds constituted more than 64 % of the total population of the Kirkuk governorate and 53 % of the population of the Kirkuk district. By 1977, the Kurds represented 37 % while Arabs represented 44 % and Turkomans 16 %. The Christian population declined from about 9 % to less than 2 %. (Ihsan, 2017, p.381-2)

Furthermore, when the Iran-Iraq War began in 1980, Kurdish parties increased their control in Northern Iraq and brought people back to the villages that were destroyed by the Iraqi government. In the meantime, the Americans continued supporting Hussein in his war against the Islamic Republic of Iran even as his soldiers gassed and bombed Kurdish communities— in March 1988, Halabja was attacked by chemical weapons and "up to 5,000 people were killed, mostly civilians" (Safi, 2019). The world's relative silence were again signs of betrayal. By the end of war in 1988, Iraqi forces' full-scale attack on Iraqi Kurdish civilians and fighters alike in order to take control of northern region resulted in the killing of an estimated 200,000 people, the destruction of more than 4,000 Kurdish villages, and the forced deportation of 1.5 million Kurds in what Iraq called the "Anfal campaign" (Marcus, 2007, p.126; Natali, 2005, p.58).

However, after the 1991 Gulf War, Saddam moved away from secular ideology and tried to Islamise the Iraqi identity and placed the phrase "Allah Akbar" (God is great) on the Iraqi flag and reframed the Kurdish-Arab partnership as a Muslim fellowship necessary to combat U.S. and Zionist regions (Natali, 2005, p.64). Still, the Kurds staged their own popular uprising. In response, Baghdad counterattacked brutally which was ignored by the United States and the Coalition Forces and resulted in over two million Kurdish villagers fleeing to Turkey and Iran in April 1991. Ankara was unhappy about the influx of Kurdish refugees and equally displeased by the international attention, led the Western governments to act. The allies decided to take pressure off Turkey and to keep it on Iraq and passed Resolution 688 at the U.N. Security Council. The allied-protected zone gave the Kurds a type of de facto autonomy in their region (Marcus, 2007, P.179; Chaliand, 1993, p. 235).

Furthermore, after the 2003 invasion of Iraq, the Kurds managed to strengthen their autonomous region in Iraq. *On 25th of September 2017*, Iraqi Kurds Voted for Independence. Voters in Iraqi Kurdistan "overwhelmingly choose independence" in a referendum held by regional officials despite objections by the Iraqi government (Zucchini, 2017). Baghdad rejected the result, and the international community (those with share holds in Kurdistan's oil companies) backed Baghdad to keep the flow of oil from the landlocked Kurdistan which is estimated to have around 45 billion barrels of oil and 110 trillion cubic feet of gas, making it the tenth largest hydrocarbon reserve in the world (Ihsan, 2017, p.466). Indeed, the "One Iraq" policy by US, which prevent any direct sales of weapons or military equipment to the Kurds, has been an obstacle in the way of Kurdish independence (Ihsan, 2017, p.443-4).

3.3 Northern Kurdistan

Shortly after the Turkish republic was formed in 1923, Kurdish nationalists rebelled against the state's authority. Kemalist Turkey passed laws to wipe out Kurdish history and identity. By 1924, Kurdish-language education was banned, Kurdish names were forbidden, Kurdish village names were changed to Turkish ones, and Kurdish history did not appear in the history books. Thus, the Kurds become deprived of all their natural rights, and were called 'mountain Turks' (Chaliand, 1993, p.5-6; Marcus, 2007, p.10-18). However, three major national revolts followed. The first revolt was the 1925 Sheikh Said Revolt which called for an independent Kurdistan but failed to achieve its aims. Thus, fifty-three of its leaders were executed (Tahiri, 2007, p.66). According to Kurdish sources, civilian losses amounted to the destruction of 206 villages; the burn of 8,758 houses ; and the killing of 15,206 men, women, and children. In 1930, Chirguh stated that more than 500,000 were deported during the winters of 1925-26, 1926-27, and 1927-28, and that more than 200,000 of these deportees lost their lives in the course of their forcible removal to western Anatolia (Jwaideh, 2006, p.206). The second revolt was the Ağrı Dağı (Ararat Mountain) revolt (1930-31), which was organized by Khoybun (Independence) but was suppressed by the Turkish army (ibid, p.145). The Turkish military "slaughtered between 7,000 and 15,000 Kurds in less than a week in Zilan Valley". Some historians put the figure at 47,000 Kurds killed by the Turkish state terrorism (Beam, 2015).

However, on 5 May 1932, a law ordering the deportation and dispersion of Kurds was passed: several hundred thousand Kurds were deported to Central and Western Anatolia and four separate categories of inhabited zones were recognized in Turkey,

No.1 zones will include all those areas in which it is deemed desirable to increase the density of culturally Turkish population. (this is obviously referred to Kurdistan)

No.2 zones will include those areas in which it is deemed desirable to establish populations which must be assimilated into Turkish culture (ethnically Turkish Turkey)

No.3 zones will be territories in which culturally Turkish immigrants will be allowed to establish themselves, freely but without the assistance of the authorities. (the most fertile and habitable areas of Kurdistan were thus graciously offered to Turkish immigrants)

No.4 zones will include all those territories which it has been decided should be evacuated and those which may be closed off for public health, material, cultural, political, strategic or security reasons (this category included the more inaccessible areas of Kurdistan) (Chaliand, 1993, p.57)

This law led to the third Kurdish revolt in Turkey in the 1937, Dersim Revoltion which was led by Sayyid Reza. The revolt started in 1937 in the mountains of Dersim and continued until the end of 1938, but the insurgents could not receive outside help. And the people of Dersim were massacred which I shall explain later (Jwaideh, 2006 p.215; Tahiri, 2007, p.75).

In 1960, the Turkish military staged a coup which had the backing of the educated elite to draw up a new constitution. The resulting document enshrined broad freedoms to form associations, publish, organize trade unions, and call strikes. However, coup makers discussed and implemented "forced deportation of Kurds from eastern to western provinces, mass arrests, bureaucratic engineering to prevent the Kurds from becoming teachers in their own provinces " (Barkey, 2017, p.214). Later in 1965, some the underground Kurdistan Democratic Party of Turkey (TKDP) was formed. This was the first nationalist Kurdish party inside Turkey since the last crushed rebellion of 1938. It called for a Kurdish federation within Turkey's borders (Marcus, 2007, p.19-20).

On March 12, 1971, a second coup was staged to curb left-right violence and growing feelings of nationalism among Kurds but also to re-write 1961 constitution and laws so that such violence could not emerge again. Socialist parties were charged with communist propaganda and supporting Kurdish separatism (Marcus, 2007, p.22). However, civilian rule in 1973 reignited the old divisions and violence. It was then that the PKK, led by Abdullah Öcalan, first made its appearance.

On November 28, 1978, PKK was formed and called for a national revolution to overthrow the Turkish state (Marcus, 2007, p.46)

Forward to an independent, united, democratic Kurdistan!

Down with imperialism and colonialism!

Long live independence and proletariat internationalism!

Long live the PKK (Kurdistan Workers' Party).

As Uzun puts it, "in 1978, the PKK was founded as a Kurdish movement that adopted the legacy of the massacred revolutionaries of the Turkish Left. Based on Marxist-Leninist theory and the strategy of a long-term people's war, it aimed at achieving an 'independent Kurdistan'." (Quoted in Jongerden, 2017, p.250)

However, on September 12, 1980 a third coup was staged, and martial law was imposed throughout Turkey. This coup turned to be decisive for the Kurdish movement. Over the next three years, tens of thousands of leftists, Kurds, and rightists would pass through the courts and prisons, torture of detainees would become routine, and all democratic opposition would be silenced. Thus, PKK's leader Öcalan departed to Syria and arranged for PKK fighters to get training from the Palestinian militant groups in Syria and Lebanon. Between 1980 and 1982, about 300 PKK militants arrived for training (Marcus, 2007, p.54-7). In the meantime, the captured PKK prisoner resisted mistreatment in prison. The night of March 21, 1982—the Kurdish new year—PKK prisoner Mazlum Dogan hanged himself in protest. On May 18, four other PKK

prisoners burned themselves to death. On July 14, 1982, PKK prisoners led a "death fast" to demand an end to abuses and by September, four of the group's senior cadre had died (ibid, p.67). Even worse, the 1982 constitution stated that every citizen of Turkey was a Turk, another named the state language as Turkish, and another said that this article could never be changed. Under the law governing political parties, it was not allowed to claim that minorities existed in Turkey, nor permitted "protect [or] develop non-Turkish cultures and languages". In fact, law 2932, which specifically banned all uses of the Kurdish language without citing the word Kurdish (ibid, p.85). From 1984 onwards tension escalates, the PKK began its attacks inside Kurdistan. Turkish security forces reacted to PKK attacks with shows of force. A counter-insurgency campaign began. Kurds were detained on suspicion of helping the PKK; Turkish security forces created state's village guard system and threaten to burn down people's houses if they did not join. Kurds who tried to protest were accused of working for the PKK (ibid, 79-85).

In April 1991, article 8 of the Anti-Terrorism Law came into force. It made it possible to consider academics, intellectuals, and journalists speaking up peacefully for Kurdish rights to be engaging in terrorist acts. Similarly, under Article 312 of the Turkish Penal Code, mere verbal or written support for Kurdish rights could lead one to be charged with "provoking hatred or animosity between groups of different race, religion, region, or social class." (Barkey, 2017, p.227-9). For instance, in March 1992 during the Kurdish Newroz, "Turkish security forces shot and killed some 90 demonstrators" (Marcus, 2007, p.207). Activist Kurds and parliamentarian showed resent about Newroz massacre. Later, many were abducted and killed: "more than 250 that year and just over 450 the next year"(ibid, p.176):

Diyarbakir HEP chairman Vedat Aydin was killed in July 1991...The next year, 27 HEP officials were mysteriously murdered in the southeast. In 1993, the

number of HEP officials murdered was 17, including one of the party's parliamentarians; in 1994, another 18 HEP officials were killed. (ibid, p.208) Further, the 1990's counter-insurgency campaign did not part civilians, villages and towns. In August 1992, in the city-town Sirnak, where about 25,000 people lived, the security forces bombed the city ruining more than 70 percent of the houses and shops and killed 22 townspeople including five children —allegedly because PKK fired mortars at state buildings (ibid, p.176). On December 24, 1992, in the southeast town of Lice, security forces opened fire after thousands of people gathered on the streets demanding to be allowed to bury three PKK rebels killed in the nearby mountains. Seven civilians were killed (ibid, p.165-7). In 1993 Lice, a town of 10,000 people, was bombed and closed off to outsiders. More than 30 civilians were killed and 100 wounded; houses and shops were destroyed (ibid, p.221). In 1994, five villages in the Cudi Mountains were bombed by fighter planes; "killing a total of 24 people, almost all of them elderly or children".

In 1994, some 1,000 settlements were forcibly evacuated, compared with another 1,000 settlements emptied under mainly state pressure between 1990 and 1993...In total, somewhere between 300,000 and more than one million Kurds were driven out of their homes, only to crowd in shantytowns and slums in Diyarbakir and cities in the west (ibid, p.222).

However, an International conspiracy led to capture of Ocalan and his sentence was read out on June 29, 1999—on the day Kurdish nationalist leader Sheikh Said was hanged in 1925 in Diyarbakir. Ocalan was sentenced to death. Later, in prison, Ocalan had come up with something he called the "Democratic Republic," which aims at ending struggling for autonomy, a federation, or independence. Instead, Kurds shall fight for a truly democratic Turkey, in which Kurds and Turks would be unified in the way that Turkey's founder, Ataturk, had imagined. (ibid, p. 287)

In 2001, Turkish apartheid constitution still considered that "the people of Turkey, regardless of religion and race, are Turks with regards to Turkish citizenship", article 88; "the Turkish state, with its territory and nation, is an indivisible entity. Its language is Turkish", Article 3 (Ihsan, 2017, p.376). However, in August 2002, a set of reforms were approved by Turkish parliament, and Kurdish-language classes were allowed finally, but only as special, after-school private classes and then only for people over the age of 18. (Marcus, 2007, p.294). By 2004, the Turkish Parliament passed a language law, permitted limited Kurdish-language broadcasts, and released nine Kurdish deputies from prison (Natali, 2007, p.110). In August 2005, Prime Minister Erdoğan (and now President) declared that Turkey had a "Kurdish problem", had made "grave mistakes" in the past, and now needed "more democracy to solve the problem." (Gunter, 2017, p.227). His motivations were several: to appease the European union with which accession negotiations began in 2005; to draw Turkey's Kurdish votes away from pro-Kurdish parties and toward the AKP: and to weaken the political influence of the Turkish General Staff (TGS), which had been instrumental in "securitizing" Ankara's approach to its Kurdish problem (Park, 2017, p.200). However, on 11 December 2009 the Constitutional Court banned the pro-Kurdish DTP because of its close association with the PKK. More than 1,000 BDP and other Kurdish notables were placed under arrest for their supposed support of the PKK. So, the 'Kurdish Opening' seemed closed (Gunter, 2017, p.228).

On 21 March 2013 at Diyarbakir's Newroz, a message from Ocalan was read out. In his message he referred to the common past of Turks and Kurds, asserted that they live together under the "flag of Islam", and that they needed to create a common future (Park, 2017, p.201). By July 2013, the People's Congress of Kurdistan (Kongra-Gel), a

PKK-affiliated body, declared that the first stage of the peace process had been completed by the PKK withdrawals from turkey (Gunter, 2017, p.229) and was time to implement Kurdish demands which included:

1. Öcalan release or transfer to house arrest.
2. The abolishing of the so-called "village guard" system of government-sponsored and armed Kurdish citizens;
3. The right to maintain a local self-defense force; an amnesty for Kurdish fighters and for imprisoned activists;
4. A reform of Turkey's notorious and wide-ranging anti-terror laws; education in Kurdish; establishing Kurdish as co-equal with Turkish as an official language of the Republic;
5. The replacement of the current ethnic definition of citizenship with a civic one;
6. An end to the 10 percent electoral hurdle for parliamentary representation;
7. And above all, some kind of devolution, self-determination, or "democratic autonomy" that would, in effect, introduce something tantamount to federal political system in Turkey (Park, 2017, P.202).

However, Erdoğan's democratization package announced on 30 September 2013 merely granted the following rights:

1. Established private schools for Kurdish-language education.
2. Restored the Kurdish village names that had been changed into Turkish.
3. Permitted the use of the letters X, Q, and W of the Kurdish alphabet on signposts and identification cards.
4. Granted freedom for political campaigning in Kurdish.
5. Abolished the student's daily vow of allegiance that began "I am a Turk." (Gunter, 2017, p.231)

However, the Kurds were not satisfied with these provisions and objected their unilateral formulation.

In April in the run-up to the June 2015 General vote, Erdoğan pronounced that "there is no Kurdish issue in this country, there is a problem of the PKK"(Park, 2017, p.201).

Yet, the pro-Kurdish People's Democracy Party (HDP) received 13.1 percent of the national vote and more than doubled its parliamentary seats to 80 and AKP lost its parliamentary majority it had held since 2002. Thus, the ruling AKP forced another set of elections in November of the same year. In the run-up to the election, Turkey's security forces renewed its fighting against PKK and pro-Kurdish activities were bombed in Suruc in July 2015 (ibid, p.199). City centers of Nusaybin, Cizre, and old Diyarbakir were razed after the broken PKK-Turkish ceasefire. The entire city of Sirnak was leveled. Some 2,000 people had died in the fighting (Gunter, 2017, p.239).

Nonetheless, aftermath the failed coup of July 2016. Amnesty International (AI) reported that the "Turkish government had fired or suspended at least 50,000 people from various institutions, including judges, teachers, soldiers, police, and journalists." On 11 September 2016, Turkey's interior ministry announced that it was taking direct control of 25 local government municipalities in the south-east, removing the elected HDP city mayors, and replacing them with government-appointed trustees (ibid, p.239). Further, in September 2016, Turkey's education ministry suspended 11,285 teachers for allegedly supporting Kurdish separatists. Erdogan claimed that the firing of the teachers and local mayors was part of the campaign against Kurdish terrorism. (ibid, p.241). Today, HDP co-leader Salahuddin Demirtas and other HDP MPs are stripped of their parliamentary immunity and imprisoned for charges of treason.

3.4 Western Kurdistan (Rojava)

In Syria, the Franco-Turkish Treaty of 1921 incorporated three Kurdish areas—Jazira (Hesekê), Kurd-Dagh (Afrîn), Arab Pinar (Kobanî) into Syrian Territory, which was placed under French mandate. The artificial border between Syria and Turkey (railroad) divided Kobanî and most of Kurdish cites into half (Knapp et al.,2016, p.5). In the 1930s, Syrian Kurds rebelled against Arab rule from Damascus and agitated for autonomy in Cizîrê. In response, in 1938, the French government placed Cizîrê under its direct control (ibid, p.11). French troops, however, departed the region on April 15, 1946. Later, in 1963, Ba'athist officers carried out a coup against the old elites and came to power, and another coup in 1966 followed to overthrow the traditional Ba'ath leadership, with the support of Syrian Air Force General Hafez Al-Assad, who became minister of defense. Later, On November 16, 1970, Assad seized power and threw the entire former political leadership into jail, creating a system that can best be called a 'presidential monarchy' (ibid, pp.13).

In the meantime, a census of the residents of Hesekê province was carried on in 1962 requiring Kurds to prove that they had lived in the region before 1945. Those who could not produce such documents were declared ajanib (Arabic for "foreigners") and those weren't at home while the census took place categorized as maktoumeen (Arabic for "hidden"). In all, "some 120,000 to 150,000 Kurds were stripped of their citizenship...By 2004, there were in Rojava approximately 200,000 ajanib and 80,000 to 100,000 maktoumeen" (ibid,19-20). By 1963 coup, Arabization campaigns were launched and called the Kurds in Syria 'immigrants of Turkey'. The head of internal security for Hesekê province, Muhammad Talab Hilal, developed a twelve-point plan for the Arabization of northern Syria, which he introduced this way:

The bells of Jazira sound the alarm and call on the Arab conscience to save this region, to purify it of all this scum, the dregs of history until, as befits its geographical situation, it can offer up its revenues and riches, along with those of the other provinces of this Arab territory ... The Kurdish question, now that the Kurds are organizing themselves, is a malignant tumour which has developed and been developed in a part of the body of the Arab nation. The only remedy which we can properly apply thereto is excision. (McDowall, 2010, 474-5).

It was revived in 1967. It aimed at: creating an 'Arab Cordon' all along the frontier, settlement of Arabs in Kurdish areas, removal of the Kurds from their land, denial of education for Kurds, denial of job opportunities for Kurds. In 1975, the state built 40 "model village" in Cordon Zone, between Amuda in the west and Derik in the east, including the Qamishli region. Seven thousand Arab peasant families were armed and planted (Chaliland, 1993, p.200). Cizîrê (after Arabization) "is now dotted with 1,717 villages, of which 1,161 are predominantly Arab...and make up 54 percent of the population. Kurds make up 42 percent of the population" (Knapp et al.,2016, pp.7).

Nevertheless, after the Syrian revolution, on 12th of November 2013 , the Kurds have declared Autonomy in Northern Syria, and PYD's (Democratic Union Party) controlled areas were divided into three separate administrative units, or cantons (Efrin, Kobanî, Jazira). In March 2016, Federation of Northern Syria (Rojava) was declared (Allsopp, 2017, p.296). However, Turkey opposed Rojava and looked for any opportunity to destroy it politically and diplomatically. Erdogan declared that PYD and PKK as identical terrorist organizations (Barkey, 2017, p.221). And started covertly supporting armed Jihadist/Salafist groups such as Jabhat al-Nusra which was affiliated with al-Qaeda, and the even more extremist Islamic State in Iraq and Syria (ISIS). It is well-documented that Turkey has allowed jihadists from all over the world to transit its territory and cross into Syria to join ISIS. So, ISIS might destroy the Syrian Kurds

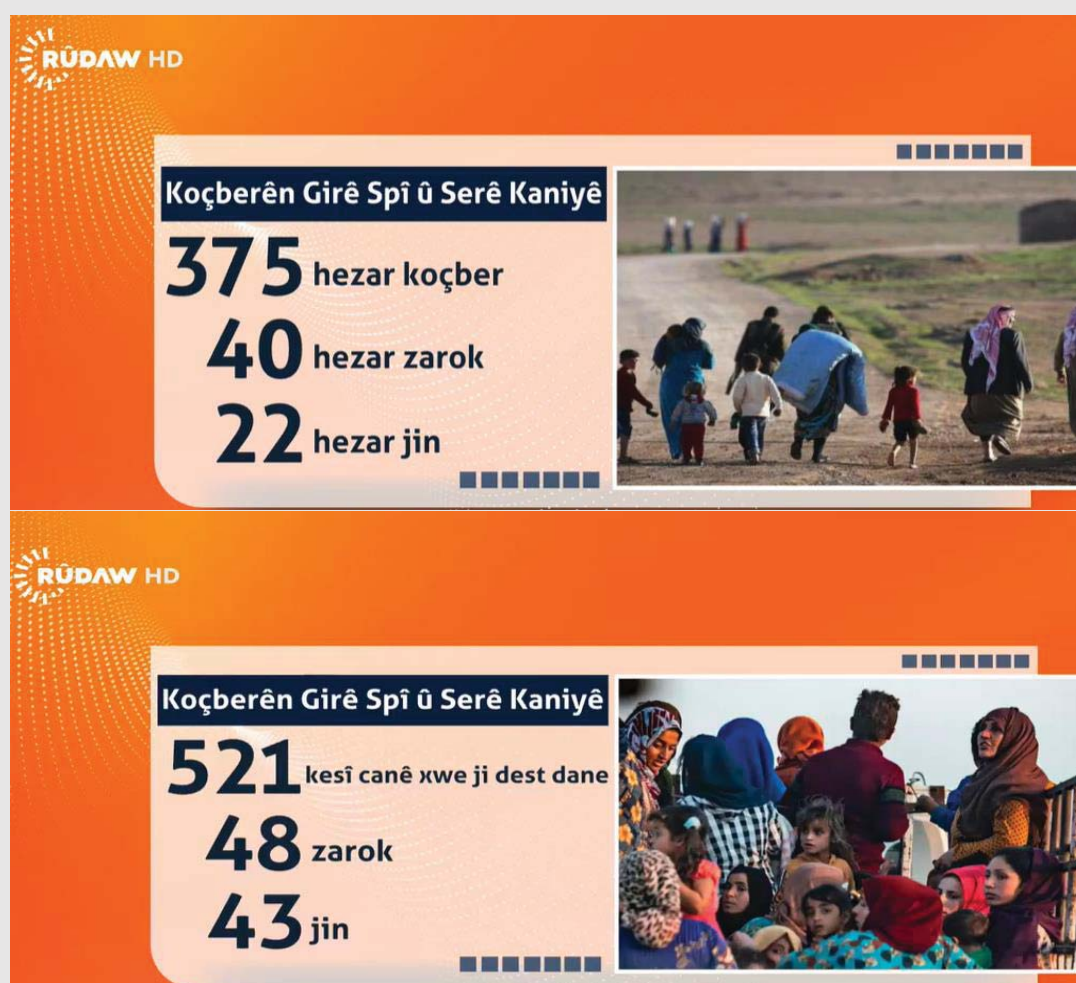
across the Turkish border in Kobani. This became clear when Turkey disdained to join the US-led coalition against ISIS during the bitter fighting in Kobani, from September-October 2014 (Gunter, p.233-7). When ISIS was defeated in Kobani, Turkish forces and their Syrian militia proxies directly military intervened in Syria, first in Operation Euphrates Shield (August 2016 – March 2017) and second in Olive branch to isolate/split Afrin from Kurdish controlled Kobani in the east, preventing the formation of a contiguous Kurdish-controlled territory in northern Syria. The invasion of Afrin on 20th of January 2018 led to the forced removal of thousands of indigenous Kurds (McGee, 2019). To further destroy Rojava, Turkey brokered a deal with US to invade Syria for the third time. On October 6th, 2019. Trump stated that:

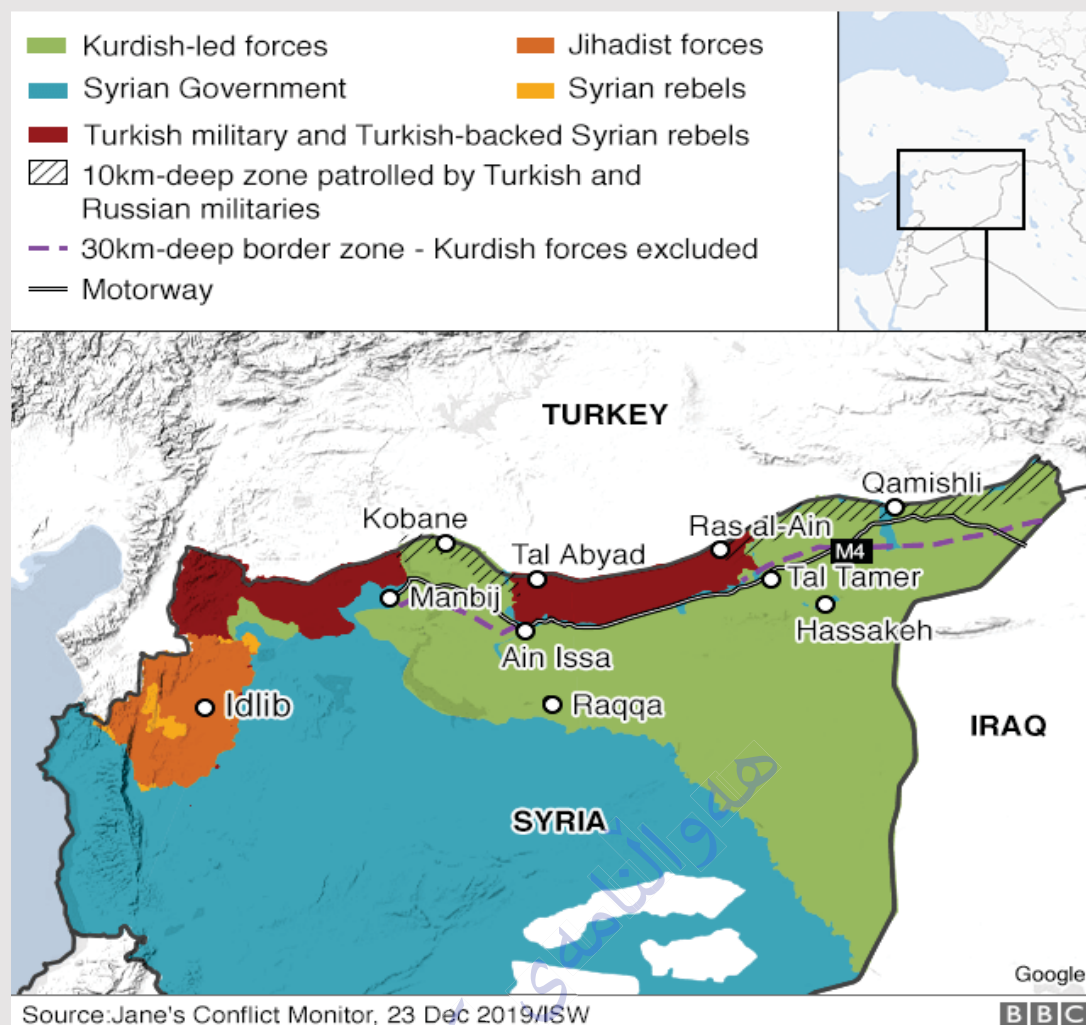
We've secured the oil and, therefore, a small number of US Troops will remain in the area [Syria]. Where they have the oil. And we're going to be protecting it, and we'll be deciding what we're going to do with it in the future (Trump, 2019).

Thus, President Donald Trump ordered the American troops stationed in north-eastern Syria to withdraw. On October 9th 2019, Turkey invaded North-east of Syria in what is called Peace Spring operation (The Economist, 2019). Hence, Kurds who had eliminated the Islamic State's caliphate in March, after five years of gruelling warfare (The S.D.F. lost eleven thousand soldiers; the U.S. lost six.) were abandoned by Trump for Oil (Wright, 2019).

Nevertheless, Erdogan has two stated objectives for Turkey's invasion of northeast Syria. One is the complete removal of Syrian Kurdish-led fighters from the border (Kremlin, 2019). Thus, closing the door for any Kurdish autonomous region. History here repeats itself and another Lausanne agreement is being engineered with the presence of Turkey, Iran, U.S. and Russia as the main actors for carving new spheres of influence. The other objective is the resettlement in this area of millions of Syrian

Arab refugees. Erdogan told the UN: "If this safe zone can be declared, we can resettle confidently somewhere between 1 to 2 million refugees."(cited in Wintour, 2019). However, Turkish invasion is a continuation of turkey's racist anti-Kurdish campaign. It reflects the realpolitik in which states are self-interested and wish to maximize their interest without regard to any moral principles. The invasion displaced 375000 civilian (40000 children and 22000 women) and killed 521 civilians (including 48 children and 43 women) (Rudaw, 2020a).





Chapter 4: From Dersim, to Halabja, to Sinjar, to Kobani, to Afrin, the mentality is same: Genocide.

According to article II of Genocide convention, Genocide means:

Any of acts committed with intent to destroy, in whole or in part, a national, ethnical, racial or religious group by means of five punishable acts: 1. Killing members of the group; 2. Causing serious bodily or mental harm to members of the group; 3. Deliberately inflicting on the group conditions of life calculated to bring about its Physical destruction in whole or in part; 4. Imposing measures intended to prevent births within the group; 5. Forcibly transferring children of the group to another group (UN, 1948).

4.1 Dersim

After Dersim Revolution which was led by Sayyid Reza in 1937 in the mountains of Dersim and continued until the end of 1938, activist Nuri Dersimi, who was involved in the early stages of the Dersim rebellion writes that when the Turkish troops began hunting down the rebellious tribes, the men gave battle, while the women and children hid in deep caves.

Thousands of these women and children perished, because the army bricked up the entrances of the caves. These caves are marked with numbers on the military maps of the area. At the entrances of other caves, the military lit fires to cause those inside to suffocate. Those who tried to escape from the caves were finished off with bayonets. A large proportion of the women and girls of the Kureyshian and Bakhtiyar [two rebel tribes] threw themselves from high cliffs into the Munzur and Parchik ravines, in order not to fall into the Turks' hands.

In the spring of 1938 military operations resumed on an even larger scale. The Karabal, Ferhad and Pilvank tribes, which surrendered, were annihilated. Women and children of these tribes were locked into haysheds and burnt alive. Men and women of the Pilvank and Asagi Abbas tribes, that had always remained loyal to the government, were lined up in the In and Inciga valleys and shot. The women and girls in Irgan village were rounded up, sprinkled with kerosine and set alight. Khech, the chief village of the Sheykh Mehmedan tribe, which had already surrendered, was attacked at night and all inhabitants were killed by machine gun and artillery fire. The inhabitants of Hozat town and the Karaca tribe, men, women and children, were brought near the military camp outside Hozat and killed by machine gun. (...) Thousands of women and girls threw themselves into the Munzur river. (...) The entire area was covered by a thick mist caused by the artillery fire and air bombardments with poisonous gas. (...) Even young men from Dersim who were doing their military service in the Turkish army were taken from their regiments and shot. (cited in Bruinessen, 1994, p.6-7)

However, the Dersim genocide is still not officially recognized by any state, but the estimates of civilians systematically killed are ranging between 13,000 to 70,000 people. Bruinessen argued that the killing in Dersim was massive, indiscriminate, and excessively brutal, but policy is more appropriately termed "ethnocide", the destruction of Kurdish ethnic identity. It may be paraphrased by saying that "thousands were massacred for resisting a policy of ethnocide" (ibid, p.23).

4.2 Halabja

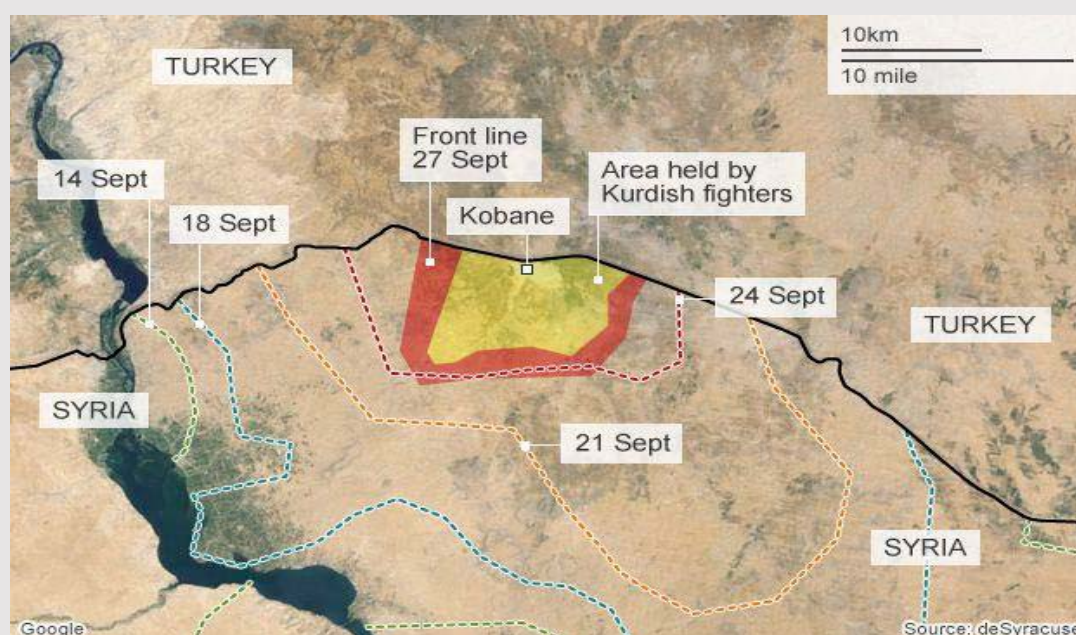
In August 1983, Iraqi security troops rounded up the men of the Barzani tribe. All eight thousand men of this group, then, were taken from their families and transported to southern Iraq. Thereafter they were killed because they were Barzanis (Bruinessen, 1994, p.17). Later, the first al-Anfal campaign began in February 1988. In mid-March 1988, Iraqi planes dropped chemical warheads on the Kurdish town of Halabja. The number of victims were 5,000 people, mostly civilians (Safi, 2019; Cummings, 2018). When the campaign ended, an estimated 200,000 people were killed and 1.5 million forced out of their homes. Many of deportees, men, women, and children ended up in mass graves near the Saudi border (Marcus, 2007, p.126). However, British, Swedish, Norwegian and South Korean parliaments have all recognized that the crime of genocide was committed against Iraqi Kurds by senior officials of the government of Saddam Hussein, based on a policy of extermination targeting Iraqi Kurds during the Anfal and Halabja military campaigns in 1988, but no governments have done so – except for that of Iraq. That allows them to avoid legal liability for supporting and arming Saddam during this time. (Pitel, 2013; Barbarani, 2014).

4.3 Sinjar

In August 2014, ISIS launched a coordinated attack across the Sinjar region of Northern Iraq, homeland to the Yazidi Kurds: Approximately 12,000 Yazidis were killed or abducted by ISIS. The perpetrators systematically divided Yazidis into different groups: Young women and girls were forcibly converted and transferred to and between various holding sites in Iraq and Syria to be used as Sabaya (sex slaves) or forced wives by ISIS fighters, a practice that was officially endorsed and regulated by ISIS leadership; Yazidi boys who had not yet reached adolescence were separated from their mothers, brain-washed, radicalized, and trained as child soldiers; and older boys and men who refused to convert to Islam, as well as some of the older women, were summarily executed by shooting or having their throats cut, their bodies often left onsite or dumped in mass graves. Those who were forced to convert to Islam and spared were relocated by ISIS to abandoned villages and exploited as forced laborers. ISIS's attack also caused an estimated 250,000 Yazidis to flee to Mount Sinjar, where they were surrounded by ISIS for days in temperatures above 40 degrees Celsius. ISIS prevented any access to food, water or medical care in a deliberate attempt to cause large numbers of deaths. Hundreds of Yazidis perished before a coordinated rescue operation involving Yazidi volunteer defenders, the Syrian Kurdish forces (YPG/YPJ) and PKK, along with an international coalition, led to the opening of a safe passage from Mount Sinjar to Syria from 7 to 13 August 2014 (Yazda, 2020). However, The United Nation, European Union, the United States, UK, France, Canada and other countries have formally recognized the Yazidi Genocide (UN Human Rights Council, 2016, p.3).

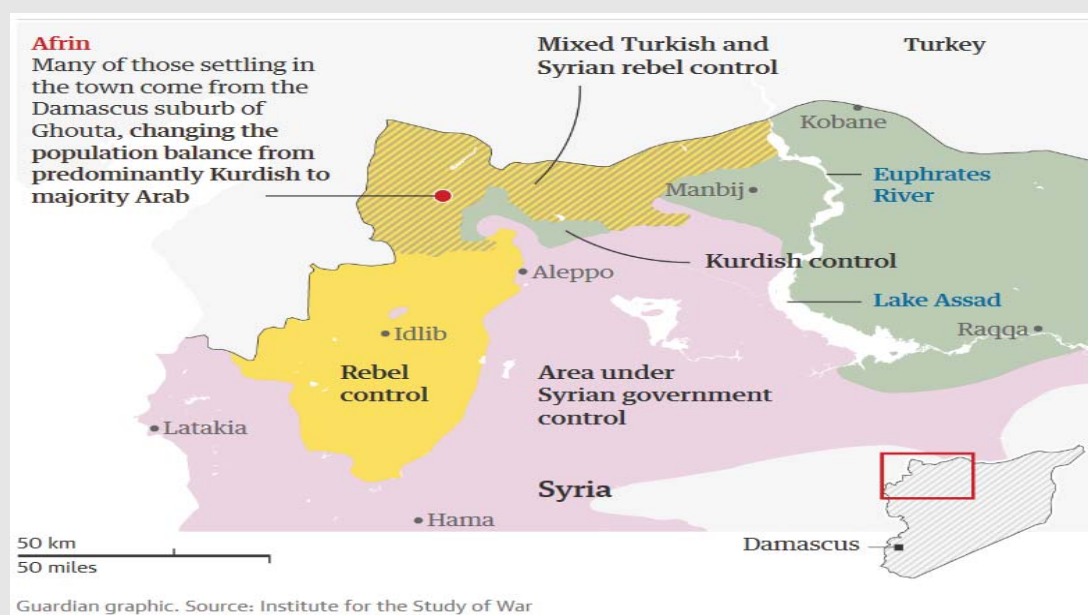
4.4 Kobani

In mid-September 2014, ISIS militants began laying siege to Kobane, which was the central canton of three de facto autonomous cantons under PYD control in northern Syria. When ISIS tightened the siege around the city, Turkey was joyfully watching Kurdish slaughter on the other side of the border. Up until the 134-day of siege, Kurdish forces (YPG, YPJ, and later joined by Peshmerga) were fighting to the last minute to secure the civilian escape, around 200,000 of civilians fled across the border to Turkey (UNHCR, 2014). However, when US started giving air support and dropping resupply, the balance of power changed, and Kurdish fighters were able to drive ISIS out January 2015. Over 350 YPG and YPJ fighters were martyred in the defense of the city and its people. Nonetheless, after liberation of Kobane, ISIS Fighters managed to infiltrate into the town and its nearby villages in the early hours of Thursday, June 25, killing at least 146 civilians in a house-to-house massacre. "The body of one child bore the impact of five bullets", says the British-based Syrian Observatory for Human Rights. YPG described the attack on Kobani as "a suicide mission" (Kurdistan24, 2015; Reuters, 2015)



4.5 Afrin

Afrin was administered by PYD since 2012. It was a haven for displaced civilians from other parts of Syria, with the United Nations reporting a population of around 125,000 on Internally displaced people (McGee, 2019). However, on January 20, 2018, Turkish forces and their Syrian militia proxies began the invasion of Afrin while Russians withdrew its troops from that region due to an agreement with Turkey. Both US and Russia allowed the invasion to proceed unabated. Nevertheless, after 58 days of fierce resistance, Ankara seized Afrin from the Kurdish control on March 24. As a result, tens of thousands of Kurds fled, and around 280 civilians were killed (BBC, 2018). The UN estimates suggest that around 150,000 people were forcibly displaced because of the operation (UNHCR, 2018).



Further, the goal of Turkey's direct military intervention in Syria, first in Operation Euphrates Shield (August 2016 – March 2017) and second in Olive branch was to isolate/split Afrin from Kurdish controlled Kobani in the east, preventing the formation of a contiguous Kurdish-controlled territory in northern Syria (McGee, 2019).

Nonetheless, after invasion, Turkey implemented a policy of demographic change, replacing Kurds with Arabs and Turkmen; opening schools to teach in Arabic and Turkish, but not in Kurdish. Thus, "the Kurdish population of Afrin has fallen by more than 60 percent", according to a local rights group. According to the latest statistics from Afrin-based Human Rights Organization, "the size of the indigenous population of Kurds in the Afrin region reached 34.8 percent in January, while they previously made up 97 percent of the population" and "the number of arrivals from various other regions makes up 65.2 percent of the population." In the meantime, Turkey's Syrian militia proxies were committing human right abuses against civilians: looting Kurdish homes and businesses, seizure of property by fighters, residents intimidation or kidnapping for ransom, and blocking displaced families from returning (Rudaw, 2020b).

Chapter 5: Discussion and analysis.

During the rivalry between the Ottomans and Safavids empires, there was anarchy in the region since the region lacked a central authority to impose order. The Ottomans were competing with Safavids for regional hegemony. To stand as a hegemon, the Ottomans were offering Kurdish *emirs* autonomy over their regions to encourage them to join the Ottoman empire. Thus, most of Kurdish autonomous regions joined the Ottoman empire. This rationale can be explained by offensive realism. That is to say, up until WWI, existing empires were competing for hegemony in their regions by adjoining nations in their bandwagon to protect the balance of power and prevent any 'peer competitors'.

However, after WWI, some hegemonies diminished, and new hegemonies were raised as was predicted by offensive Realism that a hegemon state in a region will aggressively defend its status by marginalizing all competing states in its neighborhood. Thus, Ottoman empire collapsed due to its siding with the central powers' bandwagon during WWI, and its territories were distributed between the new emerging hegemonies – Allied Powers' bandwagon. This change of balance of power after WWI led to the division of Kurdistan by *Sykes-Picot/Lausanne Agreements*. Hence, the Kurds were not allocated a state due to the rivalry over interests in the Kurdish region between the new winning hegemonies.

Further, after Sykes-Picot, ethnic groups which were constituting the Ottoman empire began competition for power and security but because ethnic groups were not evenly allocated to the different states which were created after the Ottoman collapse (e.g. Turkey, Syria, Iraq), some ethnic groups were empowered over others and had better chances of survival. That is to say, the rules of the game were not fair within each state created since ethnic groups were allocated based on interests not morality. For instance, in Turkey, ethnic Turks outnumbered, Armenian and Kurds ethnics. In Iraq and Syria, ethnic Arabs outnumbered ethnic Kurds and so forth. It was like putting a fox in a cage with a rabbit and expecting the rabbit to survive.

Moreover, after the random allocation of ethnicities into states, dominant ethnics managed to control the central authority and had malign intentions (especially the elite) against the other ethnics. Thus, the security dilemma ceased to operate and became a genuine security threat for minority ethnics. Hence, ethnic cleansing began. This scenario can be explained by the fourth development of security dilemma when the central authority is dominated by one group of two ethnic groups, according to Tang. For instance, in Turkey, ethnic Turks began constituting their state by massacring the

Armenian first and then by eliminating the Kurds and Turkification of the remnants of these ethnics, as previous chapters have explained this process (e.g. Dersim massacre). In Iraq and Syria, when the Baath party got into power in these countries, they instantly began the process of elimination of ethnic Kurds by genocide and Arabization campaigns, as previous chapters have showed (e.g. Halabja Genocide). Thus, the security dilemma can be fruitfully applied to understand ethnic conflict in states that the Kurds were allocated as minority. Further, humanitarian intervention was implemented selectively as Realists have suggested (e.g. international community failed to rescue the Kurds in Halabja and Derism). Yet, Kurds in Iraq were helped out but the Kurds in Turkey were not. Kevin McKiernan, who made a film by the name good/ bad Kurds, explained: "'Good Kurds' are those in Iraq; they are Saddam Hussein's victims, whom we want to help. 'Bad Kurds' are those waging an armed insurrection against Turkey, an American ally: they are the receiving end of US weaponry." (cited in Marcus, 2007, p.200)

Nevertheless, after 2001, the Securitization theory better explains politician's behaviour in Turkey. For instance, in August 2005, Erdogan stated that Turkey had a "Kurdish problem" during his election campaign to draw Turkey's Kurdish votes away from pro-Kurdish parties and toward the AKP, thus, he de-securitized the Kurdish issue to enhance his chances of winning the elections. Yet, in April in the run-up to the June 2015 General vote, Erdogan pronounced that "there is no Kurdish issue in this country, there is a problem of the PKK", thus, securitizing the issue of Kurds (they are terrorists) to draw Turkish nationalists votes. Here, the referent objects were the national security and territorial unity of Turkey. The securitizing actor was the Erdogan. The audience consisted of Turkish public opinion.

However, after 2016, Turkey's direct military intervention in Syria, first in Operation Euphrates Shield (August 2016 – March 2017), second in Olive branch (2018), and third in Peace Spring (2019) to eliminate ethnic Kurds from their regions is a return to offensive realism tactics and the Kurds are once again facing an existential threat. Likewise, the rise of ISIS in Syria and Iraq in 2014, drag the region into anarchy. Thus, composing ethnics of these states were facing an existential threat. For ISIS tried to dominate in the region by massacring other ethnics (e.g. Sinjar and Kobani Massacre). However, they were defeated and marginalized by the Kurds which can also be explained by security dilemma in an ethnic conflict.

Conclusion:

This thesis has tried to shed the light on the Kurds' history and their struggle to secure their existence which they have been denied by imperial powers at the start of twenty century. It has showed why the Kurds don't have their own state and what happened to them as a result of that. They were not rightly allocated to newly created states where they have faced systematic annihilation. They have suffered genocide, marginalization, and systematic assimilation. They have suffered one hundred years of misery just because they were wrongly used by hegemonic powers as bargaining chip to secure their interests. The Kurds have been struggling for their natural right of self-determination. This thesis has shown that a rabbit cannot survive if it is caged with a fox. For the rabbit to survive it has to live freely with its peers in the land where they belong. This thesis has shown how Realism theory can explain the rationale behind why the Kurds don't have their own state. It has shown that realism theory can fruitfully be applied to ethnic conflicts. This was clear by the policies which were used by dominant Arab, Turk ethnic groups against Kurdish ethnic once they had seized power. The

policies which were implemented varied from genocide to forced assimilation. This manifestation of the "intra-state security dilemma" here is that ethnic groups act based on past experience. In this regard, the attempted assault and occupation of Erbil and Kobani by IS, in 2014, and Turkish invasion of Rojava were not surprise to Kurdish forces: for them this was the same evil of the Ba'athist officers repackaged in another radical Islamist form; it was the same evil of Ataturk Turkey that used genocide and extreme brutality as part of its strategy to occupy and control populations.

This thesis has showed that the mentality of denial of the existence of ethnic Kurds is still the case in Turkey. This was clear by securitizing the issue of Kurds in Turkey. They have not only opposed ethnic Kurds natural rights in Turkey but also in Syria. They have invaded their regions in Syria under the sight of benevolent eye of the United Nation and committed war crimes through its proxies. This mentality of denial will not change until the Turks lose dearly in their land. They will understand, when there will be no Turkey but Kurdistan, when there are no Turks but Kurds, and when those who think themselves Turks are, in fact, Mountain Kurds. Then, Turks might understand what forced assimilation means and what denial of identity, language, and culture means? The Kurds are Kurds wherever they are. The people of Dersim, Barzan, Halabja, Sinjar, Kobani, and Afrin had, each in their own way, come to exemplify Kurdish resistance to central government policies of forced assimilation. It is true that superpowers have used Kurdish rebel groups for their own ends to pressure some countries or weaken them as a whole but that is the only way to survive. However, Kurdish movement as whole should coordinate in picking their allies, though they have said no friends accept mountains. Iran is producing a nuclear weapon which will change the balance of the power in the region. Once the balance of power is changed, Kurds might get their state.

Appendix Glossary

AKP: Justice and Development Party (Turkish: Adelet ve Kalkinma Partisi)

BDP: Peace and Democracy Party (Kurdish: Partiya Civaka Demokratîk)

DTP: Democratic Society Party (Kurdish: Partiya Civaka Demokratîk)

HDP: Kurdish People's Democracy Party (Kurdish: Partiya Demokratîk a Gelan)

HEP: People's Labor Party. A legal Kurdish political party formed in May 1994 and closed down by Turkish court in July 1993.

ISIS: Islamic State in Iraq and Syria.

KDP: Kurdistan Democratic Party of Iraq.

KDPI: Democratic Party of Iranian Kurdistan.

Komala: Society of Revolutionary Toilers of Iranian Kurdistan.

Peshmerga: Those who face death, are the military forces of the autonomous region of Kurdistan Region of Iraq.

PKK: Kurdistan Worker's Party (Kurdish: Partiya Karkerên Kurdistanê)

PYD: Democratic Union Party (Syria) (Kurdish: Partiya Yekîtiya Demokrat)

S.D.F.: Syrian Democratic Forces which is under Kurdish forces command.

TKDP: Kurdistan Democratic Party of Turkey

YPG: People's Protection Units (Yekîneyên Parastina Gel). Syrian Kurdish forces.

YPJ: Women's Protection Units (Yekîneyên Parastina Jin). Syrian Kurdish forces.

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