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## KRG-US April 2025 Newsletter

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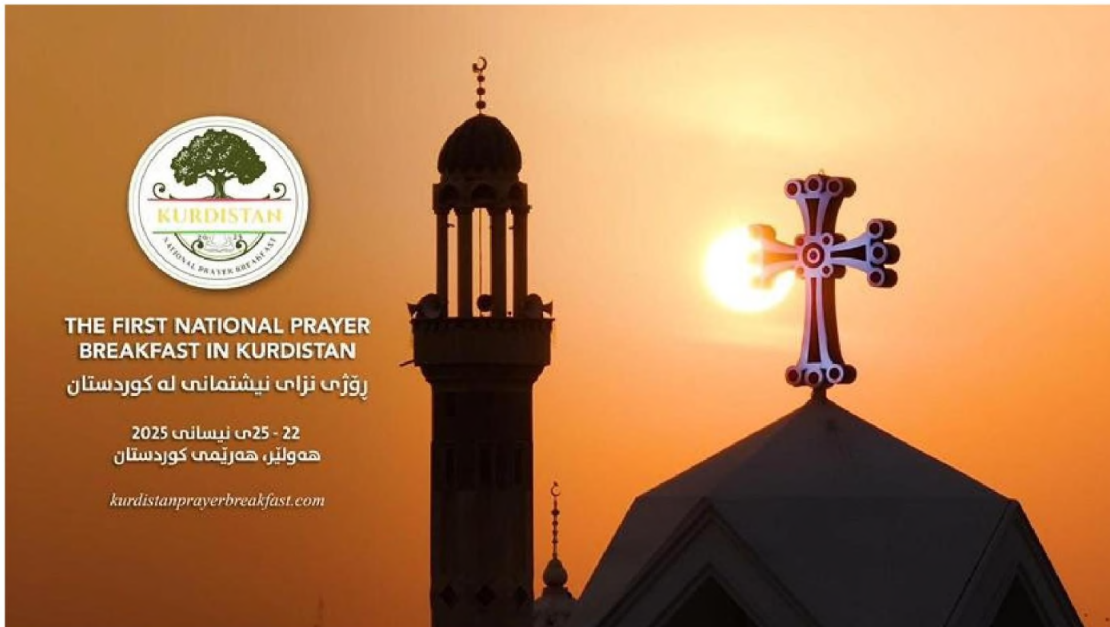
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## Kurdistan Regional Government Representation in the United States

### APRIL NEWSLETTER



## Kurdistan National Prayer Breakfast: A Celebration of Unity, Faith, and Dialogue

April 2025 marked a historic milestone for the Kurdistan Region as it successfully hosted the inaugural Kurdistan National Prayer Breakfast. The landmark event brought together political leaders, religious figures, diplomats, civil society representatives, and international guests in a unified demonstration of spiritual reflection and shared values.

Inspired by similar gatherings held around the world, most notably the U.S. National Prayer Breakfast, this first-of-its-kind event in Kurdistan served as a platform to promote peace, interfaith dialogue, and moral leadership. Held in the capital city of Erbil, the breakfast reflected the Kurdistan Regional Government's ongoing commitment to religious coexistence and democratic principles in one of the most diverse and resilient parts of the Middle East.

The inaugural gathering featured spiritual readings and prayers from leaders representing the region's rich tapestry of faiths, including Islam, Christianity, Yezidism, and other traditions. Keynote speeches emphasized themes of compassion, justice, forgiveness, and national unity in the face of ongoing regional challenges.

Attendees noted that Kurdistan's model of coexistence, often cited as a beacon of tolerance in the region, was reinforced by the launch of such a spiritually grounded, inclusive event. The event featured high-level discussion panels addressing some of the most pressing and relevant topics for the region and beyond. While the main breakfast and interfaith gathering took place on the first day, the second day was devoted to visiting the religious sites and cities representing the heart of Kurdistan's diversity. Delegates traveled to communities and places of worship, including Christian and Yezidi heritage sites. The message was clear: **religious coexistence in Kurdistan is not just a political value, it's a lived reality.**

Bishop Mar Paulus Benyamin, representing the Christian community in his address, noted, "In a world fractured by division, Kurdistan stands out as a place where people of different faiths can gather not just in peace, but in friendship. Today's gathering affirms that spirit."

The successful launch of this inaugural Prayer Breakfast has set the foundation for what is expected to become a cornerstone of the region's civic and interfaith life in the years to come.

## **Kurdistan Region Welcomes U.S. Congressional Delegation, Reaffirms Strong Bilateral Ties**



Earlier this month, a bi-partisan congressional delegation led by Rep. Adam Smith (D-WA), Ranking Member of the House Armed Services Committee, and Representatives Michael Baumgartner (R-WA), Sara Jacobs (D-CA), Wesley Bell (D-MO), George Whitesides (D-CA), and accompanying staff visited the Kurdistan Region.

The delegation met with senior leaders in Erbil where Iraq's political and security landscape, as well as developments across the broader Middle East were discussed. They addressed ways to deepen cooperation between the Kurdistan Region and the United States, reaffirming the strategic importance of the Kurdistan Region and its pivotal role in ensuring regional stability.

The CODEL briefed Prime Minister Barzani on the objectives of their visit, emphasizing their continued support for the KRG and its security forces, particularly the Peshmerga. They commended the KRG for its ongoing efforts to implement critical, modernizing reforms across key sectors.

Prime Minister Barzani expressed sincere appreciation for the United States' steadfast partnership and assistance. He highlighted major reform initiatives undertaken by the KRG in energy, electricity, and banking, and stressed the importance of maintaining momentum on these efforts. Both parties underscored the urgency of forming a new KRG cabinet without delay to ensure continued governance and policy advancement. Discussions also covered vital topics including the relationship between the Kurdistan Region and the federal government of Iraq, the resumption of oil exports via the Iraq-Türkiye pipeline, the situation in Syria, and the peace process in Türkiye.

In a recent press release, Rep. Michael Baumgartner (R-WA) shared how the visit to Iraq marked a personal milestone. Having previously served at the U.S. Embassy in Baghdad from 2007 to 2008, this was his first return to Iraq since that time. Reflecting on the trip, Rep. Baumgartner noted Iraq's stabilization over the past 17 years while cautioning that the region continues to face serious challenges, including the ongoing threat of Islamic extremism.

"We've seen real progress, but the Middle East remains a highly complex and turbulent region," Baumgartner said. "While our strategic focus may be shifting globally, the United States must remain thoughtfully engaged here."

The CODEL's visit reaffirms the strong ties between the United States and the Kurdistan Region of Iraq and underscores shared priorities in security cooperation, regional peace, and economic reform. As the KRG moves toward forming a new cabinet and advancing

its reform agenda, sustained partnership with the United States remains a cornerstone of its strategy for long-term stability and development.

## KRG Launches Peshmerga Medical Force Readiness Initiative in Partnership with Spirit of America



On April 28, 2025, the Kurdistan Regional Government officially launched the **Peshmerga Medical Force Readiness Initiative**, a groundbreaking program aimed at enhancing the medical capabilities of the Peshmerga forces. This initiative is the result of a strategic partnership with the nonprofit **Spirit of America** and is strongly supported by the **U.S. Consulate General in Erbil**.

The launch event brought together officials from the Ministry of Peshmerga Affairs, the Spirit of America, the U.S. Consulate, as well as other KRG officials to mark this important step towards delivering advanced trauma care training, modern medical equipment, and critical logistical support to frontline Peshmerga units—ensuring they are better prepared to save lives in high-risk environments.

At the heart of the initiative is a **modern digital system designed to reorganize the health affairs of the Peshmerga forces**. The platform digitally connects the medical departments of various military units to the Directorate of General Medical Affairs (DGMA), creating a streamlined, real-time communication network for health data. This marks the first digital platform for health data communication in the Kurdistan Region, laying the foundation for a more integrated and efficient military medical infrastructure.

The Peshmerga Medical Force Readiness Initiative represents a significant step forward in improving operational readiness, advancing digital innovation, and strengthening the overall resilience of the Peshmerga. The KRG is proud to stand with its American partners to protect those who serve and to build a more modern and capable defense force.

## The Runaki Electricity Project: Powering Kurdistan's Future



The Kurdistan Regional Government (KRG) has embarked on a transformative initiative to revolutionize the region's energy infrastructure: the Runaki Electricity Project. Officially launched on October 17, 2024, by Prime Minister Masrour Barzani, the project aims to provide 24-hour electricity to every business and resident of the Kurdistan Region by the end of 2026.

**To date, more than 150,000 homes and businesses across the Kurdistan Region have switched to 24/7 power.**

Erbil, the capital city, served as the pilot for the Runaki Project. Five initial neighborhoods were connected to the national grid, benefiting approximately 22,000 subscribers. Subsequent expansions included six neighborhoods, collectively serving over 460,000 citizens.

Following the success in Erbil, the project expanded to the Sulaimani Province. The initial phase targeted over 9,000 subscribers in market districts and select neighborhoods. Plans are underway to gradually expand coverage across the entire province as well as Halabja.

Duhok Province, with approximately 350,000 electricity subscribers, is the next focus. The first phase aims to provide 24-hour electricity to central Duhok, with subsequent phases extending to surrounding towns and districts.

To support the increased load and ensure grid stability, nearly 600 private transformers have been installed in 35 different neighborhoods. Additionally, smart metering systems are being implemented to facilitate efficient energy distribution and billing processes. The Runaki Project has led to the shutdown of approximately 400 diesel-powered private generators in Erbil alone, reducing emissions equivalent to removing over 60,000 vehicles from the road. This transition not only improves air quality but also lowers household energy costs and reduces noise pollution.

By providing reliable, sustainable, and environmentally friendly energy, the project not only enhances the quality of life for residents but also paves the way for economic growth and environmental stewardship. As the project progresses, it stands as a testament to the KRG's commitment to a brighter, more sustainable future for all its citizens.

## Other KRG News:

- **President Nechirvan Barzani pays respect to Pope Francis in Vatican City**
- **American University of Iraq, Sulaimani held its 9th annual forum.**

- **Kurdistan Chronicle wins Award of Excellence from U.S.-Based RCC**

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