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KRG - US NEWSLETTER FEBRUARY 2026

THE KURDISTAN REPORT

MONTHLY HIGHLIGHTS FROM THE KRG REPRESENTATION IN THE US

KRG Interior Minister Rebar Ahmed Concludes Strategic Visit to the United States

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Minister of Interior, **H.E. Rebar Ahmed** concluded a high-level visit to the United States, reaffirming the depth of the U.S.–Kurdistan partnership across security, economic, and institutional cooperation.

In Washington, Minister Ahmed met with senior government officials from the Trump administration, Members of Congress, and policy experts at the Atlantic Council and the Hudson Institute to discuss counterterrorism coordination, the enduring role of the Peshmerga, and the importance of sustained U.S. engagement in advancing long-term stability in Iraq and the Kurdistan Region.

The Minister also met with the U.S. Chamber of Commerce and American companies investing in the Region to underscore the Kurdistan Region's commitment to a stable, business-friendly environment and expanded commercial ties.

In Detroit, Minister Ahmed met with Assyrian and Chaldean community leaders, reinforcing the KRG's commitment to coexistence and strong diaspora partnerships.

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FROM THE REPRESENTATION

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Kurdistan Region Participation in IRF Summit and National Prayer Breakfast



KRG Representative Aziz accompanied senior officials from the Kurdistan Region to the 2026 annual International Religious Freedom Summit and National Prayer Breakfast in Washington D.C., reinforcing the Region's commitment to pluralism and interfaith coexistence.

H.E. Ano Jawhar Abdoka, Minister of Transportation and Communications, a Chaldean, participated in the events and affirmed the Kurdistan Regional Government's firm commitment to protecting ethnic and religious communities across the Kurdistan Region. He highlighted the KRG's long-standing efforts to safeguard and strengthen their rights, ensure equal access to services and opportunities, and preserve their cultural and religious heritage. The KRG continues to advance freedom of religion as a pillar of stability, coexistence, and democratic governance.

In addition, **Dr. Hemn Hawrami,** former Deputy Speaker of the Kurdistan Parliament and a senior member of the Kurdistan Democratic Party (KDP), attended the annual National Prayer Breakfast in Washington. On the margins of the gathering, he held a series of meetings with U.S. officials, members of Congress, and policy experts to exchange views on political developments in Iraq and the wider region, the importance of protecting the Kurdistan Region's constitutional status, and opportunities to strengthen U.S.–Kurdistan relations.

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Discussions also focused on the Kurdistan Region's role as a reliable partner for the United States, ongoing reform efforts, and the need for continued international engagement to support stability, democratic institutions, and economic growth.

These engagements reflect the Kurdistan Region's commitment to dialogue, pluralism, and religious coexistence, including strengthening long-standing partnerships.

Read the full article here

KRG-US Hosts American University Students for Dialogue



In partnership with American University's School of International Service and Dr. Yerevan Saeed Barzani Scholar-in-Residence and Director of Global Kurdish Initiative for Peace, the KRG Representation welcomed students, including Barzani fellows, for an evening discussion on the history and culture of Kurdistan, recent regional developments, and U.S.–Kurdistan relations.

Representative Treefa Aziz, an SIS alumna, emphasized the importance of dialogue between students and policymakers. The discussion covered institutional development in the Kurdistan Region, security cooperation with the United States, and recent developments in the region.

The program also provided the students with opportunities to engage directly with KRG staff and learn more about diplomatic work in Washington.

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KURDISH CULTURE AND SOCIETY

February in the Kurdistan Region: Language, Art, and Women's Resilience



February in the Kurdistan Region has been marked by powerful expressions of cultural pride, linguistic heritage, and artistic resilience. From International Mother Language Day to international art exhibitions celebrating Kurdish women, the month highlighted the enduring strength of identity and creativity across Kurdistan and its diaspora.

Kurdish leaders reaffirmed that preserving the mother tongue remains central to identity, unity, and coexistence. Kurdistan Region President, H.E. Nechirvan Barzani, described the Region as a "cradle of diversity," while H.E. Prime Minister Masrour Barzani underscored the importance of multilingual education.

Cultural expression throughout the month also elevated the symbolic *kezi* (braid) as a representation of dignity and resilience. The braid, *kezi* in Kurdish, has long represented dignity, continuity, and identity. In recent weeks, artists and cultural figures across the Region have reinterpreted this symbol as a celebration of women's strength and endurance, reinforcing the role of cultural expression in moments of regional tension.

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NEWS AND MORE

- **President Nechirvan Barzani Meets U.S. Secretary of State Marco Rubio in Munich**
  President Nechirvan Barzani met with U.S. Secretary of State Marco Rubio on the sidelines of the Munich Security Conference to discuss U.S.–Iraq and U.S.–Kurdistan Region relations, regional stability, and developments in Syria, reaffirming the Kurdistan Region's role as a key partner for peace and stability.
  Read full article here

- **Prime Minister Masrour Barzani Hosts U.S. Embassy Chargé d'Affaires in Erbil**
  Prime Minister Masrour Barzani received Joshua Harris, Chargé d'Affaires of the U.S. Embassy in Iraq, in Erbil to discuss strengthening bilateral relations, Iraq's political landscape following recent elections, and cooperation on federal government formation, constitutional rights, and equitable budget and oil export arrangements for the Kurdistan Region.
  Read full article here

- **KRG Launches Digital Driver's License Through KRDPass**
  The Kurdistan Regional Government announced the launch of a digital driver's license accessible through the KRDPass application, advancing the 9th Cabinet's broader efforts to modernize public services and expand digital government initiatives.
  Read full article here

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KRG - US NEWSLETTER JANUARY 2026

THE KURDISTAN REPORT

MONTHLY HIGHLIGHTS FROM THE KRG REPRESENTATION IN THE US

KRG Representation in Washington Engages U.S. Policymakers on Developments in Northeast Syria

The Kurdistan Regional Government Representation in the United States has been actively engaging with U.S. policymakers on the ongoing security and humanitarian concerns in northeast Syria.

Recent developments, including violence affecting civilians, disruptions to essential services, and continued displacement, have raised serious concerns for civilian safety and regional stability. In response, the KRG Representation has worked to ensure these issues remain under close consideration by U.S. decision-makers.

On January 30, 2026, a comprehensive agreement was reached between the Syrian Government and the Syrian Democratic Forces (SDF), to end hostilities and provide a framework for a permanent ceasefire, the phased integration of

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SDF fighters into the Syrian armed forces and security services, the withdrawal of forces from frontline positions, and the integration of local civil institutions into the Syrian state while safeguarding civil and educational rights and enabling the return of displaced civilians.

Read the full article here

FROM THE REPRESENTATION

KRG Representative Visits Nashville to Strengthen Local Partnerships



KRG Representative to the United States Treefa Aziz traveled to Nashville, Tennessee, home to the nation's largest Kurdish population, to strengthen partnerships and engage with the Kurdish-American community. She met with Mayor Freddie O'Connell, the offices of Senators Bill Hagerty and Marsha Blackburn, the Nashville Area Chamber of Commerce, and local diaspora leaders to discuss shared priorities, economic cooperation, and the urgent security situation in Northeast Syria. The visit underscores the KRG Representation's continued commitment to expanding U.S. partnerships and supporting Kurdish-American communities.

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KURDISH CULTURE AND SOCIETY

Kurdish Film Screening in Washington, D.C.

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On Sunday, February 1, the Asian Art Museum hosted a special screening of *Singing Wings* (ئاوازی باڵەکان), a documentary by Kurdish director Hemen Khaledi. Set in a Kurdish village where storks winter, the film follows Khadijeh, a seventy-eight-year-old woman caring for her disabled husband and an injured bird, while facing the possibility of her daughter emigrating abroad.

Through quiet humor and intimate storytelling, the film offers a poignant reflection on family, caregiving, and belonging, highlighting everyday life and

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resilience in Kurdish society.

Learn more about the project here.

NEWS AND MORE

Save the Kurds Act: A Congressional Effort to Protect Civilians and Support Stability

In response to the deteriorating security and humanitarian conditions in Northeast Syria, bipartisan legislation titled the **Save the Kurds Act** was introduced by Senators Lindsey Graham (R-SC) and Richard Blumenthal (D-CT). The bill reflects growing congressional concern over threats to civilian populations, renewed instability, and the potential implications for regional security and counter-ISIS efforts.

The legislation reaffirms U.S. support for the protection of the Kurdish people and the Syrian Democratic Forces (SDF) who have played a critical role in the fight against ISIS and terrorism. The bill calls for increased monitoring and reporting on threats to civilians and U.S. partners, greater diplomatic engagement to prevent attacks and escalation, and continued coordination to support stability and humanitarian access in affected areas.

The Act underscores a bipartisan view that protecting civilians and preserving hard-won security gains is critical to preventing the reemergence of ISIS and other extremist groups. It also reflects congressional recognition of the sacrifices made by Kurdish forces and communities over many years in support of shared security objectives. The legislation has been welcomed by Kurdish-Americans and Kurds around the world, many of whom view the United States as a longstanding ally.

For the Kurdistan Regional Government, the introduction of this legislation aligns with ongoing efforts to draw attention to the humanitarian and security challenges facing Kurdish populations, while emphasizing dialogue, de-escalation, and the protection of civilians. As the bill moves forward, the KRG Representation in Washington will continue engaging with Congress and the Administration to share perspectives from the Kurdistan Region and advocate for policies that strengthen partnerships and support lasting peace and stability in Iraq and the wider region.

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MONTHLY HIGHLIGHTS FROM THE KRG REPRESENTATION IN THE US

THIS MONTH IN KURDISTAN

Renewed Attacks Disrupt Security, Energy, and Daily Life Across the Kurdistan Region

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Renewed missile and drone attacks across the Kurdistan Region have caused casualties, damaged infrastructure, and disrupted essential services. Security threats forced several international energy companies to suspend operations, including at the Khor Mor, Atrush, and Sarsang fields, reducing electricity generation and affecting fuel supplies. The KRG has condemned the attacks as violations of Iraq's sovereignty and called for stronger action to protect civilians, energy infrastructure, and regional stability.

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Italy Awards President Nechirvan Barzani Grand Cross of the Order of the Star of Italy

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Kurdistan Region President Nechirvan Barzani received the Knight Grand Cross of the Order of the Star of Italy, the country's highest-ranking honor within the order, during a ceremony in Erbil.

Presented on behalf of Italian President Sergio Mattarella, the award recognized President Barzani's leadership, commitment to dialogue and peace, and longstanding efforts to strengthen relations between Italy and the Kurdistan Region. President Barzani described the honor as a tribute to the historic relationship between Italy, Iraq, and the Kurdistan Region, as well as to all those who have worked to advance the partnership.

Read the full article here

Prime Minister Barzani Inaugurates Major Water Project Serving 53 Villages

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Prime Minister Masrour Barzani inaugurated the Balinda-Barzan Water Project, which will deliver clean drinking water to more than 35,000 residents across 53 villages in Mergasor, Akre, and Khalifan. The $105 million project includes a modern treatment facility and a 540-kilometer distribution network designed to provide reliable service for the next 20 years. The project reflects the KRG's continued investment in essential infrastructure, water security, and rural development.

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FROM THE REPRESENTATION

Iraqi Prime Minister Ali al-Zaidi Makes First Official Visit to Washington

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Iraq's new Prime Minister, H.E. Ali al-Zaidi, made his first official visit to Washington, D.C., since taking office two months ago. The visit focused on expanding economic and energy cooperation, attracting investment, and advancing shared security priorities. Representatives from the Kurdistan Regional Government and business community also joined the Iraqi delegation throughout the visit.

KRG Representative to the United States Treefa Aziz joined officials from the Embassy of Iraq in Washington in welcoming Prime Minister al-Zaidi at the airport. The Iraqi delegation included representatives from the Kurdistan Region, including Ms. Bayan Sami Abdul Rahman, Senior Adviser to KRG Prime Minister Masrour Barzani for Foreign Affairs and Climate Change, along with other government officials and private sector business leaders.

During the visit, U.S. Special Envoy Tom Barrack praised the Kurdistan Region's role in advancing stability and prosperity, while Defense Secretary Pete Hegseth recognized the Peshmerga's continued contribution to the fight against ISIS. The visit concluded with the signing of 48 agreements and memoranda across several economic sectors.

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Honoring 250 Years of the United States and a Lasting Partnership with the Kurdistan Region

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As the United States marks its 250th anniversary, the KRG reflects on more than three decades of partnership rooted in humanitarian support, security cooperation, diplomacy, and strong people-to-people ties. From Operation Provide Comfort in 1991 and the shared fight against ISIS to the establishment of the KRG Representation in Washington in 2004, the relationship has continued to grow. Today, the partnership extends across security, business, education, and cultural exchange, supported by the KRG office in Washington and the U.S. Consulate General in Erbil.

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Remembering Senator Lindsey Graham, a Steadfast Friend of Kurdistan



Representative Treefa Aziz attended the funeral services of the late Senator Lindsey Graham on behalf of the Kurdistan Regional Government and the Kurdish people, paying final respects to a steadfast friend of Kurdistan.

Throughout his decades of public service, Senator Graham consistently stood with the Kurdish people and championed the partnership between the United States and the Kurdistan Region. During the fight against ISIS, he supported efforts to provide the Peshmerga with critical weapons, training, and continued US assistance, while recognizing their courage, sacrifice, and essential role in protecting the Kurdistan Region and contributing to regional security.

His support went far beyond policy. Senator Graham's friendship with the Kurdish people was deeply valued, and his willingness to speak on their behalf during some of the Region's most difficult moments will never be forgotten. His leadership and unwavering commitment strengthened the enduring ties between the United States and the Kurdistan Region and left a lasting legacy of friendship and solidarity.

The KRG-US extends its deepest condolences to his family, friends, colleagues, and all those mourning his passing. May he rest in eternal peace.

KURDISH CULTURE AND SOCIETY

KRG Launches Major Art Gallery and Anfal Museum Projects in Erbil

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The KRG has launched two major cultural projects in Erbil's Sami Abdulrahman Park: the Kurdistan Region's largest art gallery and a modern museum dedicated to the Anfal genocide. The gallery will showcase Kurdish and international artists and expand opportunities for cultural exchange, while the museum will preserve the memory of Anfal victims and educate future generations. Together, the projects reflect the KRG's continued investment in culture, heritage, tourism, and the creative economy.

Read the full article here

NEWS AND MORE

- **Rwanga Foundation Completes Returnee Reintegration Project in Erbil**
  The Rwanga Foundation concluded a three-year project supporting the sustainable reintegration of returnees across Iraq and the Kurdistan Region through job creation, business training, financial grants, and awareness programs addressing the risks of irregular migration.
  Read full article here

- **KDP and PUK Resume Talks on Kurdistan Government Formation**
  Delegations from the Kurdistan Democratic Party and Patriotic Union of Kurdistan met in Erbil to discuss improved coordination and efforts to resolve the political deadlock surrounding the formation of the Kurdistan Regional Government's tenth cabinet.
  Read full article here

- **Investment in Kurdistan Region Surpasses $25 Billion**
  More than $25 billion has been invested through 856 projects across the Kurdistan Region, including housing, tourism, industry, trade, agriculture, education, and healthcare. The investments reflect continued efforts to diversify the economy, strengthen the private sector, and create employment opportunities.
  Read full article here

- **Kurdistan Foundation Launches First Biodiversity Project**

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The Kurdistan Foundation launched Kurdistan Biodiversity, the Region's first centralized and verified database documenting native wildlife and plant species. Developed through Climate.KRD with researchers, biodiversity specialists, and wildlife photographers, the platform currently includes hundreds of bird, mammal, reptile, amphibian, and fish species and will support scientific research, conservation, education, and public awareness.
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THIS MONTH IN KURDISTAN

Prime Minister Masrour Barzani Officially Inaugurates Youth Hub in Erbil

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Prime Minister Masrour Barzani officially inaugurated the Youth Hub in Erbil, a landmark initiative established and managed by the Kurdistan Foundation to expand opportunities for young people across the Kurdistan Region. The center, among the largest and most advanced youth facilities of its kind, will provide space for learning, innovation, culture, technology, media, and professional development. During the inauguration, Prime Minister Barzani emphasized the importance of empowering youth, preserving Kurdish identity, and creating opportunities for the next generation to lead, innovate, and contribute to Kurdistan's future.

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Iraq Returns to the FIFA World Cup, with Kurdistani Players Part of a New Generation

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Forty years after its first appearance on football's biggest stage, Iraq returned to the FIFA World Cup. The Lions of Mesopotamia qualified for the 2026 FIFA World Cup in the United States, Canada, and Mexico, marking Iraq's second appearance in the tournament and its first since Mexico 1986. For Iraqis, Kurdistanis, and members of the diaspora around the world, this historic moment is more than a sporting achievement; it is a symbol of resilience, pride, and unity.

The tournament is also a proud moment for the Kurdistan Region, which includes players from Erbil, Ankawa, Darbandikhan, Sulaymaniyah, and the diaspora selected as part of Iraq's new generation. Their stories reflect the diversity, talent, and international reach of Iraqi football today.

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FROM THE REPRESENTATION

KRG Representation At Atlantic Council's Global Energy Forum

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The KRG Representation in the United States attended the Atlantic Council's 2026 Global Energy Forum in Washington, DC, which brought together senior officials, members of Congress, diplomats, and energy leaders to discuss global energy security, infrastructure, investment, and cooperation. Featured speakers included U.S. Secretary of Energy Chris Wright, Senator Chris Coons, Representative Ami Bera, Representative Young Kim, Senator Bill Cassidy, and Crescent Petroleum CEO Majid Jafar. Representative Treefa Aziz also attended a private luncheon roundtable hosted by the Atlantic Council's Iraq Initiative in partnership with Crescent Petroleum, focused on Iraq's energy future and opportunities to strengthen the country's oil and gas sector, infrastructure, and regional energy role.

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Representative Aziz Attends Great American CEE Ideas Fair in Washington, DC

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Representative Treefa Aziz attended the Great American CEE Ideas Fair in Washington, DC, part of the 2026 Community Engagement Exchange Program sponsored by the U.S. Department of State's Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs and implemented by IREX. With more than 25,000 applicants and only 102 participants selected, the KRG Representation was proud to see the Kurdistan Region represented by four Kurdish fellows and two Kurdish mentors. The fellows presented community engagement projects focused on issues including mental health awareness, AI infrastructure development, youth engagement, and civic participation.

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KURDISH CULTURE AND SOCIETY

Kurdistan Achieves Guinness World Record for Largest Gathering in Traditional Attire

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Kurdistan officially entered the Guinness World Records after more than 1,000 participants gathered in Erbil wearing traditional Kurdish attire, securing recognition for the largest assembly of people dressed in national clothing. Organized by the Kurdistan Foundation, the Kurdish Cultural Clothing Festival celebrated one of the most enduring symbols of Kurdish identity, highlighting the rich history, regional diversity, and cultural significance of traditional Kurdish dress. The achievement marks an important milestone for Kurdish heritage and reflects ongoing efforts to preserve and share Kurdish culture with the world.

Read the full article here

NEWS AND MORE

- **Baghdad and Erbil Near Agreement on Digital Customs and Revenue Sharing**
  Erbil and Baghdad are nearing an agreement to implement the ASYCUDA digital customs system across the Kurdistan Region's border crossings, a step aimed at improving revenue transparency, streamlining trade, and strengthening economic coordination.
  Read full article here

- **Baghdad to Provide Air Defense Support to Kurdistan Region Oil Infrastructure**
  An Iraqi defense delegation visited Erbil to assess air defense needs for key oil facilities in the Kurdistan Region, as discussions continue on protecting energy infrastructure and increasing oil exports through the Iraq-Turkey pipeline.
  Read full article here

- **Zakho Hosts Festival Celebrating Traditional Kurdish Attire**
  The city of Zakho hosted the Shal u Shepek festival, celebrating traditional Kurdish men's attire through cultural panels, music, dance performances, and a concert by renowned Kurdish singer Hozan Dino.
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Escalating Attacks on Kurdistan Region Draw Global Condemnation

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The Kurdistan Region of Iraq (KRI) has faced more than **500 attacks** since the start of Operation Epic Fury, with a sharp escalation in recent days. Over the past week, strikes have increasingly targeted Peshmerga positions, Kurdish political leadership, and civilian areas. To date, at least 14 people have been killed and nearly 100 wounded.

On March 24, a major attack on a Peshmerga base in Soran killed six Peshmerga personnel and injured dozens, marking a serious intensification of the campaign. In the days that followed, drone strikes targeted the private residence of KRI President Nechirvan Barzani and the headquarters of KDP President Masoud Barzani, signaling a troubling expansion of attacks to senior leadership. Iraqi security forces also intercepted Iranian-made rockets in Kirkuk that were reportedly prepared for launch toward the Region, underscoring the persistent and evolving threat.

The United States, European allies, and regional partners across the Middle East have strongly condemned these attacks and reaffirmed their support for the Kurdistan Region. This coordinated response reflects the Region's role as a key partner in maintaining security and stability, and reinforces calls for de-escalation, accountability, and adherence to international law amid rising regional tensions.

FROM THE REPRESENTATION

KRG Engagement with U.S. Policymakers During Ongoing Conflict

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Since the onset of the current conflict in the Middle East, the KRG Representation in the United States has significantly intensified its outreach across Washington's policy and national security community. Through sustained engagement with U.S. officials, members of Congress, and leading think tanks, the KRG has worked to ensure that the evolving situation, and its direct implications for the Kurdistan Region of Iraq, remain clearly understood at the highest levels of decision-making.

These engagements included senior advisors from the Kurdistan Region, who traveled to Washington to provide firsthand insights into the rapidly changing security environment. These engagements have focused on conveying the immediate and long-term impacts of the conflict, particularly as they relate to regional stability, civilian safety, and the continued role of the Kurdistan Region as a reliable partner to the United States and a factor for peace in Iraq.

A central part of this effort has been raising awareness about the increasing frequency and severity of attacks targeting the Kurdistan Region. These unwarranted attacks and the missile, rocket and drone strikes against Peshmerga forces and critical infrastructure represent a serious escalation, yet many of these developments have received limited attention in mainstream media coverage. KRG officials have worked to bridge this gap by providing briefings and on-the-ground perspectives to policymakers and analysts, underscoring the urgency of the situation.

These coordinated efforts reflect the KRG's commitment to transparency, partnership, and proactive engagements. By maintaining a consistent presence in Washington and elevating underreported developments, the Kurdistan Region

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continues to advocate for greater international awareness and support at a critical moment for the Middle East.

KRG-US Participates in Newroz Commemorations Across the DMV Area



The Kurdistan Regional Government Representation in the United States participated in a series of Newroz events across the Washington, DC, Maryland, and Virginia area. A large gathering in Virginia brought nearly 1,000 members of the Kurdish diaspora and the broader community for an evening of unity and solidarity in light of the ongoing conflict in the Middle East, reinforcing a shared sense of resilience during a period of regional tension.

In addition to community-led events, KRG-US took part in the Smithsonian's "Nowruz Traditions from Across Asia," engaging with international partners and presenting Kurdish culture to a wider audience. Together, these events underscored the enduring significance of Newroz as both a cultural tradition and

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a symbol of renewal, while strengthening community ties and advancing cultural diplomacy in the United States.

Read the full article here

KURDISH CULTURE AND SOCIETY

Kurdish Heritage Month: Honoring History, Resilience, and a Future Shaped by Dialogue



Kurdish Heritage Month offers a meaningful opportunity to reflect on the resilience, cultural richness, and enduring identity of the Kurdish people. Observed throughout March, it highlights both moments of celebration and remembrance, acknowledging a history shaped by hardship, perseverance, and the continued pursuit of recognition and dignity. From historic milestones to periods of tragedy, the month underscores the depth and complexity of the Kurdish experience.

At its heart is Newroz, the Kurdish New Year, symbolizing renewal, unity, and hope across generations and the global diaspora. As Kurdish Heritage Month gains broader recognition, it serves not only as a celebration of culture, but as a call to preserve heritage, foster dialogue, and engage more deeply with a living culture that continues to shape communities around the world.

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Daughters of the Sun: Kurdish Women Who Shaped History



During Women's History Month, the KRG Representation honors the generations of Kurdish women who have shaped history through leadership, resilience, and service. From scholars and historians to political leaders, educators, and activists, Kurdish women have played a central role in preserving knowledge, strengthening communities, and advancing cultural and political life across Kurdistan and beyond.

Their contributions continue today through growing representation in government, public service, and civil society. From the frontlines of conflict to positions of leadership and influence, Kurdish women remain essential to shaping the present and future of the region. Their stories reflect not only a legacy of courage and achievement, but an ongoing commitment to progress, equality, and national development.

Read the full article here

NEWS AND MORE

- **14 Killed, 93 Injured: One Month of Iran-Linked Attacks in the Kurdistan Region of Iraq**
  A report by CPT-IK found that between late February and late March 2026, Iran-linked attacks across the Kurdistan Region resulted in 107 casualties and widespread damage to civilian areas, highlighting the growing impact of strikes on non-military targets despite claims of strategic intent.

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Read full article here

- **UN Chief Marks International Newroz Day with Call for Renewal and Global Unity**
  UN Secretary-General António Guterres marked International Newroz Day by emphasizing renewal, unity, and shared global responsibility, highlighting the holiday's significance for millions worldwide. He underscored Newroz as a symbol of peace, cultural diversity, and cooperation in addressing global challenges.
  Read full article here

- **Iraq Resumes Kirkuk Crude Exports via Ceyhan Following Baghdad–KRG Agreement**
  Crude oil exports from Iraq's Kirkuk fields to Turkey's Ceyhan port have resumed following an agreement between Baghdad and the Kurdistan Regional Government (KRG), signaling renewed coordination on energy flows. The deal aims to stabilize production and ensure revenue management amid ongoing regional and economic pressures.
  Read full article here

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THE KURDISTAN REPORT

MONTHLY HIGHLIGHTS FROM THE KRG REPRESENTATION IN THE US

THIS MONTH IN KURDISTAN

Prime Minister Masrour Barzani Continues Engagement with Baghdad on Outstanding Issues

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Kurdistan Region Prime Minister Masrour Barzani led a senior delegation to Baghdad for high-level meetings with the newly elected Iraqi Prime Minister, Ali Al-Zaidi and other Iraqi federal leaders, continuing efforts to resolve long-standing issues between the Kurdistan Regional Government and the federal government of Iraq.

The visit focused on key political, financial, and constitutional matters, including budget transfers, civil servant salary payments, oil exports, customs procedures, and the implementation of agreements between Erbil and Baghdad. Prime Minister Barzani met with senior Iraqi officials to discuss these issues on the basis of the Iraqi constitution, genuine partnership, and respect for the Kurdistan Region's rights within federal Iraq.

The discussions also came as Erbil and Baghdad continued talks over customs procedures and the implementation of the ASYCUDA digital customs system at the Kurdistan Region's border crossings. Prime Minister Barzani's continued engagement underscores the KRG's commitment to resolving outstanding issues through dialogue and practical solutions that protect public salaries, economic stability, and the rights of all components in Iraq.

Read the full article here

Eid al-Adha Brings Thousands of Visitors to the Kurdistan Region

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As Eid al-Adha celebrations began across Iraq and the Kurdistan Region, tens of thousands of visitors traveled to the Kurdistan Region to enjoy its mountain landscapes, cooler summer climate, hospitality, and growing tourism sector.

Tourism officials across Duhok, Erbil, Sulaimani, and Halabja reported strong visitor numbers during the holiday, with many hotels, motels, guest houses, and tourist facilities operating near full capacity. Visitors from central and southern Iraq made up a large share of arrivals, continuing a seasonal trend that has made the Kurdistan Region one of Iraq's leading holiday destinations.

Duhok remained one of the most popular destinations, with more than 30,000 visitors expected during the holiday. Across the Region, Eid was also marked by morning prayers, family gatherings, traditional meals, and community celebrations, reflecting the Kurdistan Region's continued culture of hospitality, coexistence, and welcome.

The holiday highlighted the growing importance of tourism to the Region's economy, supporting hotels, restaurants, transportation providers, small businesses, resorts, and local vendors. As thousands celebrated Eid across the Region, the holiday underscored both the resilience of local communities and the continued potential of tourism to support economic growth and connection among the people of Iraq.

Read the full article here

FROM THE REPRESENTATION

KRG Expands Engagement with Foreign Missions and UN Agencies in New York

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The Kurdistan Regional Government Representation in the United States organized and coordinated a series of diplomatic engagements in New York City to support the Kurdistan Region's continued outreach at the United Nations and with the international diplomatic community. The meetings reflected the KRG's broader efforts to strengthen engagement with foreign missions, UN agencies, and international policy institutions on issues affecting the Kurdistan Region and the wider Middle East.

KRG Representative Treefa Aziz and Ms. Bayan Abdul Rahman, Senior Advisor to Prime Minister Masrour Barzani on International Affairs, focused their discussion on current developments in the region and the challenges faced in the Kurdistan Region of Iraq.

Read full article here

Kurdish Leaders Join Atlantic Council's 2026 Iraq Dialogue



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The KRG Representation in the United States coordinated the participation of H.E. Hoshyar Zebari, Former Minister of Foreign Affairs of Iraq and Senior Member of the KDP Executive Committee and Dr. Hemn Hawrami, Former Deputy Speaker of Parliament and senior member of the Kurdistan Democratic Party, at the Atlantic Council's 2026 Iraq Dialogue in Washington, DC.

The full-day conference brought together senior officials from Iraq, US policymakers, diplomats, business leaders, and regional experts to discuss Iraq's political, economic, and security challenges under the theme "Iraq in a New Middle East." Discussions focused on government formation, fiscal pressures, energy transition, regional tensions, and pathways toward durable stability.

In addition to the main conference, the KRG Representation arranged high-level engagements for H.E. Zebari with officials from the U.S. Administration, Congress, business community, and policy experts on current developments in Iraq and the Kurdistan Region.

Read full article here

KRG Representative Treefa Aziz Addresses Fargo-Moorhead-West Fargo Leaders in Congress



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KRG Representative to the United States Treefa Aziz addressed community and business leaders from the Fargo-Moorhead-West Fargo region during The Chamber's Washington, D.C. Fly-In, highlighting the growing friendship between Moorhead and the Kurdish city of Zakho. Representative Aziz spoke about the cities' formal friendship agreement, which aims to strengthen cultural understanding, educational exchange, business cooperation, agriculture, tourism, and long-term community ties. She also recognized Moorhead's Kurdish-American community, home to approximately 4,000 Kurdish residents, and expressed appreciation for the city's continued friendship, hospitality, and support. Partnerships like this reflect the importance of people-to-people diplomacy and the lasting bonds between the United States and the Kurdistan Region.

Learn more about the friendship agreement here

KURDISH CULTURE AND SOCIETY

Kurdish Literature Reaches New Audiences Through Translation and Storytelling



Kurdish literature continues to gain new visibility through the work of writers, poets, translators, and cultural figures preserving the stories, memories, and mythology of the Kurdistan Region while bringing them to wider international audiences.

Recent literary developments, including the English-language publication of Shad Raouf Qazaz's Children of the Zagros and Jabar Jamal Gharib's The Fall of the Heavens, reflect the growing importance of translation in sharing Kurdish narratives beyond regional and linguistic borders. These works draw on Kurdish mythology, historical memory, social experience, and the cultural landscape of the Zagros to introduce international readers to the depth of Kurdish storytelling.

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The continued preservation of oral history and poetry, including the memories of Daye Altun from Hawraman and Biyara, also highlights the central role of spoken tradition in Kurdish cultural life. Alongside the legacy of Kurdish intellectuals such as Faruq Rafiq, these stories show how literature, poetry, philosophy, and memory continue to serve as both a cultural archive and a bridge to the world.

Read the full article here

NEWS AND MORE

- **President Nechirvan Barzani's Rome Talks Focus on Strategic Ties Between Italy and Kurdistan Region**
  Kurdistan Region President Nechirvan Barzani met with Italian President Sergio Mattarella in Rome to discuss strengthening diplomatic, humanitarian, economic, and security cooperation between Italy, Iraq, and the Kurdistan Region.
  Read full article here

- **Nearly 800,000 KRG Employees Receive Salaries Through MyAccount**
  Nearly 800,000 KRG public employees received their May salaries through the MyAccount digital banking system, marking a major step in the Kurdistan Region's financial modernization and salary distribution reform.
  Read full article here

- **Kurdish MMA Champion Namo Fazil Pledges to Raise Kurdistan Flag on Global Stage**
  Kurdish MMA champion Namo Fazil pledged to represent Kurdistan on the global stage as he pursues his goal of competing in and winning the UFC.
  Read full article here

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THE KURDISTAN REPORT

MONTHLY HIGHLIGHTS FROM THE KRG REPRESENTATION IN THE US

THIS MONTH IN KURDISTAN

A Historic First: Joint U.S. Business Delegation Visits the Kurdistan Region and Syria to Advance Regional Economic Cooperation

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The Kurdistan Regional Government Representation in the United States helped facilitate a joint business delegation led by the U.S.-Kurdistan Business Council (USKBC) and U.S.-Syria Business Council (USSBC), bringing more than 20 American and regional companies to Syria and the Kurdistan Region in October 2026.



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The landmark initiative established an important framework for bringing American businesses into direct engagement with emerging opportunities across two neighboring markets at a consequential moment for the region. It also underscored the value of the Kurdistan Region's long standing relationships with American businesses and its potential role in supporting economic connectivity and private-sector development.



A central theme throughout the visit was the Kurdistan Region's potential to serve as a platform for broader regional economic engagement. Delegates explored how established business operations, infrastructure, institutional relationships, and commercial networks in the Kurdistan Region could help facilitate cross-border investment and business cooperation with Syria.

Read the full article here

Kurdistan Parliament Reconvenes After Nearly Two Years, Elects New Leadership

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The Kurdistan Parliament reconvened on November 4 after nearly two years of legislative inactivity, with 52 lawmakers attending to elect new leadership. Dr. Vala Fareed was elected Speaker, alongside Deputy Speaker Rami Noori and Parliamentary Secretary Muna Qahwachi. The development marks an important step toward restoring parliamentary functions and advancing the formation of the KRG's tenth cabinet.

Read the full article here

EVENTS IN THE UNITED STATES

Nashville Celebrates 50 Years of Kurdish-American History

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On October 6, the Nashville Metropolitan Council held a special ceremony commemorating 50 years of Kurdish arrival in the United States, recognizing five decades of resilience, community building, and contributions to the city. Home to an estimated 20,000–25,000 Kurds, Nashville hosts the largest Kurdish community in the country, affectionately known as "**Little Kurdistan**."

Since the first Kurdish families arrived in the 1970s, the community has grown into an integral part of Nashville's cultural, economic, and civic life, strengthening ties between the United States and the Kurdistan Region.

The KRG Representation in the United States extends its appreciation to Mayor Freddie O'Connell's Office, Council Members Mike Cortese and Zulfat Suara, and the Kurdistan Diaspora Confederation for helping commemorate this historic milestone.

Read the full article here

Moorhead Dedicates Friendship Park in Honor of Partnership with Zakho

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On October 16, the City of Moorhead, Minnesota, officially renamed Johnson Farms Park to Friendship Park in recognition of its growing partnership with Zakho in the Kurdistan Region. The KRG Representation in the United States attended the dedication ceremony, which celebrated the cultural and community ties between the two cities.

Established in July 2025, the Moorhead–Zakho Friendship City partnership promotes cooperation in education, culture, and economic development. The relationship has already fostered meaningful exchanges, including two University of Zakho students currently studying at Minnesota State University Moorhead.

Home to approximately 3,500 Kurdish residents, Moorhead continues to strengthen its connections with the Kurdistan Region through educational opportunities, cultural exchange, and community engagement. The dedication of Friendship Park marks another milestone in the enduring friendship between the two communities.

Read the full article here

KURDISH CULTURE AND SOCIETY

18th Erbil International Book Fair Welcomes Over 400 Publishers from 18 Countries

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The 18th Erbil International Book Fair officially opened on October 21 in the presence of President Masoud Barzani, bringing together more than 400 publishing houses and cultural institutions from 18 countries. Held under the slogan "I Am Kurdistani," the fair featured over one million titles spanning literature, history, philosophy, science, and other fields of knowledge.

Running through October 31 at Sami Abdulrahman Park, the event included approximately 90 cultural and artistic activities, including panel discussions, poetry readings, musical performances, and book signings. Organized in cooperation with the KRG Ministry of Culture and Youth, the fair highlights the Kurdistan Region's commitment to promoting literacy, cultural exchange, and intellectual development.

Read the full article here

Kurdistan Region Advances Historical Preservation and Environmental Infrastructure

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The Kurdistan Region is expanding efforts to preserve its cultural heritage and natural landscapes through archaeological restoration, environmental initiatives, and tourism infrastructure improvements. The KRG has allocated approximately $687,000 annually to archaeological preservation in Erbil Governorate, while more than 50 international archaeological teams have received permits to conduct research across the Region. Ongoing projects include restoration of the UNESCO-listed Erbil Citadel, historic marketplaces, and archaeological landmarks.

Complementing these efforts, the Rwanga Foundation recently organized an environmental initiative on Mount Safeen, where volunteers planted oak seeds and improved hiking trails. Additional investments in solar energy, water infrastructure, and digital trail mapping aim to improve accessibility while protecting the Region's natural environment. Together, these initiatives highlight ongoing commitments to cultural preservation, environmental sustainability, and tourism development.

Read the full article here

NEWS AND MORE

- **Representative Aziz to Speak at Congressional Event Honoring American Veterans and Kurdish Peshmerga**
  KRG-US Representative Treefa Aziz will deliver remarks at the Barzani Charity Foundation's *Defenders of Humanity* event on November 9 at the Rayburn House Office Building. The event will honor American veterans and Kurdish Peshmerga, highlighting their shared sacrifices in the fight against ISIS and the enduring US-Kurdistan partnership.
  View event details and register here

- **President Masoud Barzani Welcomes Resumption of US Consulate Activities in Erbil**

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President Masoud Barzani welcomed US Consul General Wendy Green following the resumption of consular activities in Erbil. During their meeting, both sides reaffirmed their commitment to strengthening US-Kurdistan relations and promoting regional peace and stability.
Read full article here

- **Uzbekistan to Open Trade Center in Erbil as Kurdistan Region Expands Foreign Investment**
  Uzbekistan plans to establish a trade center in Erbil as the Kurdistan Region continues expanding international trade and investment opportunities. The initiative highlights growing economic cooperation and the Region's efforts to attract foreign businesses and strengthen commercial partnerships.
  Read full article here

- **KRG-US Congratulates Newly Elected and Returning Members of Congress**
  Following the November 3 US midterm elections, the Kurdistan Regional Government Representation in the United States extended its congratulations to newly elected and returning Members of Congress. The Representation reaffirmed its commitment to maintaining longstanding bipartisan relationships in Congress and strengthening the enduring partnership between the United States and the Kurdistan Region.
  Read full statement here

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THE KURDISTAN REPORT

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THIS MONTH IN KURDISTAN

Kurdistan Region Marks Historic Unification of Peshmerga Forces

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The Kurdistan Region has completed the historic unification of its Peshmerga forces under the Ministry of Peshmerga Affairs, bringing all forces into a single command-and-control structure. The milestone, formally celebrated in Erbil on September 21, marks the culmination of years of reform and opens a new phase focused on modernization, professionalization, and strengthening the Peshmerga's capabilities in partnership with the United States and the Global Coalition.

Read the full article here

U.S. Military and Global Coalition Complete Military Mission in Iraq

On September 30, 2026 the United States and the Global Coalition against ISIS completed the withdrawal of their remaining military forces from Iraq, including the Kurdistan Region. The mission, which began in 2014 to support Iraq and the Kurdistan Region fight against ISIS, has transitioned to a new phase of security cooperation between Iraq and the United States focused on bilateral defense relations, training, intelligence sharing, and continued efforts to counter terrorism.

The completion of the withdrawal represents a significant transition in the U.S.-Iraq security relationship, while US engagement continues through diplomatic, economic, and security channels. For the Kurdistan Region, the transition highlights the importance of continued US engagement and support for regional security, including continued cooperation with the Peshmerga and security

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agencies efforts to address ongoing threats from regional and internal security challenges.

FROM THE REPRESENTATION

KRG-US Advances Diplomatic and Economic Engagement During UNGA 81



The KRG Representation in the United States participated in a series of diplomatic, policy, and business engagements surrounding the 81st United Nations General Assembly in New York. Highlights included a U.S. Chamber of Commerce and Atlantic Council business roundtable with Iraqi Prime Minister Ali al-Zaidi, a U.S.-Kurdistan Business Council roundtable with Iraqi Foreign Minister Dr. Fuad Hussein and H.E. Fawzie Hariri, Minister, President of Diwan, Kurdistan Region Presidency, and policy discussions focused on Iraq, Syria, regional security, and the future of U.S. engagement in the region.

Read the full article here

KRG-US Supports Kurdish Storytelling at the 10th New York Kurdish Film Festival

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The Kurdistan Regional Government Representation in the United States was honored to support the 10th New York Kurdish Film Festival as a sponsor and to join filmmakers, artists, community members, and guests in celebrating Kurdish storytelling through cinema.

KRG-US Representative H.E. Treefa Aziz attended the festival and delivered remarks highlighting the importance of film in preserving Kurdish history, sharing diverse experiences, and introducing audiences to the richness and complexity of Kurdistan and its people.

The Representation was proud to support the New York Kurdish Cultural Center, and its President and Co-director, Ms. Xeyal Qertel, for their continued dedication to Kurdish arts, culture and cinema.

Read the full article here

KRG-US Hosts American University Students for Educational and Cultural Program

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KRG-US welcomed graduate students from American University's School of International Service for an educational and cultural evening focused on the Kurdistan Region's history and current regional dynamics. Organized in partnership with Barzani Scholar-in-Residence Dr. Yerevan Saeed, the program included remarks from Representative H.E. Treefa Aziz and Barzani Peace Fellow Aheen Hajibadri, and an open discussion with students and members of the KRG-US team.

Read the full article here

KURDISH CULTURE AND SOCIETY

Deaf Leader Becomes First Kurd to Attend Prestigious Leadership Institute

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Rizgar Ismail of Duhok has become the first Deaf Kurd to attend Frontrunners, a nine-month international leadership program in Denmark for emerging Deaf leaders. Through the program, he will collaborate with participants from around the world on issues including Deaf education, interpreter training, sign language recognition, and community advocacy. KRG-US was honored to meet Rizgar and his colleagues last summer and joins the Kurdish Deaf community in celebrating this important milestone.

Read the full article here

Kurdish Art and Heritage Take Center Stage Across the Region and Abroad

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Kurdish art and heritage took center stage this month through cultural initiatives in Erbil, Damascus, and Europe. Designer Lana Zana Piran revived historic Kurdish clothing traditions through her *Dunadun* fashion collection in Erbil, while the Damascus International Fair hosted its first dedicated Kurdish pavilion featuring traditional clothing, music, crafts, and folklore. In Poland, Kurdish artist Ashna Dawlat joined the *Art Without Borders* exhibition, using visual art to explore migration, memory, identity, and the enduring connection to homeland.

Read the full article here

NEWS AND MORE

- **Kurdish Filmmaker Brings Peshmerga Story to Venice Film Festival**
  Kurdish-Norwegian director Halkawt Mustafa's No Paradise If You Are Killed by a Woman premiered at the Venice International Film Festival, telling the story of a Kurdish female Peshmerga sniper fighting ISIS while searching for her younger sister. Starring Avan Jamal and filmed in part on location in Mosul, the film has also been selected as Iraq's submission for the Best International Feature Film category at the Academy Awards.
  Read full article here

- **Kirkuk Oil Exports Through Kurdistan Pipeline Rise to 250,000 Barrels Per Day**
  Oil exports through the Kurdistan Region's pipeline to Turkey have increased to approximately 250,000 barrels per day, including around 180,000 barrels of Kirkuk crude and 70,000 barrels produced in the Kurdistan Region. The expanded northern export route has taken on greater importance as disruptions to southern shipping routes have placed additional pressure on Iraq's oil export infrastructure.
  Read full article here

- **Global Coalition Military Mission Concludes in Iraq**
  As the Global Coalition's military mission concludes, the Kurdistan Region honors the service and sacrifice of all those who stood with the Kurdistan Region and Iraq in the fight

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against ISIS. The transition marks a new chapter in the KRG-U.S. partnership, with continued cooperation focused on shared security, stronger bilateral ties, and expanded business and economic engagement.

Read full Department of Foreign Relations statement here

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Opportunity and Uncertainty in the Middle East: Next Steps for the Kurdistan Region of Iraq

1 message

Kurdistan Regional Government - USA <us@gov.krd> Mon, Feb 9, 2026 at 10:33 AM
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Event Invitation

Opportunity and Uncertainty in the Middle East: Next Steps for the Kurdistan Region of Iraq



Thursday, February 12, 2026
2:00 p.m. – 3:00 p.m.

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For decades the United States' partnership with the Kurdistan Region of Iraq (KRI) has been a crucial component of American policy in the Middle East. Today the Middle East holds unprecedented economic opportunities for the US and its regional allies. But the region is also wracked by potential conflicts—especially tensions between the United States and Iran and a fragile truce in eastern Syria. Against this uncertain backdrop, Iraqis are immersed in a complicated, high-stakes government formation process in both Baghdad and Erbil. How will these dynamics shape the future of the US-KRI partnership? What are the most significant opportunities for this partnership? And what do policymakers need to do to mitigate risks to US-KRI mutual interests?

Join Hudson for a deep dive into these topics with Interior Minister of the Kurdistan Regional Government His Excellency Rebar Ahmed, one of the region's most experienced and respected statesmen. Senior Fellow Joel Rayburn will host Minister Ahmed for a fireside chat followed by audience Q&A.

To RSVP, please email Talia Magnuson at **tmagnuson@hudson.org**.

This invitation is nontransferable.

Watching online? **Join the event here.**

Speakers

Rebar Ahmed
Interior Minister, Kurdistan Regional Government

Joel Rayburn
Senior Fellow, Center for Peace and Security in the Middle East, Hudson Institute

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KRG - US NEWSLETTER APRIL 2026

THE KURDISTAN REPORT

MONTHLY HIGHLIGHTS FROM THE KRG REPRESENTATION IN THE US

THIS MONTH IN KURDISTAN

Despite the Ceasefire, the Kurdistan Region Continues to be Attacked

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Since February 28, the Kurdistan Region has been attacked more than **800 times** by drones and missiles, despite not being a party to the conflict. According to KRG data, these attacks have left **20 people dead, 123 wounded,** and caused widespread damage to civilian infrastructure, impacting homes, businesses, and everyday life across the Region.

As communities work to recover, ongoing insecurity continues to strain both public services and economic stability. The KRG has called on Baghdad to ensure accountability for US-sanctioned terrorist groups responsible for these attacks, stressing the need to safeguard civilians.

Read the full article here

Building a Greener Future: Sustainability Efforts Expand Across the Kurdistan Region

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Despite ongoing security challenges, the Kurdistan Regional Government continues to advance efforts to ensure growth remains sustainable. From environmental protection campaigns at key tourist sites to large-scale green infrastructure projects in Erbil, the Region is steadily integrating sustainability into its broader development approach.

At the same time, long-term initiatives such as the Green Belt Project and energy reforms under the Runaki program are working to improve air quality, expand green space, and reduce emissions, positioning the Kurdistan Region as a proactive leader in environmental resilience.

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FROM THE REPRESENTATION

KRG Engagement with U.S. Policymakers During Ongoing Conflict

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Amid heightened tensions during the U.S.–Iranian conflict, the Kurdistan Regional Government Representation in Washington maintained steady engagement with U.S. officials to ensure that the implications for the Kurdistan Region remained clearly understood. These efforts focused on reinforcing the Region's role as a stable and reliable partner, while emphasizing the urgent need to safeguard its security and economic resilience during a volatile period.

Prime Minister Masrour Barzani held a series of high-level calls with senior U.S. cabinet officials, including Secretary Marco Rubio, Secretary Chris Wright, and Secretary Doug Burgum. He also engaged with congressional leaders including House Foreign Affairs Chairman, Brian Mast and U.S. Ambassador to the United Nations, H.E. Michael Waltz. These discussions centered on urgent air defense requirements, the continuity of oil exports, and the protection of critical infrastructure in the Kurdistan Region.

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The President of the Kurdistan Region, H.E. Nechirvan Barzani also held a call with Congressman Abraham Hamadeh to discuss the regional situation.

The conversations addressed broader regional energy security, underscoring the Kurdistan Region's strategic importance as a dependable energy partner. Kurdish leadership highlighted the need for coordinated efforts to ensure uninterrupted energy flows, strengthen infrastructure resilience, and mitigate risks posed by regional instability.

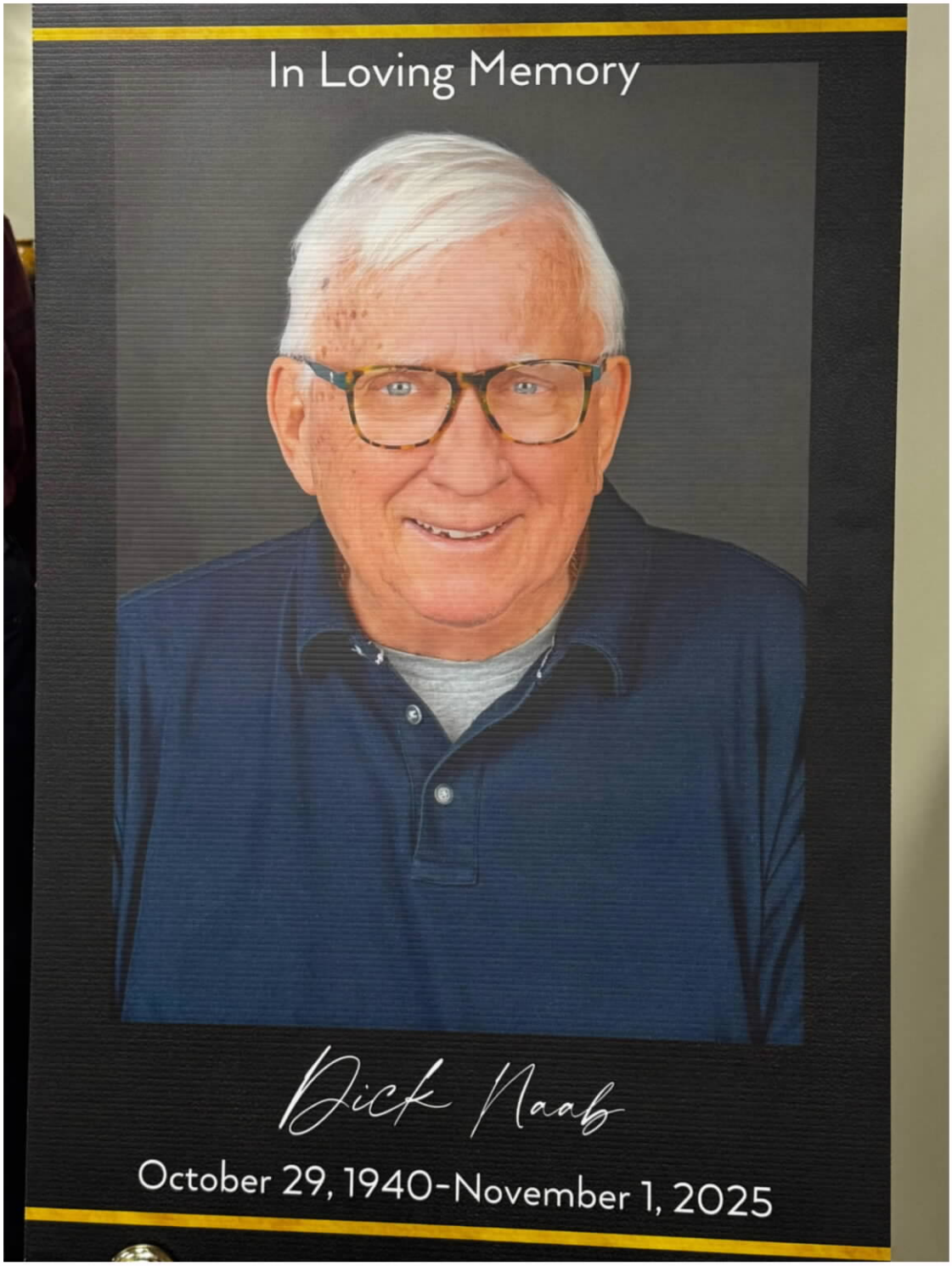
These engagements reflect the Kurdistan Region's proactive diplomacy and its continued commitment to close coordination with the United States in advancing shared security and economic priorities.

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Honoring Colonel Richard Naab: A Lifelong Friend of the Kurdistan Region

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Colonel (Ret.) Richard Maurice Naab was laid to rest with full military honors at Arlington National Cemetery, marking the passing of a decorated U.S. Army officer whose legacy extends far beyond his distinguished service.

On behalf of H.E. Prime Minister Masrour Barzani, KRG Representative to the U.S., Treefa Aziz and Senior Advisor to the PM Bayan Sami Abdul Rahman attended the ceremonies and extended Kurdistan's leadership condolences to the family. During the eulogy, the Colonel's steadfast service to and deep love for the Kurdish people, as well as the lasting impact of his support over many years, were recognized.

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For the Kurdistan Region, Colonel Naab is remembered not only as a soldier, but as a steadfast ally during one of the most defining moments in Kurdish history. During the 1991 humanitarian crisis following the Kurdish uprising, he played a key role in Operation Provide Comfort, a U.S.-led mission that helped deliver aid and establish a safe haven for over one million displaced Kurds. His leadership and compassion during that time left a lasting imprint, forming deep and enduring ties with the Region.

Even after his military career, Colonel Naab remained closely connected to the Kurdistan Region, continuing to advocate for its people and support its development. His passing has been met with widespread condolences from Kurdish leaders, reflecting the enduring impact of a man who stood with the Kurdish people in their darkest hour, and remained a friend ever since.

KURDISH CULTURE AND SOCIETY

Remembering the Anfal Genocide



Earlier this month, April 14 marked the anniversary of the Anfal Genocide, one of the most devastating chapters in modern Kurdish history. Carried out between 1987 and 1988, the campaign resulted in the killing or disappearance of more than 182,000 Kurds and the destruction of over 4,000 villages, leaving a lasting impact on communities across the Kurdistan Region.

Recognized as genocide, Anfal was a systematic effort to dismantle Kurdish society through coordinated military operations, chemical attacks, and forced displacement. Decades later, many families continue to seek justice and the

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remains of their loved ones, reflecting the enduring human impact of the campaign.

The anniversary serves as a moment of remembrance and reflection, underscoring the importance of preserving historical memory and ensuring such atrocities are never repeated.

Read the full article here

NEWS AND MORE

- **International Airlines to Resume Flights to Erbil Airport Next Month**
  Turkish Airlines, Pegasus Airlines, and Qatar Airways will resume flights to Erbil International Airport in early May 2026, boosting travel, tourism, and commercial activity. The move reinforces Erbil's role as a key regional gateway and improves international connectivity.
  Read full article here

- **KRG Returns IQD 3.2 Billion to Citizens Under Electricity Discount Plan**
  The Kurdistan Regional Government has returned 3.2 billion Iraqi dinars to over 133,000 households through a 20% electricity discount program, supporting affordability as more than 85% of citizens gain access to reliable power under the Runaki initiative.
  Read full article here

- **Rwanga Replants 300-Year-Old Kurdish Qazwan Tree in Duhok**
  The Rwanga Foundation has successfully replanted a 300-year-old Qazwan (turpentine) tree in Duhok province after it was uprooted by strong winds, preserving a vital cultural and ecological symbol. The effort reflects ongoing environmental initiatives to protect native species across the Kurdistan Region.
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The Kurdistan Region continues to face a series of unwarranted drone and missile attacks amid heightened regional tensions. On August 17, explosive-laden drones targeted the private office of Kurdistan Region Prime Minister Masrour Barzani and the residence of the head of the Kurdistan Region's Security and Intelligence Agency in Erbil. No casualties were reported.

The attack was strongly condemned by the Iraqi federal government, the United States, Canada, the United Kingdom, and European partners. US Special Presidential Envoy for Syria and Iraq, Ambassador Tom Barrack, strongly condemned the strike, describing Prime Minister Barzani as a valued Kurdish partner and warning that attacks against the Kurdistan Region threaten regional stability. He also reaffirmed US support for Iraq's sovereignty and for ensuring that weapons and security forces remain under state authority.

The KRG has reiterated that the Kurdistan Region is not a party to regional conflicts and should not be drawn into hostilities beyond its borders. It continues to call for the protection of its people, critical civilian infrastructure, and the security and stability of the Region.

Read the full article here

President Nechirvan Barzani Advances Dialogue and Regional Cooperation

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Throughout August, President Nechirvan Barzani undertook important diplomatic engagements in Baghdad and Damascus, focusing on cooperation, stability, and constructive dialogue at a time of continued political and security challenges across the region. In Baghdad, he emphasized the importance of strong Erbil-Baghdad relations, coordination among Iraq's state institutions, and resolving outstanding issues within the framework of the Iraqi Constitution. In Damascus, he discussed regional stability, security, economic cooperation, and the importance of peaceful dialogue among Syria's communities. Together, these engagements underscored the Kurdistan Region's commitment to constructive regional diplomacy and to a stable, secure, and prosperous Iraq and wider region.

Read the full article here

Prime Minister Barzani Outlines Vision for Security, Partnership, and Economic Growth

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In an August interview with **Al-Monitor**, Prime Minister Masrour Barzani outlined the Kurdistan Region's priorities on security, its partnership with the United States, economic development, and regional cooperation. He emphasized the importance of strengthening the Region's defensive capabilities amid continued security challenges while ensuring that changes in the U.S. military presence do not diminish the broader U.S.-Kurdistan relationship.

Prime Minister Barzani highlighted the growing importance of political and economic ties, including expanding American investment in the Kurdistan Region and strengthening trade and regional economic integration. He also stressed the need for a stable and sovereign Iraq, stronger state institutions, and constructive dialogue to address security and political challenges. Looking ahead, he reaffirmed the KRG's commitment to building lasting partnerships that advance security, investment, economic opportunity, and shared prosperity.

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KURDISH CULTURE AND SOCIETY

Duhok Expands Agricultural Production and Market Access

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Duhok is becoming a leading agricultural center in the Kurdistan Region, with growing production and expanding markets across Iraq and abroad. In the first half of 2026, the governorate shipped approximately **110,000 tons of locally produced fruits and vegetables** to central and southern Iraq, while grape production is projected to reach up to **80,000 tons** this year. Investments in irrigation, greenhouses, storage, food processing, and agricultural technology are helping strengthen the sector and create new opportunities for trade and investment. The growth of Duhok's agricultural economy highlights the Kurdistan Region's broader efforts to diversify its economy and expand connections with international markets.

Read the full article here

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  Read full article here

- **KRG Unveils 24-Year Strategy to Shift Kurdistan Toward Surface Water**
  The Kurdistan Regional Government approved a long-term water strategy aimed at reducing reliance on groundwater and increasing the use of rivers, dams, lakes, and springs. By 2050, the plan targets 75% reliance on surface water, with 26 new strategic projects expected to add approximately 2.1 million cubic meters of daily drinking-water capacity.
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- **US-Peshmerga Agreement Set to Expire as Coalition Mission Ends**

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The US-Peshmerga Memorandum of Understanding is set to expire in September as Coalition forces prepare to conclude their mission in Iraq. Despite changes to the security framework, KRG Representative to the United States Treefa Aziz emphasized that the KRG-US relationship extends beyond any single agreement and remains rooted in decades of cooperation, shared interests, and strong people-to-people ties.

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KRG Interior Minister Rebar Ahmed Concludes Strategic Visit to the United States

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Minister of Interior, **H.E. Rebar Ahmed** concluded a high-level visit to the United States, reaffirming the depth of the U.S.–Kurdistan partnership across security, economic, and institutional cooperation.

In Washington, Minister Ahmed met with senior government officials from the Trump administration, Members of Congress, and policy experts at the Atlantic Council and the Hudson Institute to discuss counterterrorism coordination, the enduring role of the Peshmerga, and the importance of sustained U.S. engagement in advancing long-term stability in Iraq and the Kurdistan Region.

The Minister also met with the U.S. Chamber of Commerce and American companies investing in the Region to underscore the Kurdistan Region's commitment to a stable, business-friendly environment and expanded commercial ties.

In Detroit, Minister Ahmed met with Assyrian and Chaldean community leaders, reinforcing the KRG's commitment to coexistence and strong diaspora partnerships.

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Kurdistan Region Participation in IRF Summit and National Prayer Breakfast



KRG Representative Aziz accompanied senior officials from the Kurdistan Region to the 2026 annual International Religious Freedom Summit and National Prayer Breakfast in Washington D.C., reinforcing the Region's commitment to pluralism and interfaith coexistence.

H.E. Ano Jawhar Abdoka, Minister of Transportation and Communications, a Chaldean, participated in the events and affirmed the Kurdistan Regional Government's firm commitment to protecting ethnic and religious communities across the Kurdistan Region. He highlighted the KRG's long-standing efforts to safeguard and strengthen their rights, ensure equal access to services and opportunities, and preserve their cultural and religious heritage. The KRG continues to advance freedom of religion as a pillar of stability, coexistence, and democratic governance.

In addition, **Dr. Hemn Hawrami,** former Deputy Speaker of the Kurdistan Parliament and a senior member of the Kurdistan Democratic Party (KDP), attended the annual National Prayer Breakfast in Washington. On the margins of the gathering, he held a series of meetings with U.S. officials, members of Congress, and policy experts to exchange views on political developments in Iraq and the wider region, the importance of protecting the Kurdistan Region's constitutional status, and opportunities to strengthen U.S.–Kurdistan relations.

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Discussions also focused on the Kurdistan Region's role as a reliable partner for the United States, ongoing reform efforts, and the need for continued international engagement to support stability, democratic institutions, and economic growth.

These engagements reflect the Kurdistan Region's commitment to dialogue, pluralism, and religious coexistence, including strengthening long-standing partnerships.

Read the full article here

KRG-US Hosts American University Students for Dialogue



In partnership with American University's School of International Service and Dr. Yerevan Saeed Barzani Scholar-in-Residence and Director of Global Kurdish Initiative for Peace, the KRG Representation welcomed students, including Barzani fellows, for an evening discussion on the history and culture of Kurdistan, recent regional developments, and U.S.–Kurdistan relations.

Representative Treefa Aziz, an SIS alumna, emphasized the importance of dialogue between students and policymakers. The discussion covered institutional development in the Kurdistan Region, security cooperation with the United States, and recent developments in the region.

The program also provided the students with opportunities to engage directly with KRG staff and learn more about diplomatic work in Washington.

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KURDISH CULTURE AND SOCIETY

February in the Kurdistan Region: Language, Art, and Women's Resilience



February in the Kurdistan Region has been marked by powerful expressions of cultural pride, linguistic heritage, and artistic resilience. From International Mother Language Day to international art exhibitions celebrating Kurdish women, the month highlighted the enduring strength of identity and creativity across Kurdistan and its diaspora.

Kurdish leaders reaffirmed that preserving the mother tongue remains central to identity, unity, and coexistence. Kurdistan Region President, H.E. Nechirvan Barzani, described the Region as a "cradle of diversity," while H.E. Prime Minister Masrour Barzani underscored the importance of multilingual education.

Cultural expression throughout the month also elevated the symbolic *kezi* (braid) as a representation of dignity and resilience. The braid, *kezi* in Kurdish, has long represented dignity, continuity, and identity. In recent weeks, artists and cultural figures across the Region have reinterpreted this symbol as a celebration of women's strength and endurance, reinforcing the role of cultural expression in moments of regional tension.

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- **President Nechirvan Barzani Meets U.S. Secretary of State Marco Rubio in Munich**
  President Nechirvan Barzani met with U.S. Secretary of State Marco Rubio on the sidelines of the Munich Security Conference to discuss U.S.–Iraq and U.S.–Kurdistan Region relations, regional stability, and developments in Syria, reaffirming the Kurdistan Region's role as a key partner for peace and stability.
  Read full article here

- **Prime Minister Masrour Barzani Hosts U.S. Embassy Chargé d'Affaires in Erbil**
  Prime Minister Masrour Barzani received Joshua Harris, Chargé d'Affaires of the U.S. Embassy in Iraq, in Erbil to discuss strengthening bilateral relations, Iraq's political landscape following recent elections, and cooperation on federal government formation, constitutional rights, and equitable budget and oil export arrangements for the Kurdistan Region.
  Read full article here

- **KRG Launches Digital Driver's License Through KRDPass**
  The Kurdistan Regional Government announced the launch of a digital driver's license accessible through the KRDPass application, advancing the 9th Cabinet's broader efforts to modernize public services and expand digital government initiatives.
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