

15th Annual Conference Summary

9/12/2002

The Kurdish National Congress of North America (KNC) held its 15th Annual Conference August 2-3, 2002 in Kitchener, Ontario. The Conference was held under the theme: *Kurds and Global Changes in the Aftermath of 9/11: Opportunities & Challenges*.

The traumatic events of September 11, 2002 have changed the landscape of world politics forever. Already they have marked the fate of many nations and states and many more changes are yet to come. In this post-September 11 international environment of change and imminent change, the Kurds look forward to throwing off the yoke of oppression of their occupiers and perhaps to obtaining a realistic chance at their hitherto usurped right to self-determination.

The 15th Annual Conference focused on the examination of the present state of affairs and pressing concerns in Kurdish lands, ranging from an analysis of issues related to the exercise of the right to self-determination, to the logistics and modalities of the implementation of this right in today's Realpolitick. Particular concern was voiced regarding the historical phobia of the surrounding regional powers to any form of such exercise – a phobia that has been whipped up to a state of hysteria by current looming possibilities, especially on the part of the Turks.

Panel presentations of the issues were thorough and realistic. The discussions and deliberations were live and vivid. Many panel members and participants had traveled from afar – from Kurdistan, from Europe, and from the US to make their contributions. Some invitees were not able to be personally present because of logistics or other reasons, but instead sent local representatives or well-wishing faxes and letters.

One such presentation was by Dr. Asad Khailany on [historical reasons Kurds were not able to gain their independence](#).

As was the case in the 14th Conference, all participants agreed on the regionalization of the Kurdish struggle – that is to say each region would set its own interim goals depending on their regional political maturity and environment.

Once again, the general assembly applauded the successful democratic experiment unfolding in Southern Kurdistan and reaffirmed its Resolution 3 issued during the 14th Conference in support of these efforts:

- *Resolution 3 of the 14th Conference - Recognizing the impact of gaining self-rule in one part of Kurdistan on the rest of the region, the conference calls on all Kurdish political parties and organizations to support and enable the Kurds of southern Kurdistan- Iraq to consolidate their administrative and political position in the region with a view to gaining greater recognition in the international arena and avoid all actions that might jeopardize the gains made in the self-rule area during the past 10 years.*

Indeed, considering the current US mood and its declared policy of a regime change in Baghdad, much of the panel and Q&A discussions focused on Southern Kurdistan and Kurdish efforts to proactively work for a Federal, Democratic, Multi-Party Parliamentary rule in Iraq.

The 15th Annual Conference of the Kurdish National Congress issued nine Resolutions:

Resolution 1

The delegates of the Kurdish National Congress of North America 15th Annual Conference reaffirm that the only real solution to the Kurdish problem is a United Free Kurdistan.

Resolution 2

The delegates of the Kurdish National Congress of North America 15th Annual Conference respect and support the Kurdistan National Assembly (Parliament) resolution of 1992, declaring Federation for Southern Kurdistan. The delegates of the 15th Conference salute the progress that has been made in Southern Kurdistan towards creating a peaceful environment, building civil society, and recognizing the rights and the role of women in Kurdistan. The delegates further affirm their support for the Kurdish authorities and the people of Kurdistan in their tireless effort to build democracy and establish a pluralistic society.

Resolution 3

The delegates of the Kurdish National Congress of North America 15th Annual Conference call on the two major political parties and other forces in Southern Kurdistan to expedite their efforts toward full implementation of the 1998 Washington Accord, and move toward forming a unified government and holding new elections in Kurdistan. The national and political rights of the Kurdish people can be achieved only with collective efforts.

Resolution 4

The delegates of the Kurdish National Congress of North America 15th Annual Conference condemn the policies of ethnic cleansing and Arabization implemented by the Fascist Ba'ath regime, particularly in Kirkuk, Khanaqin, Sinjar and Makhmour, and call on the Kurdistan political forces to unify and intensify their efforts to liberate all of Kurdistan from the Iraqi government's hegemony. The delegates further call on the international community, the Iraqi opposition, and the Arab and Islamic world to work toward putting an end to these racist and inhumane policies.

Resolution 5

The delegates of the Kurdish National Congress of North America 15th Annual Conference call on the International community, especially the United States and Canada, to force the present and any future Iraqi government to provide compensation to the victims of the chemical weapons attack on Halabja and other areas in Kurdistan, as well as to the victims of the Anfal campaign. The delegates further demand that war crimes tribunals be established to bring those who designed and committed these atrocities to justice.

Resolution 6

The delegates of the Kurdish National Congress of North America 15th Annual Conference demand that the government of Turkey recognize the national and political rights of the people of Northern Kurdistan, and release all the political prisoners including Layla Zana and her imprisoned parliamentary colleagues. The delegates further demand that the nearly 4000 destroyed villages of Northern Kurdistan be rebuilt, their inhabitants returned and justly compensated.

Resolution 7

The delegates of the Kurdish National Congress of North America 15th Annual Conference ask that the governments of the United States and Canada, as well as the European community, work towards impressing upon the Turkish government the need to recognize the national and political rights of the people of Northern Kurdistan, and have a permanent OSCE representative in the region to monitor the situation until such a goal is achieved.

Resolution 8

The delegates of the Kurdish National Congress of North America 15th Annual Conference call on the government of the Islamic Republic of Iran to stop its continued policies of denial of the national and political rights of the people of Eastern Kurdistan, and to create a democratic and free environment where the people can freely express their beliefs and decide their political future.

Resolution 9

The delegates of the Kurdish National Congress of North America 15th Annual Conference call on

the Syrian government to end its policy of oppression and denial of the political and democratic rights of the people of Western Kurdistan. The delegates further demand that the International community exert their influence on the Syrian government to end its repressive policies and grant citizenship to thousands of its Kurdish citizens.