

**In Memory of the Kurdish Patriot Ms Soraya Serajeddini
(Nakshbandi)**

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Founder Kurdish National Congress of North America (KNC)

Patriot Ms Soraya Serajeddini (Nakshbandi)

In the USA Senate building addressing the conference

On July 24, 2006 in the city of Millersville in the state of Maryland, USA, the Executive Vice President of the Kurdish National Congress of North America (KNC), and the chairperson of the Committee on Democracy and Freedom for All Iranians and Kurdish Human & National Rights died suddenly. Soraya Serajeddini (Nakshbandi) had a severe asthma attack and passed away within minutes. Soraya's dedication, determination, hard work, and commitment to human rights, women's rights, minority rights, Kurdish National Rights, democracy, and freedom for all was unparalleled. Soraya was a visionary and worked tirelessly to promote democracy and freedom in general and Kurdish human and national rights in particular. She strongly believed in a united free Kurdistan. When she suggested to me in the 17th National KNC conference on March 25-26, 2005 in Nashville, Tennessee USA to chair a conference in southern Kurdistan on Independent Kurdistan on November 9-13, 2005 I accepted and asked her to be the vice chair of the conference and she accepted. Her energy and dedication contributed significantly to the success of the conference and we were very proud of her achievement. During that conference it was decided to direct more efforts to promote democracy, freedom for all and Kurdish national and human rights in other parts of Kurdistan, specifically western and eastern Kurdistan. Starting January 2006 she chaired the newly created committee on "Democracy and Freedom for All Iranians and Kurdish Human & National Rights". Through her dedication and efforts it was possible to hold the first conference on Democracy and Freedom for All Iranians, and Kurdish Human & National Rights in the US Senate building. She chaired the conference, which was attended by the Kurdish leaders from Iran and the representatives of all other minorities in Iran. Soraya also contributed significantly to the success of the conference on Democracy & Freedom in Syria & Syrian Kurdish Human and National Rights which was held March 13, 2006 in the US Senate building and was chaired by Dr. Sherko Abbas. Soraya, and her husband Tom have dedicated their lives to promote democracy and freedom and Kurdish human & national rights. In recognition of their efforts both Soraya and Tom were elected to the board of directors of KNC and they received the highest number of votes in the election held during the 18th KNC National Conference on March 17-19, 2006 in Washington D.C. On June 23rd 2006 we had meetings in the US Senate, Congress and the State Department. Soraya flew all night from California to get to the meetings on time. She was very tired but I remember how well she performed. I introduced her by saying "Here is our capable, and knowledgeable KNC Executive Vice President, and the Chairperson of the committee to promote democracy, freedom and Kurdish human

and national rights in Iran”. She spoke so wonderfully and elegantly which left a great impression on all in attendance. The departure of Soraya is not only a great loss to her family, KNC, and the Kurdish people but also for all peace loving people, and all those seeking equal rights for women, and justice, democracy, human rights, and national rights for all.

At the time of the incident her beloved children, Aveen Ver Ploeg age 12, and Daryan Ver Ploeg age 10 were in California with her beloved husband Thomas Ver Ploeg, the Secretary, and member of the executive board of directors of the Kurdish National Congress of North America (KNC). The only person present at the time of the tragedy was her sister, Shawnem Serajeddini (Nakshbandi), who was visiting from Eastern Kurdistan.

Soraya was born 1960 in Tehran, Iran to her parents Abed Serajeddini, and Zayneb Setoodeh. Soraya was a member of the well-respected family of the Tariqat Nakshbandi Sheikhs of Taweele and Biare in Kurdistan. Soraya and her family escaped Iran in 1980, and went to southern Kurdistan lived for two years in Suleymani and Baghdad. In 1982 Soraya came to the US, first attended San Francisco State University, then transferred to Northeastern University in Boston in 1984 and graduated in 1987 with a BS degree in Electrical Engineering. In the same year Soraya and Thomas Ver Ploeg were married. Later they moved to California and joined KNC, and were instrumental in organizing activities within the Kurdish community there and making Kurdish issues known to the American people. In 2004 the family moved to Washington, DC so that they could devote even more time to Kurdish issues. KNC has lost a very dedicated and committed leader. I had the privilege to work with her, and her talent, leadership and commitment always impressed me.