



## Survey on Kurdish Conflicts in the Middle East

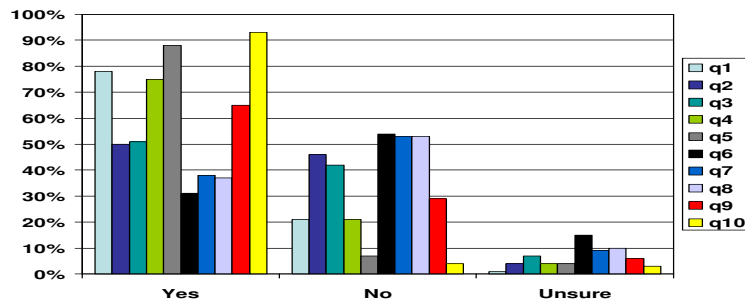
By Kurdish National Congress of North America

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History of conflicts in the Middle East is as old as the region itself. The oldest and the most ignored conflict in the region for the past century has been the Kurdish conflict. Without their consent, the Kurds have been separated from each other and their national rights have been denied. In return, the Kurdish movement with various means has been fighting the states that have determined the destiny of the Kurds. This fighting has been without much success mainly due to unanswered questions about the lack of democratic values in the Middle East, unity among the Kurds, and opportunity for the people in Kurdistan to express freely what they prefer.

On April 29-30 the Kurdish National Congress of North America (KNC-NA) had its 23<sup>rd</sup> annual conference. The theme of the conference was “The Future of (a United) Kurdistan, One vs. Multiple States”. During the conference a survey related to the Kurdish conflict, choices, and unity was carried out. The survey contained 10 questions and was distributed to 97 adult men and women from all parts of Kurdistan. 68 adults responded to the questions with Y=Yes, N=No, or U=Unsure as indicated in the following table and graph:

Question	Y	Y%	N	N%	U	U%
1. Should all parts of Kurdistan unite in one state?	53	78%	14	21%	1	1%
2. Should each part of Kurdistan seek its own independence?	34	50%	31	46%	3	4%
3. Is federalism in the states that control Kurdistan reasonable?	35	51%	28	42%	5	7%
4. Should the dividing borders in Kurdistan be eliminated?	51	75%	14	21%	3	4%
5. Should the term Kurdistan refer to the land of all 40 million Kurds?	60	88%	5	7%	3	4%
6. Should KRG change its name to SKRG?	21	31%	37	54%	10	15%
7. Does armed struggle today benefit the controlling states?	26	38%	36	53%	6	9%
8. Is boycotting schools that don't teach Kurdish in Kurdistan feasible?	25	37%	36	53%	7	10%
9. Should Kurdish dialects be unified in one official language?	44	65%	20	29%	4	6%
10. Should all believers and non-believers have equal rights?	63	93%	3	4%	2	3%



About 78% of the responders preferred one state consisting of all parts of Kurdistan. However, many of those who voted for a single state voted also for multiple Kurdish states, which consisted 50% of total responders. Federalism was a reasonable alternative for 51% of the participants. A more reasonable alternative for 75% of the participants was elimination of the borders between different parts of Kurdistan.

As expected a majority of the responders, 88%, preferred to refer to Kurdistan as the land of all 40 million Kurds. The Kurdistan Regional Government (KRG) in Southern Kurdistan refers to its territory as Kurdistan and the majority 54% had no objection with this designation. Only 29% preferred KRG should be called Southern Kurdistan Regional Government (SKRG). A majority of 53% did not agree that armed resistance benefits the states that control Kurdistan. Only 38% have concluded that the era of armed struggle is over because the opponents of Kurds benefit from it.

While 37% agreed with boycotting non-Kurdish languages in the countries that do not allow Kurdish being taught at public schools, 53% believed such a measure is not feasible. In response to having one official Kurdish language 65% answered yes. Interestingly an overwhelming majority of 93% believed that believer and non-believers should have equal rights. Such a response indicates the rejection of those states that do not have a secular constitution and impose the values of one group on the whole society.

Considering the small size of the sample and the specific setting in which the survey was carried out, one can not make a general recommendation about the choices of all Kurds. However, it indicates the trend among the Kurds who participated in a gathering organized by the Kurdish National Congress of North America. This survey deserves to be repeated by various national and academic organizations in Kurdistan and abroad as a step toward referendums on solving the Kurdish conflict in the Middle East.