

A Letter to President Barack Obama on the recent Turkish-Iranian aggression against Kurdistan-Iraq

President Barack Obama
The White House
1600 Pennsylvania Ave NW
Washington, DC 20500

August 27, 2011

Dear Mr. President:

When America decided to invade Iraq and topple its tyrannical regime, America was in need of assistance from all of its friends in the region, particularly America's long time ally, Turkey. To expedite the toppling of the regime, America asked Turkish authorities for permission for American ground forces to pass through Turkey and into Iraq. The American request was denied and America received a cold shoulder from Turkish authorities.

During that crucial period, to facilitate America's success in toppling Saddam Hussein's despotic regime, the Kurdish leadership put the Peshmarga forces under the US military command. Kurdish leaders have done their due diligence to promote America's mission in Iraq whether through mediating between/among Arab political rivals to create better unity in Baghdad or by participating in the US military undertaking against militants. The people of Kurdistan embraced American forces and welcomed them with flowers while they were barraged with bullets in other parts of Iraq.

The stability that the people of Kurdistan along with their leadership have established during the past two decades has helped America to move forward in Iraq in completing its mission. Nonetheless, Kurdistan and its people have found themselves under a hybrid state of violence and political mistreatment by Baghdad, and occasionally have seen hostilities from Iran and Turkey through air and ground invasions. Consequently, many innocent people including women and children died. Villagers were forced leave their villages and became internally displaced.

The recent Turkish-Iranian joint air and ground onslaught against Kurdistan-Iraq under the pretext of going after the PKK and PJAK is a clear violation of International laws that support sovereignty of statehood, and violates the UN Declaration of Human Rights, and democratic principles.

Sadly enough, it was American-made jet fighters the Turks flew in their raids on Kurdistan, and murdered innocent people. In one incident, a whole family of seven was cut into pieces. This flagrant violation could not have happened without America's prior knowledge of the Turkish raids. What is even more tragic is that the Turkish government, jointly with America's archenemy, Iran, conducted this recent military operation against defenseless Kurds.

Mr. President, US made fighters were used to murder citizens of Kurdistan at a time when Kurdish people and their leadership have been the most supportive of Americans in Iraq, and one of the few in the larger Middle East. The people of Kurdistan have always looked up to America and expected America to provide viable support in the face of external aggression. Therefore, instead of being complacent about Turkish internal oppression of the Kurds and Turkish aggression towards the Kurds in Kurdistan-Iraq, America could play a better role in finding a political solution to the Turkish-Kurdish conflict. America as an occupying force of Iraq is responsible for securing Iraq's borders.

While Turkey uses the PKK as a pretext for its aggression against the peace-loving people of Kurdistan-Iraq, the reality is that there remain some twenty-five million Kurds in Kurdistan-Turkey, who, since 1924, have been faced with Turkish policies of constitutional genocide, which attempts to eradicate Kurdish identity as a different ethnicity. The Turkish Constitution in Chapter Four, I. Turkish Citizenship, Article 66 (as amended on October 17, 2001), vividly states "Everyone bound to the Turkish state through the bond of citizenship is a Turk."

This Article advocates constitutional genocide against all those who carry national identities other than Turkish identity. The fact is that the PKK is a product of this racist and inhuman Constitution. While it may be convenient for Turkey to declare those it oppresses as "terrorists," others see it as a legitimate struggle for ethnic and national freedom. Under this Constitution, there is no place for the Kurds to claim their God-given "national and democratic rights" in Turkey. If they do, the intolerant Turkish mentality stigmatizes them as "Terrorists." Interestingly, one could ask which side, through its acts defines the "definition" of terrorist, the Turkish state that constitutionally has a policy of systematic genocide against one of the ancient peoples in the world or the PKK that has a national agenda for its oppressed people? The PKK was forced into an armed struggle to stop the genocidal Turkish policies in Kurdistan-Turkey. Additionally, the PKK, occasionally, had ceased all its activities against the Turkish state to promote dialogue with The Turks. It has always been the Turkish stubborn stand that preferred military solution to the Kurdish cause in Turkey.

Mr. President, Turkey needs to realize the reality in which Turkey lives. The truth is that the issue is not the PKK, but rather it is an issue of some twenty-five million Kurds, who have been buried alive under the myopic Turkish Constitution. Let's hypothetically assume the Turkish raids on Kurdistan eliminate the PKK, even then Turkey must realize that it cannot exterminate the Kurdish cause. Thus, it is wise for the Turks to come to terms with this reality and end the cycle of hate and distrust. They must accept the historical reality that the Kurds have been living in their ancestral lands, which were partitioned and made parts of the modern Turkish state (and other states), and have their own national characteristics that must be respected.

What the Kurds in Turkey, Iran, Iraq, and Syria struggle for is totally in tune with the United States' Declaration of Independence, to achieve "Life, Liberty and the Pursuit of Happiness." Therefore, it is expected of America that America use its influence to help

the people of Kurdistan especially in Turkey and Iraq where America can play a more effective role in finding a solution to the Kurdish plight. In Turkey, the Turks should be encouraged to look for a political solution to the Turkish-Kurdish uproar. In Iraq, America could do more to influence the implementation of the Article 140 to normalize the Arabized and sequestered parts of Kurdistan.

America's support for Turkey has emboldened Turkish authorities to, under the US tutelage, violate international norms, and transgress human integrity. To end this succession of cynicism in Turkey, America can influence the Turks to amend their Constitution in which the Kurdish national and democratic rights are recognized and revered. As long as Turkey adheres to the Turkish "status quo," it would be difficult for the people of Kurdistan in Turkey, or Kurds in other parts of Kurdistan to live in peace.

Mr. President, in your speech in the Turkish Parliament on April 6, 2009, you applauded the Turkish reform for greater democracy. You encouraged the Turks to have dialogue with the Kurdish leaders in Iraq, which indeed made a noticeable difference in Turkish behavior vis-à-vis the Kurds in Kurdistan-Iraq. However, you put Al-Qaida and the PKK on the same scale without referring to the inherently racist Turkish Constitution. Therefore, we ask you Mr. President, to call for a similar stand you displayed in your speech for the Kurds in Iraq by encouraging Turkish authorities to establish dialogue with the Kurds in Turkey so the Turkish-Kurdish bloodshed ends. In view of the fact that there exists conflict between the Turks and Kurds in Turkey—the region may never be able to see peace and tranquility—and Turkey may continue its internal oppression of the Kurds and trespass internationally recognized borders and violate the rights of Kurds beyond Turkey's borders.

Further, since "unfortunately" Kurdistan is still a part of Iraq, it is the US responsibility to protect the people of Kurdistan. Thus, any violation against Kurdistan should be considered as a violation against Iraq. Particularly, with regard to the Iranian aggression, we ask that America protect its Kurdish friends in the face of America's die-hard enemy, Iran.

In conclusion, we implore that the US provide protection for the people of Kurdistan from external aggression. Further, we ask that America help the Kurdish leadership to strengthen democratic institutions in Kurdistan, and promote principles on which the Kurdistan society could be transformed into a functioning civil society in which human integrity is preserved and freedom of speech including freedom of the press is respected. May God continue to bless America and Kurdistan with His love and wisdom.

We shall continue to pray for your success.

Sincerely yours,

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