

# MEMORANDUM

**To: Mr. Bashar Al-Asad, President of the Republic of Syria,  
From: The Kurdish Community in the UK**

**On the Kurdish Question in  
Western Kurdistan (Syrian Kurdistan)  
And the killing of Kurdish people on 12 March 2004  
killing the Kurdish leader Sheikh Mashouq Al Khaznawi  
on 1-6-2005 and the killing of three Kurds on 20<sup>th</sup> March 2008  
by your regime**

**Mr. Bashar Al-Asad,**

We are the Preparing Committee and many other organisations and Kurdish personalities presenting this memorandum in the name of Kurdish people in Western Kurdistan (Syrian Kurdistan) to recognize the rights of Kurdish nation in Syrian Kurdistan, before - Kurdistan - to be separated by the international forces as done to Iraqi Kurdistan since 1991. We would like you to recognize our rights, and to build a strategic relation between the Arabs and the Kurds. The Kurds who are now about 40 millions and more than three millions of them inside the Syrian political borders and it is your decision to make the 40 million people to be friend to the Arabs or not.

We would like to draw your attention to some light on the situation in Western Kurdistan (Syrian Kurdistan).

The situation in Western Kurdistan faces, as it has always done, a political and media blackout by the Syrian Government.

However, in order to clarify the situation in Western Kurdistan we would like to give you a brief account of the Kurdish question in general.

The Kurdish people is the fourth largest nation in the Middle East and the largest nation in the world without a national state. Kurdistan used to be, like all the existing countries in the Middle East - except Iran -, under the rule of the Ottoman Empire. In the aftermath of the First World War when the Ottoman Empire disintegrated (1918) it seemed the most reasonable solution that Kurdistan should be granted national independence. Although the Treaty of Sevres (1920) did provide the creation of an independent Kurdish State, when Mustafa Kemal became the Turkish leader he refused to accept this. A second treaty of Lauzanne was signed in 1923, and Kurdistan was not mentioned in it. Then in a Franco-Turkish agreement the railway line between Mousel (a city in Iraqi Kurdistan) and Aleppo (a city in Syrian Kurdistan) became the border line between Turkey and Syria. The result of these agreements, in which the Kurds had no saying whatsoever, was the division of Kurdistan. The Kurds have never accepted this, so they started their continuous struggles against the regimes occupying Kurdistan, namely Iraq, Turkey, Syria, Iran,

and the former Soviet Union. These governments since then have practised the most repressive policies in the history of mankind against the Kurds.

For 80 years the Kurds have had no national rights, and their country Kurdistan was divided and occupied as an international colony, and the Kurds have been prosecuted, massacred, assimilated and denied the very basic human rights.

In fact the Kurds are asking now, especially after the Halabja disaster and the recent genocide which is still carrying on, to be separated from Iraq and all occupiers of Kurdistan. Whether the Kurds are demanding full independence or a more limited autonomy or extension of electricity to their villages in these States the Kurdish people are face severe restrictions and harsh oppression.

As we mentioned earlier the Franco - Turkish agreement (Ankara Treaty 1921) set the boundary which separated the Syrian Kurdistan from the motherland Kurdistan. As a result thousands of families were divided.

Those on the northern side of the railway line came under Turkish occupation (and in fact regarded as Turks by the Turkish government), and those on the southern side of the railway line came under the Syrian occupation, whose population now is more than two millions, (and in fact regarded as Arabss by the Syrian government).

The Kurds in Syria during the twenties and thirties enjoyed to some extent press and publishing freedom, and had their own centres and organizations under the French colony. When Syria got independence in 1946 and Arabs took control of the government, the Kurds lost everything they achieved.

All Kurdish centres were closed, organisations were banned and all Kurdish publications, books, magazines and newspapers, new and old were confiscated.

The leaders of the Kurdish people in Syria were sent into exile or executed.

Below are a few examples of these atrocities:

- 1- In 1930 the French colonial in Syria exiled the Kurdish leader Osman Sabri to the Island of Madagascar. He was brought back as a result of a heavy pressure by the Kurds on the authority. Since then, this Kurdish hero had been arrested on more than 18 occasions and spent more than 12 years behind bars. He was not allowed to travel as well because he had been deprived of his Syrian nationality.
- 2- In 1951 the Syrian authorities assassinated Prince Jaladat Bader Khan and exiled his brother (Prince Kameran), and a number of Kurdish dignitaries such as Dr. Noraddin Zaza.
- 3- In 1958 the Syrian authorities dismissed hundreds of Kurdish officers from the Syrian army because just they are Kurds, among them were: The chief of staff in the Syrian Army General Tawfik Nizamaddin, General Mahmud Shewkat, Colonel Fuad Malatali, Colonel Bakri Qotresh...
- 4- In 31/11/1960 the Syrian authorities burnt to death 380 Kurdish children in the town of Amouda while they were watching a film in the cinema.
- 5- In 1962 the Syrian authorities deprived 150 000 Kurds of the Syrian citizenship in the province of Al-Jazierah.
- 6- In 1967 the Syrian authorities carried out a racial policy called "the Arab Belt" which aimed at the expulsion of the Kurdish population living along the borders of Iraq and Turkey "15 km wide and 375 km long" and replacing Arabs in their areas. The purpose was to separate these Kurdish areas of Kurdistan from other Kurdish areas in Iraq and Turkey.

- 7- A group of patriotic Kurds have been arrested in Syria for more than 15 years without any court decision, one of these Mr. Daham Mero was released recently, and that was because of his age, he was over eighty, and many other Kurdish political prisoners have been killed as Dr. Hamid Sino, or created a mental illness to them as Mr. Bahjat Mohamed.
- 8- On March 21, 1986 the Syrian authorities prevented the Kurds from celebrating their national day "Newroz". The Kurds organized a peaceful demonstration in Damascus protesting against this action. The Syrian army then opened fire at the rally and as a result a Kurdish youth was killed and tens injured.
- 9- In 23/3/1993 the Syrian authorities burnt to death 72 Kurdish prisoners in the central prison of Al-Hasaka city.
- 10- Now, in Syria hundreds of schools teaching English, French, German, Spanish, Armenian Turkish, Farsi and Hebrew but no one single school for teaching Kurdish language.
- 11- On 12-3-2004 the Syrian regime secret police and the nationalist Baathist incited and attacked the Kurdish civilians in Qamishly and in all Kurdish cities and areas. Hundreds of the Kurds were murdered and injured, thousands were jailed.
- 12- On 20-3-2008 the Syrian regime secret police attacked the Kurdish civilians in Qamishly during Newroz celebration and killed 3 Kurds and injured other five. And tens of Kurds were arrested.

We request from the Syrian government to stop killing the Kurds and to grant our people the civil and political rights, by taking legal and official actions to:

- 1- Officially recognise the national existence of the Kurds both as a nation in the Syrian constitution.
- 2- Taking official steps towards teaching our children the Kurdish language in primary schools and making it possible to our people to use their language in business, press and media.
- 3- Taking legal and official steps towards granting our people the right to practice our believes freely.
- 4- Granting the nationality certificate to all our people who have been deprived of one since 1962, and canceling all legislations opposing that.
- 5- Release of all political prisoners, including who arrested during the Kurdish demonstrations in Damascus in 25/6/2003, in Aleppo in 30/6/2003 and in the great uprising in all parts of Western Kurdistan in 12 March 2004 and send the Syrian secret police officers who were responsible of the killing of our people to a fair court, and to pay for the families of our victims, you should send now a personal apologies to the Kurdish families who lost their members during the massacre of 12 March 2004 by security forces of your regime, **otherwise we are going to ask a help from our friends world wide.**

**On 1 May 2008, a peaceful demonstration will be held by the Kurdish community in the UK and their friends, in front of the Syrian Embassy at 2.00, to support the rights of Kurdish people in Western Kurdistan (Syrian Kurdistan). During the demonstration the above Memorandum will present to the Syrian Embassy.**

## Newroz Martyrs in Qamishli Western Kurdistan on 20-4-2008

