

TURKEY PREFERS ISLAMIC STATE TO KURDISH STATE

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Kurdish women make up a large proportion of the YPG militia fighters who are battling ISIS on the front lines in Syrian Kurdistan. (Image source: Mirava News video screenshot)

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Uzay Bulut, [Gatestone Institute](#), 5 July 2015

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Although this success by the Kurds must have been welcomed by people horrified at such a genocidal terrorist group, Turkey's President, Recep Tayyip Erdogan [vowed to prevent](#) the establishment of a Kurdish state in the region. "I am addressing the whole world," he said: "We will never allow a state to be formed in northern Syria, south of our border."

Actually, Syrian Kurds do not demand an independent state. They demand an autonomous or federal Kurdish administration. But even if they demand independence one day, they have every right to it.

If there are 21 Arab states and 6 Turkic states, why should a Kurdish state not exist?

Before the area was captured by Kurds, it had been used by ISIS as a gateway from Turkey to Raqqa, but apparently this did not disturb Turkey's government. No Turkish official stood up to say: "We will never allow the Islamic State to rule northern Syria."

"It is revelatory," said Dr. Sherkoh Abbas, President of the Kurdistan National Assembly of Syria, that the supply line to the ISIS capital, Raqqa -- recently broken by the Kurds -- originates in Turkey.

"Turkey also opposed the Kurdistan Regional Government (KRG) in Iraqi Kurdistan, and now they are the biggest trading partners and have good relations."

"It is best for Turkey to embrace Kurdish Regional Government in Syrian Kurdistan to prevent radicals from threatening Kurds and Turks. So it is about time for the international community, Obama administration and Turkey to admit that Iraq and Syria are failed states, and thus to allow each ethnic group to go their own way."

Apparently, for the government of Turkey, ISIS, which engages in mass murder, ethnic cleansing, mass rape and sexual slavery, is preferable to the Kurds, who resist ISIS and demand rights and liberties that have been taken away from them by the repressive regimes that rule over them.

In the parts of Syrian Kurdistan under the Kurdish PYD (Democratic Union Party) and its armed wing, YPG (People's Protection Units), gender equality, a respect for minority rights and secularism are promoted and practiced.

The PYD, which rules the Kurdish autonomous administration of Syrian Kurdistan, defines its primary aim on its [official website](#):

"Our Party's principal aim, at this crucial stage of history, is to ensure and safeguard the peaceful nature of this popular uprising and to prevent any possibility of the transformation of this popular movement into an Arab-Kurdish conflict. Our strategy is to sow the seeds of brotherhood among peoples and to achieve solidarity and equality between them."

With its limited military power aided only by NATO planes and Peshmerga forces, the YPG are fighting against the immolators and decapitators, and trying to protect innocent people who would otherwise be massacred by ISIS.

The Kurdish militias -- the YPG in Syrian Kurdistan and the Peshmerga in the Kurdistan Regional Government in Iraq -- are the only Muslim forces truly resisting the ISIS on the ground. These Kurdish forces are mostly Muslim; at the same time, unlike the Arab regimes or radical Islamist armies in the region, they are secular and protective of minorities.

On one side, there is Turkey, whose membership in the NATO has not prevented it from turning a blind eye to -- or even facilitating the traffic of -- ISIS fighters who go to Syria by way of Turkish border crossings to slaughter or rape Yazidis, Alawites, Christians and other non-Muslim minorities. On the other side, there are the Syrian Kurdish defenders -- both men and women -- who have been the most effective force fighting ISIS and the al-Nusra Front. The difference could not be greater.

After Kurds captured Tel Abyad, both Turkish foreign minister Mevlut Cavusoglu and Deputy Prime Minister Bulent Arinc [accused](#) Kurdish forces of "ethnic cleansing."

However, [according](#) to Rami Adulrahman, head of the UK-based Syrian Observatory of Human Rights, "There's no 'ethnic cleansing' in Til Abyad against the Turkmen and Arabic population."

"The Turkish government is hostile towards Kurds in Turkey as well as Syria. It fears a strengthening of the Kurdish position in the region. ... n autumn 2014 at least 300,000 Kurds have been expelled by

IS. At that time, the Turkish government did not speak of 'ethnic cleansing' against the Kurds. Quite the contrary, the Turkish government has co-operated with IS."

Actually, it was Syrian Kurds who had been victims of ethnic cleansings at the hands of the Syrian regime, through which the demographic character of the region was changed.

According to the Peace in Kurdistan Campaign, other policies of ethnic cleansing and cultural devastation of the Syrian regime included:

- The conversion of all fertile lands in the Kurdish region into public property under the name of a 'land reform policy', and housing the Arab tribes in those areas after forcing the Kurds to migrate, by depriving them of property ownership, especially agricultural property.
- Changing the names of all Kurdish cities and villages and replacing them with names that are not historically related to the region. The main objective of this policy is to Arabize and change the demographic features of the region.
- The settlement of Arab tribes, whose lands were affected by flooding, in Kurdish areas.
- Preventing the Kurdish people from celebrating their own festivals, such as Newroz.
- Preventing the Kurds from supporting and communicating with their brethren in other parts of Kurdistan.

The historian Dr. Jordi Tejel also wrote about the human rights violations against Syrian Kurds in his book *Syria's Kurds: History, Politics and Society*. Some of them include:

- After the Baath party in 1958 led Syria to integrate itself with Egypt in the United Arab Republic (UAR), under Gamal Nasser, "recordings of Kurdish music were smashed in cafes. The publication and even the possession of books written in Kurdish language were offences punishable by imprisonment. Egyptian teachers were sent into Kurdish regions."
- "The authorities were accused in November 1960 by the inhabitants of Amuda of causing a fire in a movie house that caused the death of 283 Kurdish children. Those responsible for this act were presumably motivated by anti-Kurdish sentiments, the fruits of official propaganda in opposition to Kurdish nationalism associated with Zionism and American imperialism."
- "Between 1946 and 1957, the Syrian Kurds had no political organization to defend their rights. (e.g. cultural rights.)"
- Finally, the Kurdistan Democratic Party of Syria (KDPS) was founded in 1957. "On August 5, 1960, the leaders of the executive committee of Aleppo were arrested and tortured. The party organization was discovered and within a few days more than 5000 people were arrested and interrogated. The leaders of the KDPS were accused of separatism and finally condemned to prison."
- One of the most serious violations against Kurds was the census of 1962, in which about 120,000 Kurds lost their citizenship in their own homeland and were registered as "aliens."
- Syrian Kurds were also exposed to the racist propaganda of the Arab media. A campaign

launched by the Arab media sported slogans such as 'Save Arabism from Jazira' or 'Fight the Kurdish Menace'."

- The teaching of the Kurdish language remained prohibited during the time of Hafez al-Assad, as well. In 1970s, the public school became, for the Kurds, not only a place of Baathist indoctrination, as it was for other Syrians, but also a place of Arabization.
- "With the increase in literate children in the Kurdish regions, a tight surveillance system was established there, following the example of the Turks, by means of 'spies,' to stop the children from speaking Kurdish among themselves. Children discovered in flagrant 'defiance' could be physically punished."
- "Though the ban on Kurdish publications had already begun with Adib al-Shiskali's presidency (1951-54), under the Baathist regime measures of legal coercion were reinforced, obliging Kurdish authors and editors to have their publications printed in Lebanon, and afterwards they could be illegally brought back to Syria."
- "Two decrees from the 1980s forbade the use of Kurdish in the workplace, as well as during marriage ceremonies and festivities."
- "In the province of Al-Hasakah, in 1992, officers of the civil state began to more strictly apply the restriction against registering children with Kurdish names, in accordance with decree no. 122."
- "In May 2000, a little before the death of Hafiz al-Asad, resolution 768 ordained the closing of all stores selling cassettes, videos, and disks in the Kurdish language and re-emphasized the prohibition of using this language during meetings and festivities."

Today, in almost all of the Kurdish regions in Syrian Kurdistan that witnessed these terrible abuses, Kurds have established their [de-facto autonomous administrations](#) -- namely the Kobane, Cezire, and Efrin cantons.

Now, ISIS terrorists have been attacking Kurds in an attempt to rape their women, sell them on slave markets and annihilate them. On June 25, one of the [worst massacres](#) carried out by ISIS took place in the Syrian Kurdish town of Kobane, in which at least 145 people were murdered.

This is what happens when Kurds get caught unprepared or cannot fight back. And this is why the demands that the West arm the Kurds directly, and recognize Kurdish self-rule within secure and defensible boundaries, are a matter of life and death.

Sadly, in a region which is largely marked by a lack of respect for human rights and liberties, it is only through uprisings, civil wars or Western military interventions that Kurds in their native land, Kurdistan, have been able to get some human and national rights.

At least the days when Syrian Kurds were not even given ID cards and were made stateless in their own ancient lands are about to be over. But the regimes that rule the Kurds still deny their language and culture, arrest them unlawfully, expose them to all kinds of abuses and even torture or murder

them, just because they were born Kurds.

It would be much better if the states ruling over Kurds would willingly recognize Kurdish rights without shedding any blood, but that is not how the states in this region operate.

Uzay Bulut, born and raised a Muslim, is a Turkish journalist based in Ankara.

In an interview with Gatestone Institute.

For instance, the 1973 policy of "Arab belt", otherwise known as the "Arab cordon", in the Kurdish Cezire region, along the Turkish border, aimed to put into practice ethnic cleansing and the dispossession of Kurds, who were classified by Syrian state authorities as "non-national" elements, and the transfer of their land to Arabs, who were regarded as "national" elements. (Source: "Syria's Kurds: History, Politics and Society", by Jordi Tejel, Routledge Advances in Middle East and Islamic Studies, 2008.)

According to the [Peace in Kurdistan Campaign](#), "The Arab belt resulted in the seizure of Kurdish agricultural lands (350km long and 15 km wide), and thousands of Kurdish land owners and farmers being forcibly driven from their own properties which were given to Arab settlers and farmers coming from Arab regions."

In 1963, lieutenant Muhammed Talab al-Hilal, former chief of the Secret Services in Al-Hasakah, published a report on the Kurdish province of Cezire in which he claimed that the Kurdish people did not exist because they possessed neither "history nor civilization; language nor ethnic origin." He also called for an increase in repressive policies in all domains in order to expunge from Cezire all signs of Kurdish identity because the Kurds were "their enemies" and "there is no difference between Kurds and Israelis, for Judistan and Kurdistan, so to speak, are of the same species." (Source: "Syria's Kurds: History, Politics and Society", by Jordi Tejel, Routledge Advances in Middle East and Islamic Studies, 2008.)

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Kurds who had their Syrian citizenship revoked were registered by the Syrian authorities as "aliens". And those who did not take part in the census became 'unregistered' or literally 'concealed/hidden'. The lack of nationality and identity documents meant that the stateless Kurds, for all practical purposes, were rendered non-existent. Their basic rights to education, employment, property ownership, political participation, and legal marriage were severely limited, relegating them to the outermost margins of Syrian civil society. 'Unregistered' Kurds had even lower status than the 'aliens' and had no opportunities in Syria.

In some cases, families found out that some members were nationals and others were not. Some

fathers, for instance had nationality while his brother or sister could not.

Many persons who lost their nationality later also lost rights to their property, which was seized by the government and used for the resettlement of displaced Arabs. Since the Syrian Kurds did not have citizenship in another country, they were defined as stateless under international law.

