



QUBAD'S REPORT

Representative Qubad Talabani met with U.S. Rep. Howard Berman, Chairman of the House Foreign Affairs Committee, and over 20 other members of Congress to discuss the post-election situation in Iraq and the future of U.S.-Iraqi/KRG relations.

The series of meetings are part of the KRG's continuing extensive outreach to the U.S. Congress, including Senate Foreign Affairs Committee staff and staffers on the Kurdish-American Congressional Caucus. Representative Talabani urged U.S. lawmakers that opening a Consulate in the Kurdistan Region serves the U.S.'s long-term political and economic interests in Iraq while providing much needed consular affairs for Americans in Kurdistan.

Representative Talabani also shared the Kurdistan Region's perspective with officials from the National Security Council, Office of the Vice-President, State Department, and Defense Department on issues ranging from the outcome of the national election to political developments within Iraqi Kurdistan.

FILMING UNDERWAY

Filming of *The Kurdistan Seed* project is underway this month in Kurdistan. The project celebrates Kurdistan's rich agricultural history from ancient times to today. One goal is for the project to raise awareness and gather international support for the Region's farmers.

The film will focus on the Region's efforts to become self sufficient in food production, highlighting crops native to the Kurdistan Region, such as wheat, lentils, barley and onions. It will also recap the Region's history of farming and how it was once the breadbasket for much of the Middle East.

Filming is to include daily life on three different Kurdish farms, a few days in the life of a young Kurdish farmer just beginning his craft, organic fruit farmers and their orchards, and film students at the agricultural college.

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CLOSE UP

The Yezidi (or Êzidî) is one of the Near East's most ancient and mysterious people. Most Yezidis live in Iraqi Kurdistan, with smaller pockets in the Kurdish parts of Syria, Southeast Turkey, Russia and Armenia. The holiest site for Yezidis is Lalish Temple. A central Figure in Yezidism is Malak Tawusi (Peacock Angel) who was created by God before the creation of the world and who embodies both light and darkness. The High Holy Day for all Yezidis around the world is known as Red Wednesday (Charshembe Sur), and this day falls on a Wednesday in early April.



CULTURE

Human fossils from Shanidar cave in Kurdistan are a centerpiece attraction at the new Human Origins exhibition at the Smithsonian Institution Museum of Natural History in Washington, DC. Those visiting also can enjoy a booth where you can see what you would look like 2 million years ago.

The exhibit builds on the 1971 book "Beyond Bones" by Owen Edwards, which details the early excavation of Shanidar Cave complex. Shanidar has never been fully excavated.

COMMUNITY

International Week at George Mason University is one of the most famous weeks on one of the most diverse campuses in the nation. This year, after some effort, the flag of Iraqi Kurdistan was hung beside the flags of other countries and nations in the Johnson Center. It was a proud and emotional moment for many Kurds. An unprecedented number of Kurds participated in the Parade of Nations and carried more Kurdish flags than any other group.

The Kurdistan Student Organization placed fourth in the overall dance competition, prompting many students and faculty with questions about Kurds and Kurdistan—and Kurdish clothes. KSO members used the Culture on the Lawn event to make fresh kabobs and grilled vegetables, perform Kurdish dances and entice audience members to participate. The Showcase of Cultures was another venue for Kurdish food, snacks, books, display boards and maps. KSO members closed by attending “Rep Your Roots” and showcasing the documentary entitled, “Who am I? I am a Kurd”, reading poetry and from “Hell is Over: Voices of the Kurds After Saddam” and performing dances.



KRG staffer Sabat Mahmoud helped organize the Kurdish student participation in the GMU International Day.

DIPLOMATIC OUTREACH

Representative Qubad Talabani met separately with Ambassadors Dr. Christian Prosl of Austria, Petr Kolar of the Czech Republic, Pierre Vimont of France, and Jonas Hafstrom of Sweden, as well as diplomats from Japan, Norway and Germany, to provide details on the outcome of Iraq’s national election, discuss Iraq’s outstanding issues, and to encourage cultural and economic partnerships. The diplomats were impressed by the increasing number of construction and development projects in Erbil and throughout the Kurdistan Region. Talabani thanked each embassy for their involvement and interest, especially in promoting economic investment.

CATCHING UP

Kurdish communities across the United States have urged their respective members of Congress to support a House Resolution (H. Res. 873) calling on the State Department to open a consulate in the Kurdistan Region of Iraq. Recently the community in Washington State met with Rep. Jim McDermott; members of the American Kurdish Council (AKC) in Virginia met with Rep. Jim Moran; and Kurdish Americans in Binghamton, New York, and St. Louis, Missouri, met with their respective Congressmen’s staffers. These discussions follow previous meetings held by Kurdish communities in Arizona with Rep. John Shadegg and in Tennessee’s with Kurdish American Caucus Chair Rep. Lincoln Davis. There are currently 26 members of Congress who have signed on to H. Res. 873.