

KURDISH GENOCIDE



ANFAL REMEMBRANCE DAY

6:30pm, Monday 7 April

Harvey Goodwin Suite, Church House, Dean's Yard,
Westminster, London SW1P 3NZ



Kurdish Genocide

Saddam Hussein was determined to wipe out the Kurds in Iraq. In 1988, he launched a genocidal campaign that he code-named Anfal. In this carefully planned, eight-stage operation, 182,000 men, women and children were killed.

The Anfal is part of a wider genocide that began decades earlier in which hundreds of thousands of innocent people perished, families were torn apart and 4,500 villages were destroyed. The genocide saw the use of chemical weapons countless times, including in Halabja; the disappearance of 8,000 Barzani boys and men in 1983; and the killing of Faylee Kurds in the 1970s and 1980s. The Anfal was the peak of the genocide, a crime committed while much of the world was silent.

In Kurdistan, April 14 is the day marked every year for remembrance of the notorious Anfal Campaign. Although Anfal began before April 14, 1988, the Ba'athist regime launched the largest Anfal operations in the Garmian areas in the south and southeast of Slemani on that day.

As the people of Kurdistan continue to seek political, moral and legal recognition of Anfal as an act of genocide, according to the 1948 United Nations Genocide Convention, today we hear from Ministers, MPs, survivors and family members as we remember those whose lives were lost.

For more information on the campaign for formal recognition of the Kurdish Genocide please visit: <http://www.justice4genocide.com/>

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PROGRAMME

CHAIR:

- ❖ **18:30 Khasro Ajgayi**
Director of Community Outreach, Kurdistan Regional Government UK Representation

A MINUTE'S SILENCE

SHORT FILM

A short film which captures the lead-up to Anfal, the peak of the genocide in Kurdistan

The Road to Anfal by Gwynne Roberts

The short film is an excerpt from *Anfal* (RWF World) which charts the events leading up to 1988, Halabja and the Anfal operations. Witnesses interviewed as part of the Kurdistan Memory Programme testify to the Arabisation of Kirkuk, the persecution of the Faylee Kurds and Barzanis, and the 1987 chemical attacks.

(RWF World, Kurdistan Memory Programme, www.kurdmemory.com)

OPENING AND WELCOME:

- ❖ **18:40 Bayan Sami Abdul Rahman**
Kurdistan Regional Government High Representative to the UK

SPEECHES:

- ❖ **18:45 His Excellency Faik Nerweyi**
Iraqi Ambassador to the UK
- ❖ **18:50 Rt Hon Hugh Robertson MP**
Minister of State at the Foreign and Commonwealth Office for the Middle East
- ❖ **19:00 Minister Falah Mustafa**
Head of the Kurdistan Regional Government Department of Foreign Relations
- ❖ **19:10 Nadhim Zahawi MP**
Co-Chair of the All-Party Parliamentary Group on the Kurdistan Region in Iraq
- ❖ **19:15 Meg Munn MP**
Co-Chair of the All-Party Parliamentary Group on the Kurdistan Region in Iraq
- ❖ **19:20 Laween Atroshi**
Labour Parliamentary Candidate for Surrey Heath



SURVIVOR TESTIMONIES:

❖ **19:25 Bahman Mahmood**

Anfal survivor and eye-witness

"In April 1988, our village was surrounded by tanks for days and nights. They were planning to Anfal us, but we had a lucky escape. They said it was the wrong village. They went and they Anfaled another village. I have been back to Kurdistan since and I can't find my village, it's gone. It was flattened by their bulldozers."

❖ **19:30 Taban Shores**

Escaped execution as a child

"I was just a child. My mother and I were destined to be executed because my father was a peshmerga. The incredible act of bravery and kindness by fellow Kurds saved us."

❖ **19:35 Talib Omer**

Survivor of genocide against Barzani clan

"I was four years old. Soldiers attacked our house. They were looking for all the males – young men, elderly or even boys – and took them away. I had a lucky escape because I was too little and was with my mother at the time so they didn't take me."

REMEMBRANCE:

❖ **19:40 Basho Anvari**

Journalism student, son of Della Murad, Artistic Director, Founder and Trustee of Gulan, a charity promoting Kurdish culture

Tells story of his mother Della who is from Halabja and created the Halabja remembrance badge in the shape of a white tulip

❖ **19:45 Ata Mufty**

Member of the London Kurdish Film Festival organising committee

Reads poem in Kurdish: Valley of Butterflies by Sherko Bekas

❖ **19:50 Sadie Wykeham**

UK Director of RWF World which produces the Kurdistan Memory Programme, the world's largest bilingual film archive of witnesses to Anfal and Kurdish history.

Reads poem in English: Hide and Seek in Bergalou by Nazand Begikhani



MESSAGES OF SUPPORT FROM PARLIAMENT

Ian Lucas MP
Labour MP for Wrexham
Shadow Minister for Middle East and Africa

“As we mark Anfal Day, we stand in solidarity with the Kurdish people, including those based in Iraqi Kurdistan, in the UK, and throughout the world.

“We must remember not only the 182,000 men, women and children who lost their lives in the orchestrated campaign, but also those left behind, coping with losing their loved ones. We remember also the destruction of homes, villages and towns devastating historic communities.

“As we look to the future, and as Iraqi Kurdistan builds closer relations with the UK, we should remember the persecution of those who died in the Anfal campaign, and honour their memory. This must never happen again.”

Jason McCartney MP
Conservative MP for Colne Valley
Vice-Chair of the All-Party Parliamentary Group on the Kurdistan Region in Iraq

“I first started meeting Iraqi Kurds in the early 1990s when I was an officer in the Royal Air Force helping to police the no-fly zone over the Kurdistan Region. My job took me to villages in the Zhako area where I heard of the tremendous suffering of the Kurds at the hands of Saddam Hussein.

“I am deeply privileged to have taken part in the no-fly zone which, I am sure, saved many thousands of Kurds from the brutality of the Baathist regime. It has made me a convinced advocate of the need for the UK and others to recognise that they suffered a genocide so that it can never happen again.”

Lord Glasman
Labour Life Peer

“Last year in Erbil I visited the excavation of a mass grave at the invitation of the Minister for Anfal. It contained the remains of Mohammed Serspi. His distressed son was present to see the long delayed and final confirmation of his father's arbitrary execution.

“He had been a school teacher and was still wearing his pyjamas. This confirmed to me the extent of the systematic execution of Kurds by the Iraqi secret police and it is time that this was recognised for what it was. An attempt at genocide against the Kurdish people.”



Stephen Metcalfe MP
Conservative MP for South Basildon and East Thurrock
Vice-Chair of the All-Party Parliamentary Group on the Kurdistan Region in Iraq

“The genocide must be recognised not to affirm the status of victim on the Kurdish people but to recognise what they have survived and to walk with them as they continue to surge forward economically, socially, diplomatically and culturally.”

“My time in the Kurdistan Region showed me that they are a forward-looking people but the burden of history should be shared by the UK and others formally recognising the genocide. We also need a clear message to dictators all over the world that we will not tolerate genocide and the use of chemical weapons.”

Fabian Hamilton MP
Labour MP for Leeds North East
Vice-Chair of the All-Party Parliamentary Group on the Kurdistan Region in Iraq

“The Halabja massacre when some 5,000 Kurds were killed by the Saddam Hussein regime in 1988 was just one part of a long-running genocide and the single biggest chemical attack ever on civilians. The international community failed at the time to bear witness to this atrocity although the later no-fly zone, initiated by the British, prevented Saddam conducting further acts of genocide against the Kurds until he was overthrown in 2003.”

“The Commons has taken the lead in formally recognising the genocide. I hope that the Government follows this historic example as part of our deepening friendship with the Kurdistan Region, which I am proud to have visited.”

Dave Anderson MP
Labour MP for Blaydon
Secretary of the All-Party Parliamentary Group on the Kurdistan Region in Iraq

“The Kurdistan Region has changed so much and for the better over the eight years since I was lucky enough to first visit it. It could have a great future but its history is clear too. It's impossible to miss the deep damage done by the genocide.”

“So many people were affected either directly or indirectly. Persuading the Commons to recognise the genocide was a proud moment for myself and others. It is a huge advance and, I hope, in time will be followed by the Government. The Kurds wish to escape their past but it has to be acknowledged properly first.”



SPEAKER BIOGRAPHIES

In speaking order



Khasro Ajgayi

Director of Community Outreach, Kurdistan Regional Governemnt UK Representation

Khasro Ajgayi is the Director of Community Outreach at the Kurdistan Regional Government UK Representation. He is also in charge of consular services and media relations. Ajgayi is a former journalist and London correspondent for various Kurdish satellite channels. He is an active member of the Kurdish community in London. Ajgayi studied international journalism and obtained a postgraduate diploma from the London School of Journalism. He is currently studying part time for a Masters in the Art of Negotiation at Leicester University.



Bayan Sami Abdul Rahman

Kurdistan Regional Government High Representative to the UK

Bayan Sami Abdul Rahman was appointed the Kurdistan Regional Government Representative to the UK in 2005 and was reappointed to the position in 2006, after the reunification of the Government. Under her leadership, the UK office has helped create and support a task force on the Kurdish genocide that includes MPs, academics, lawyers, survivors and communications experts. During Abdul Rahman's tenure at the UK Representation, there has been a marked increase in trade, and exchanges in education, capacity building, culture, sport, humanitarian and social affairs. She was voted into the Kurdistan Democratic Party's leadership in 2010. Abdul Rahman was an active member of the UK's Kurdish community from her teens and continues to support the community today. Before her appointment, she worked as a journalist for 17 years, including at the Financial Times. Her late father, Sami Abdul Rahman, a veteran leader of the Kurdish movement, was killed alongside his elder son Salah and 96 others in a twin suicide bombing in 2004.



His Excellency Faik Nerweyi

Iraqi Ambassador to the UK

His Excellency Faik Nerweyi, the Iraqi Ambassador to the UK, was born in 1946 in Erbil where he grew up. He attended Baghdad University from 1966 to 1970 before earning a degree and becoming a high school teacher for three years. From 1973, His Excellency began working as a humanitarian relief supervisor in Iraq. In 1977, he moved to Finland where he completed a Masters degree in Social Sciences (Politics and International Relations) at



Tampere University. Upon his graduation, His Excellency became a research assistant at the Tampere Peace and Conflict Research Institute (TAPRI) before being appointed International Cultural Advisor to Social and Health Ministry in Finland. Since 1996, His Excellency has been the Representative for Iraq in Turkey and in Jordan. In 2010 he was made Iraq's ambassador to Moscow, where he remained for three years before coming to London where he lives with his wife and three children.



Rt Hon Hugh Robertson MP

**Minister of State at the Foreign and Commonwealth Office
Minister responsible for the Middle East**

MP for Faversham and Mid Kent since 2001, Hugh Robertson was appointed Minister of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs with responsibility for the Middle East and North Africa, in 2013. Last year, on behalf of the Prime Minister, the Minister responded to 182 letters from the Kurdish community calling on the UK Government to follow the British Parliament's example and formally recognise the Kurdish genocide. In his letter the Minister joined his predecessor Alistair Burt and the Shadow Minister for the Middle East, Ian Lucas, in accepting that the people of Kurdistan were the victims of "appalling crimes which should be condemned in the strongest terms." Prior to embarking on his political career, the Minister was head of new business development for the property division at Schroders. Before this, he was an officer in The Life Guards from 1982 to 1995, serving in Northern Ireland, Cyprus, and the Gulf War. He also served with the UN peacekeeping force UNPROFOR in Bosnia and Herzegovina.



Minister Falah Mustafa

**Head of the Kurdistan Regional Government Department of
Foreign Relations**

Minister Falah Mustafa Bakir was appointed the first Head of the KRG Department of Foreign Relations in September 2006. As part of his role, he is a well-received lecturer and frequently represents the KRG at international conferences around the world. Being fluent in Kurdish, English and Arabic, he often delivers speeches at leading universities and think-tanks and appears regularly as a guest lecturer at the University of Salahaddin in Erbil. The Minister promotes and encourages scholarship and training programmes for the people of Kurdistan, working with postgraduate students both locally and abroad. Prior to his appointment as Head of the KRG Department of Foreign Relations, the Minister served as the Public Relations Officer of the Kurdistan Democratic Party from 1996 to 1999 and as the KRG Deputy Minister of Agriculture & Irrigation from 1999 to 2002. Before this, he was a Senior Adviser to KRG Prime Minister Nechirvan Barzani from 2002 to 2004. He also served as the KRG's liaison officer to the Coalition Provisional Authority in 2003 and to the Multi-National Forces Korean Contingent stationed in Erbil in 2004. Today, he lives with his wife and their four children in Erbil, Kurdistan Region, Iraq.





Nadhim Zahawi MP

Co-Chair of the All-Party Parliamentary Group on the Kurdistan Region in Iraq, first Kurdish-born British Member of Parliament

Nadhim Zahawi was born in 1967 to Kurdish parents in Iraq. During Saddam Hussein's rise to power and his persecution of the Kurdish people his parents fled Iraq to the UK for safety. He was educated at King's College School in West London followed by University College London where he received a BSc in Chemical Engineering. He co-founded and later became chief executive of YouGov, one of the world's leading political and business information gathering companies. Nadhim was elected to the Westminster Parliament in May 2010 and is a member of the Business Innovation and Skills Select Committee. He regularly visits Iraqi Kurdistan and in March 2012 launched an online petition calling for a debate in the British Parliament on the recognition of the Kurdish genocide. The e-petition campaign succeeded in securing the debate which took place a year later, 28 February 2013, resulting in a formal recognition of the mass murder of Kurdish people as an act of genocide.



Meg Munn MP

Co-Chair of the All-Party Parliamentary Group on the Kurdistan Region in Iraq

Elected in 2001 as the Member of Parliament for Sheffield Heeley. Meg was Minister for Women and Equality between 2005 and 2007, then Foreign Office Minister until October 2008. Since 2008 she has been Chair of the All-Party Parliamentary Group on the Kurdistan Region in Iraq and has visited the region a number of times, including to lead the UKTI/Middle East Association trade delegation to the Erbil International Trade Fair in October 2011. Meg has led numerous training/mentoring sessions and is currently engaged in a long-term project supporting development in the Iraqi Parliament. Meg holds an MA in Social Work from the University of Nottingham, a Certificate and Diploma in Management Studies from the Open University and, in 2012, became the first MP to be awarded Chartered Manager status by the Chartered Management Institute.



Laween Atroshi

Labour Parliamentary Candidate for Surrey Heath

Laween Atroshi is Labour's Prospective Parliamentary Candidate for Surrey Heath to challenge Cabinet Minister of Education, Michael Gove. He is believed to be the first British-born Kurdish Parliamentary Candidate for Labour. He is also standing in local elections as a candidate for Hillingdon. Atroshi works in the NHS in Clinical Research and is a Trustee for the Helen Rollason Cancer Charity. He submitted a petition in 2011 calling on Britain to officially commemorate the Kurdish genocide.





Bahman Mahmood

Anfal survivor and eye-witness

Bahman was born in 1978 in the city of Qaladiza, in the Slemani province of Kurdistan. Qaladiza was targeted by the Ba'ath regime in 1974, 1978 and again in 1988 during Anfal. Aged 10, Bahman and his family fled to Iran after they became targets in Anfal campaign. Bahman came to the UK in 1994 and has now lived here for 20 years. He went to school in Merton, London, from Year 9 through to his GCSE's and GNVQ's. He started a career in hairdressing in 2005 and is married with three children. Bahman is an active member of

the Kurdish community in the UK.



Taban Shoresh

Kurdish genocide survivor and eye-witness

Taban Shoresh is a genocide survivor who fled persecution from Saddam Hussein's regime in the late 1980s. Born in Erbil, Iraqi Kurdistan, Taban is currently living in London with her 11-year-old son. She was educated in the UK and graduated from SOAS, University of London with an MSc in International Politics. Taban has a keen interest in international politics, in particular Kurdish politics and has worked at Chatham House and the Kurdistan

Regional Government UK Representation. Taban is currently working at Investec Asset Management, specialising in digital marketing and technology. She is the daughter of the late Kurdish politician, veteran and writer Sami Shoresh.



Talib Omer

Survivor of genocide against Barzani clan

Talib was born in Dyana, a village in the Soran area of Kurdistan. He came to the UK in October 2012 to complete a Master's degree in Teaching the English Language at the University of Nottingham. Before leaving Kurdistan to pursue his studies, Talib worked as an English teacher at the Soran Technical Institute. He has three children - two daughters, Paivin and Payam, and a son, Muhammad. Muhammad is named after Talib's father, who was arrested alongside Talib's brother and taken away with 8,000 other Barzani

men and boys all of whom are still missing. Talib is in the UK under the KRG's scholarship programme.





Basho Anvari

Journalism student, son of Della Murad, Artistic Director, Founder and Trustee of Gulan

Basho is a son of Della Murad, the artistic director of Gulan, a charity that promotes Kurdish culture with a view to help sustain Kurdish identity and to preserve Kurdistan's heritage, for the benefit of people of all cultures and identities. Basho is currently on his gap year, and is due to start a journalism degree in September. Born in London, he has frequently visited Kurdistan and has taken part in many of his mother's charity events. As a second-generation Kurd,

Basho has been brought up with a strong sense of his generation's duty to not only continue, but also to develop the culture of the Kurdish people and to integrate it with western society. Basho believes that Anfal Remembrance Day is an important stepping-stone to achieving this.





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