

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**



**JUSTICE FOR IRAQI KURDS**

*It's time to recognise the truth*

## **Baroness Morris signs petition to recognise the Kurdish genocide in Iraq**

**24<sup>th</sup> January 2013, London:** Baroness Morris, Chairman of Conservative Middle East Council, has signed the e-petition that calls on the British government to recognise the Kurdish genocide which took place in Iraq under Saddam Hussein's regime. At last week's international conference marking the 25th anniversary of the chemical weapons attack on Halabja and the 10th anniversary of the intervention in Iraq, Baroness Morris expressed her support for the Kurdish people in their campaign to gain recognition for the thousands of Kurdish men, women, and children who were brutally murdered from the 1960s onwards. The genocide peaked in the late 1980s in what Saddam Hussein called the Anfal.

Baroness Morris of Bolton is a Deputy Chairman of the House of Lords and the Chairman of Conservative Middle East Council, which promotes the discussion of UK foreign policy in the Middle East. She was recently appointed the UK's trade envoy to Jordan, Kuwait and the Palestinian Territories.

Last year the Baroness, heading a delegation of six Conservative MPs, visited Iraqi Kurdistan to strengthen relations in the region and to further economic cooperation.

Baroness Morris said: "Genocide is the worst crime that can be committed by humanity and it is our duty as a civilised society to remember and honour the victims. The genocide of the Iraqi Kurds was a profound tragedy. When we travelled to Kurdistan in August 2012, we saw with our own eyes the graves of martyrs and were able to understand the devastating impact of the Anfal campaign. The chemical attack on Halabja, which has come to symbolise the entire genocide, was just one savage act among many in the genocide against the Kurds. We hope that our parliament in the UK can lead the way in Europe and at the United Nations to recognise the genocide against the Kurds and we would encourage everybody, whatever their faith or nationality to sign this e-petition."

In response Ms Bayan Sami Abdul Rahman, Kurdistan Regional Government High Representative to the UK said: "We are extremely pleased that Baroness Morris has decided to publicly support the e-petition to recognise the atrocities against the Kurdish people in Iraq. Baroness Morris has a strong understanding of the Middle East and her support demonstrates that those within the British government are keen to see justice for the victims and survivors of the Kurdish genocide. The e-petition has seen a great level of support from the British public with currently over 27,000 signatures. However, we urge people to continue signing as the e-petition is due to close shortly on March 7<sup>th</sup>."

The e-petition can be found here: <http://epetitions.direct.gov.uk/petitions/31014>  
Campaign website: <http://www.justice4genocide.com/index.php>

### **Notes to Editors:**

For further information or photos, please contact Stephanie Blott, Amy Bourke or Helen Ayres at [KRG@luther.co.uk](mailto:KRG@luther.co.uk) or call 0207 618 9193.

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### **Some key facts about the genocide**

- The genocide of Kurdish people in Iraq began in the 1960s and continued until the late 1980s.
- In 2006, the International Commission on Missing Persons (ICMP) estimated there being 270 mass graves in Iraq containing between 10 and 10,000 bodies in each grave.
- An estimated 180,000 Kurdish people were killed between 1987 and 1988 alone during Saddam Hussein's genocidal campaign called Anfal. The true scale of the killing from the 1960s to 1990 is not yet known.
- In the 1980s, the Kurdish population was also attacked with chemical weapons. During the most vicious assault, Saddam Hussein dropped bombs containing chemical weapons on the Kurdish city of Halabja gassing as many as 5,000 men, women and children to death indiscriminately and leaving tens of thousands of people injured. They died slowly, in unimaginable pain from chemical burns. Of those who survived, many still live with painful injuries and many children are born with birth defects.
- In 1983, 8,000 men and boys of 'battle age' from the Kurdish Barzani tribe were rounded up on trucks and vanished. The bodies are now being discovered in mass graves. From then on, men and boys as young as 13 were targeted, driven far away from their homes in trucks and executed en masse. Many victims were tied together, made to stand on the lip of pre-dug graves and shot in the back so they would fall forward into them. Others were made to lie down in pairs, sardine-style, next to mounds of fresh corpses before being killed. Some, who didn't die from gun shots, were then buried alive.
- Of the total Kurdish victims, an estimated 70% were men, according to Human Rights Watch
- 90% of Kurdish villages and more than 20 small towns and cities were completely destroyed during the campaign to wipe out the Kurdish population in Iraq.
- In 1993, US-based Human Rights Watch launched an extensive investigation into the attack on the Kurds by Saddam Hussein's regime and concluded that it was genocide.
- In 2005, the court in The Hague established that the chemical bombing in Kurdistan constituted genocide in a landmark case in 2005 - the Frans Van Anraat Trial. During the Appeal, it was later referred to as 'war crimes'.
- The Iraqi High Tribunal found Sultan Hashim Ahmad, Hussein Rashid al-Tikriti, and Ali Hassan al-Majid (known as Chemical Ali) guilty of genocide in 2007.
- The research institute Swiss Peace recognised the genocide in 2008.
- In 2008 the Iraqi Presidential Council approved Resolution 26 ratifying a parliamentary resolution condemning the crimes of Saddam Hussein's regime against the Kurds as acts of genocide. This resolution affirmed the previous parliamentary resolution that declared all acts

committed against the Kurds in Iraqi-Kurdistan by the former regime were to be considered genocide.

- In March 2010, the Iraqi Supreme Court ruled that the 1988 attacks on the Kurdish population were indeed genocide. In the autumn of 2012, the Norwegian and Swedish parliaments recognized the Kurdish genocide.
- On January 17, 2013, the KRG UK Representation hosted the first international conference in Britain on the Kurdish genocide. Speakers included former French Foreign Minister Bernard Kouchner, as well as leading legal and academic experts and survivors of the genocide.