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PRESS RELEASES

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European delegation pledges its support for international recognition of Kurdish genocide

Erbil, Kurdistan – Iraq (KRG.org) – Victims of the 1988 Halabja chemical attack and other genocidal campaigns against the people of Kurdistan were remembered on Saturday, in a ceremony attended by President Barzani and many foreign and national organisations. President Barzani and the Kurdistan Regional Government asked the foreign officials to help achieve international recognition of the Kurdish genocide in Iraq.



KRG UK Representation and parliamentarians mark Halabja anniversary and launch e-petition on recognition of Kurdish genocide

The Italian Delegation Presidency of the NATO Parliamentary Assembly and the Presidency of the Atlantic Treaty Association (ATA) partnered with the Kurdistan Region's leadership to host the ceremony.

Senator Sergio De Gregorio, the Head of the Italian Delegation to the NATO Parliamentary Assembly, said, "In the past the Kurds used to say that they have no friends but the mountains, but today it is not only the mountains that are your friends. Many people around the world are your friends, and we will work hard to obtain the required signatures from the European Parliament in Brussels in order to recognise these crimes as genocide.

Senator De Gregorio expressed his sorrow to the families of victims that nothing was done to stop the crimes, and he promised to work to bring the Kurdish people closer to NATO and to inform more members and delegates of the NATO Parliamentary Assembly about the Kurdish issue.

The Minister of Martyrs and Anfal Affairs, Mr Sabah Ahmed Mohamed, said that he was hopeful that the European delegation can help the people of Kurdistan to find justice and to ensure that such crimes are never committed again. He also thanked them for coming to see for themselves the problems that the people of Kurdistan still suffer as a result of the Ba'ath regime's campaign of genocide.

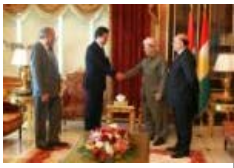
The Albanian Defence Minister, Mr Arben Imami, commended President Barzani and the Kurdish leadership for helping Kurdistan to become a beacon of stability and progress in the region. He said that the Albanian people also know what it feels to suffer from oppression, and he gave his full support for recognition of the crimes as genocide.

The Secretary General of the Mediterranean Foundation, Mr Michelle Capasso, with Minister Imami, presented the Mediterranean Prize for Peace to President Barzani, who accepted it on behalf of the Kurdish people. President Barzani said, "This award is a tribute to the victims of genocide in Kurdistan and to our people for opting for religious and ethnic tolerance and peaceful coexistence. I dedicate this award to families of every victim of genocide in Kurdistan."

President Barzani said the people of Kurdistan should be proud of their forgiveness and religious and ethnic tolerance. "We are gathered here today to seek international recognition of the genocide against our people. We should never forget the crimes committed against our people, especially against the Failis, the Barzanis, the chemical attack on Halabja and the Anfal campaign. During the Kurdish uprising of 1991, two Iraqi army divisions surrendered to our forces. Most of these prisoners were involved with committing barbaric crimes in Kurdistan, but our people refrained from seeking revenge and let the prisoners go unscathed,



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something that our people should be proud of.”

He concluded, “However, while we don’t seek revenge and violence, we won’t forget what we have suffered in the past. The people of Kurdistan still have the same rights as every other people around world, and we will continue to struggle for these rights through peaceful methods.”

The Anfal campaign of the late 1980s was a multi-stage attempt to systematically eliminate the Kurdish people and culture. The Anfal and other campaigns resulted in the deaths of approximately 182,000 people, the destruction of more than 4,500 villages, and hundreds of thousands were forcibly displaced from their homes.

The genocide included the use of chemical weapons. The 16 March 1988 attack on the town of Halabja remains the largest single chemical weapons assault directed against a civilian-populated area in history. Many of the victims of this and other assaults still suffer from the effects of the chemicals they were exposed to at that time.

Opening with a minute’s silence to honour the victims of the Anfal campaign and the chemical attack on Halabja, the ceremony also included a number of speeches from local and visiting officials, a video documentary of the attacks, and recorded comments from advocates around the world calling for recognition of the attacks as genocide. The ceremony concluded with the presentation of the Mediterranean Prize for Peace to President Barzani, on behalf of the Kurdish people.

Several local and visiting ministers and officials spoke at the event, and a large European delegation joined the surviving victims of the attacks and other representatives at the ceremony. Other speakers included: Dr Fuad Hussein, Chief of Staff for President Barzani; Minister Falah Mustafa, Head of the KRG Department of Foreign Relations; Mr Troels Froling, Secretary General of Atlantic Treaty Association; Mr Lazar Elenovski, Deputy of Secretary General of Atlantic Treaty Association and Former Minister of Defence of Macedonia; and Mr Michele Capasso, President of the Mediterranean Foundation.

- [Photo Gallery of the ceremony](#)

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