

## Political and Cultural Organisations in Kurdistan

Most of the political parties in the Kurdistan regions are secular, many having evolved out of the armed struggle for autonomy or independence.

### Political parties represented in the 2013 – 2017 Kurdish parliament, Kurdistan Region of Iraq (Bashur)

There are 19 Kurdish political parties in the Kurdistan Region of Iraq of which nine are represented in the current parliament, along with Turkmen and Assyrian/Chaldean parties.

Name of party	Acronym	Year founded	Founder
Kurdistan Democratic Party	KDP or PDK	1946	Mustafa Barzani
Patriotic Union of Kurdistan	PUK	1975	Jalal Talabani
Gorran: Change Movement		2009	Nashirwan Mustafa
Kurdistan Islamic Union	KIU	1994	Salahuddin Bahaadin
Islamic Group in Kurdistan		2001	Ali Bapir
Islamic Movement of Kurdistan		1979	Sheikh Uthman Abd-Aziz
Kurdistan Socialist Democratic Party		1981	Saleh Yousefi
Kurdistan Communist Party - Iraq		1993	Kamal Shakir
Kurdistan Toilers' Party		1985	Khalid Zangana
Turkmen Development List		?	?
Erbil Turkmen		?	?
Turkmen Change and Renewal		?	?
Iraqi Turkmen Front		1995	Coalition of six parties that claims Kirkuk and other areas including Mosul are Turkmen.
Assyrian Democratic Movement	ADM	1979	Yonadam Kanna. The ADM coordinated with Kurdish parties against the Baathist regime and maintains good relations with Iraqi Kurds, in contrast to some other Assyrian groups.
Chaldean Syriac Assyrian Popular Council	'Motwa'	2007	Sarkis Aghajan
Sons of Mesopotamia		2013	Galeta Shaba

## Kurdish Political Parties and Organisations in Rojhilat (eastern Kurdistan/north-west Iran)

There are at least seven Kurdish political organisations in Iran, all of which are illegal. They include the following.

Name of party	Acronym	Year founded	Founder and other details
Democratic Party of Kurdistan, Iran	KDPI or PDKI	1945	Qazi Muhammad, president of the Republic of Mahabad in 1946. Under Dr. Abdul Rahman Ghassemlou, the party joined the uprising against the Shah, but after Ayatollah Khomeini came to power, he declared a holy war in Iranian Kurdistan. After Ghassemlou was assassinated in 1989, Mustafa Hejri took over as Secretary General. Another leader, Sadegh Sharafkandi, was assassinated in Berlin in 1992.
	Split KDPI #2	2006	Abdullah Hassanzadeh led the split of the KDPI, on the basis that Hejri was taking the party too far to the right and was sympathetic with US wanting to destabilise Iran. President Khatami's election in 1997 and the election of a reformist parliament in 2000 gave Kurds hope that Khatami's promises of a plural and inclusive political culture would be fulfilled. They were not.
Komala		1969	The Marxist organisation of Komala was founded by a congress of ten people. Among them was Abdullah Mohtadi, who was one of the founders of the KNC in Brussels.
Kurdistan Freedom Party	PAK	1991	Hussein Yazdanpanah who led Iraqi and Iranian Kurdish members in their wish for an autonomous Kurdistan region in Iran. After clashing with the Iranian army in April 2016, PAK announced the resumption of an armed struggle.
Free Life Party of Kurdistan	PJAK	2004	Abdul Rahman Haji Ahmadi founded the organisation to fight for democratic federalism in Iran. Fighters in the armed wing come from all parts of Kurdistan and share a Qandil base with PKK. In mid 2016, clashes broke out between PJAK and the Iranian army.

## Kurdish Political Parties in Rojava (western Kurdistan/northern Syria)

There are at least 15 Kurdish political parties in Syria, none being legal. They include the following.

Name of party	Acronym	Year founded	Founders and other details
Khoybun (Independence) League		1927, Lebanon	Founders included intellectuals from Syria such as Jaladet Bedir Khan (first president), Thurayya Bedir Khan and Kamuran Bedir Khan, and tribal leaders such as Hajo Agha from Turkey and Osman Sabri from Syria. <i>Khoybun</i> instigated the Ararat Rebellion and Republic (1927 – 1930), but otherwise focused on political and cultural matters, five being elected to the Syrian parliament, <i>Khoybun</i> lobbying the French for Kurdish autonomy in Syria and for schools to teach in Kurdish, and in 1946, attempting to submit an application for an independent Kurdistan at the first meeting of the UN.
Kurdistan Democratic Party - Syria	KDPS	1957	Osam Sabri, Nur al-Din Zaza and former members of Khoybun. When the party split, that faction that continued to use the name was linked to KDP - Iraq.
Kurdish Democratic Progressive Party	KDPP	1965	Abd al-Hamid Darwish, after splitting from KDPS, the KDPP became linked with PUK - Iraq. Named KDPP since 1976.
Yekiti		1992	Coalition of leftist parties, led by Fuad Aliko and Hasan Salih, and based in urban centres, particularly Qamishli, Hasaka, Damacus, Aleppo and Latakia.
Democratic Union Party	PYD	2003	Established by former PKK members. In 2010, Salih Muslim became chair and in 2012, Asiyah Abdullah became co-chair. Influenced by Abdullah Ocalan's concept of democratic federalism. The PYD was instrumental in establishing local multi-ethnic administrations in areas free of ISIS and wants a Federation of northern Syria - Rojava. Since 2014, PYD has established offices in Berlin, Moscow, Paris, Prague and Stockholm.
Kurdistan Freedom Party	Azadi	2005	Kheir al-Din Murad. One of a number of parties that oppose the dominance of PYD in the Rojava administrations.
Kurdish National Council	KNC	2011	President Masoud Barzani was instrumental in establishing the KNC as an umbrella group for 11 Syrian Kurdish parties with links to KDP Iraq, thus excluding PYD. The KNC and PYD formed a coalition called TEV-DEM to jointly administer the multi-ethnic local administrations in northern Syria. In 2015, the KNC established the Rojava Peshmerga.
Movement for a Democratic Society	TEV-DEM	2012	A coalition of PYD, KNC and other parties that oversees the multi-local administrations in Rojava and other parts of northern Syria since 2013.
Kurdish Supreme Council/Committee	KSC	2012	President Masoud Barzani was instrumental in establishing the KSC to include all groups in the KNC, PYD and TEV-DEM to better co-ordinate the Rojava administrations. It was the KSC that established Peoples' Protection Units (YPG and YPJ) to defend Afrin, Kobani and Cizere and liberate other towns from ISIS.
Syrian Democratic Council	SDC	2015	The SDC was established at a conference in Rmeilan, Hasaka province, in 2015 to represent all ethnicities in the Syrian Democratic Force (SDF) and local administrations. The SDC was responsible for formulating a social contract for a multi-ethnic Federation of Rojava and Northern Syria. KNC oppose this formula, preferring an autonomous Kurdistan region - Syria.

## Political organisations representing Kurds in Bakur (northern Kurdistan/eastern Turkey)

There are at least 31 past and present Kurdish political organisations in Turkey. These are some of them.

Name of party	Acronym	Year founded	Founder or other details
Socialist Party of Turkish Kurdistan Changed to Socialist Party of Kurdistan	PSTK PSK	1974 1993	Kemal Burkay (lawyer, writer) founded party to bring about a socialist, multi-party system. After the 1980 coup many members were arrested. Burkay was in prison four times. The party has since recovered but Turkey blocks all media about the PSK.
Kurdistan Workers Party Renamed Kurdistan Freedom and Democracy Congress Renamed Kurdistan Peoples' Congress Returned to original name	PKK KADEK Kongra-Gel PKK	1978 2002 2003 2008	Abdullah Ocalan, who has been held in prison in solitary confinement since 1999. PKK's armed wing, founded in 1984, is called Peoples' Defence Units (HPG). PKK's youth wing, founded in 2013, is called the Patriotic Revolutionary Youth Movement (YDG-H). PKK is a leftist organisation that is listed as a terrorist organisation by Turkey, the US, Australia and NATO.
Peoples Labour Party	HEP	1990	Banned in 1993.
Freedom and Democracy Party	OZDEP	1993	Banned six months after its formation.
Democracy Party	DEP	1993	Banned in 1994. Leyla Zana and others in the party and who had been elected to parliament were sentenced to 15 years in prison.
Peoples Democratic Party	HADEP	1994	Banned in 2003. 46 founding members banned from all political activities.
Democratic Peoples' Party	DEHAP	2002	When about to be banned, DEHAP united with DTP. DTP won mayorships in 100 cities in the local elections of 2009.
Kurdistan Freedom Falcons/Hawks	TAK	2004	Radical military group that broke away from PKK and wants independence. Has claimed responsibility for a number of terrorist acts in western Turkey, including in Ankara and Istanbul since 2005.
Democratic Society Party	DTP	2005	Established by Leyla Zana and others after their prison release. Banned in 2009.
Democratic Society Congress	DTK	2007	Umbrella organisation consisting of political parties, unions and NGOs with Kurd, Arab, Armenian and Assyrian representatives, that in 2011 announced the aim of democratic autonomy for Kurdistan of Turkey.
Peoples' Democratic Party	HDP	2012	Founded by the Peoples' Democratic Congress, a union of left wing movements and is in alliance with DBP. Co-chairs Selahattin Demirtas and Figen Yuksekdag (since 2014) led the party for 7 June 2015 elections, when 80 members were elected to parliament. This was reduced to 59 members in the election re-run on 1 November 2015. Many HDP members, including the two co-chairs, are now facing prosecution and imprisonment on charges of being linked to terrorists and inciting violence.
Democratic Regions Party	DBP	2014	An amalgamation of the Peoples' Democratic Party (DTP) and Peace and Democracy Party (BDP) that focused on regions, while HDP focused on national elections. Since August 2015, 22 DBP mayors were imprisoned, 31 DBP officials were sacked and 24 DBP mayors replaced.

## International Umbrella Organisations

Name of organisation	Acronym	Year founded	Current chair/s or other details
Kurdistan National Congress	KNK	1999	Established in Brussels as a coalition of Kurdish and Assyrian-Chaldean-Syriac parties including Gorran, PUK, PIK, PKK and its affiliates (PJAK, KON-KURD, KDSP), PYD, Komala and other parties, to advocate for Kurdish and Assyrian rights in the EU, UN and elsewhere.
Kurdistan Democratic Communities Union led by assembly called Kurdistan People's Congress	KCK	2007	Umbrella organisation for all parties and militants affiliated with the PKK across Turkey, Syria, Iraq and Iran, including PKK, HPG (PKK's Peoples Defence Forces), PYD, YPG/YPJ (Syrian Kurdish Peoples' Protection Units) PJAK (Iran), Kurdistan Democratic Solution Party (KDSP), and civil society organisations with the aim of promoting 'democratic federalism' within nation-state borders.
Confederation of Kurdish Associations in Europe; Renamed Kurdish Democratic Society Congress	KON-KURD	1993 2013	Based in Brussels for federations affiliated with PKK in Austria, Australia, Canada, Great Britain, Belgium, Denmark, France, Germany, Netherlands, Sweden and Switzerland.

## Cultural Organisations

Name of organisation	Acronym	Year founded	Details
Kurdish Institute of Brussels		1978	Focused on the integration of Kurds and other minorities into Belgian society and the promotion of Kurdish culture in and outside Kurdistan.
Kurdish Institute of Paris		1983	Focused on promoting Kurdish language, culture and history, publishing a journal <i>Kurmanji</i> , maintaining a library that includes historical archives, and maintains relations with the French Ministry of the Interior and Ministry of Culture.
Kurdish PEN		1988	Based in Cologne, Germany, to promote Kurdish writers.
Washington Kurdish Institute		1996	Based in Washington to increase awareness and advocate for human, cultural, and political rights throughout Kurdistan.
Middle East Research Institute	MERI	2014	Based in Erbil and focused on contributing to the process of nation building and democratisation in the Middle East through research, analysis and policy development.



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