3rd International Kurdish Studies Conference

Shifting Dynamics of the Kurdistan Question in a Changing Middle East

Middlesex University | London, UK
25th - 26th June 2019
Shifting Dynamics of the Kurdistan Question in a Changing Middle East

Over 35 million Kurds live under the national jurisdictions of Turkey, Iran, Iraq and Syria where the Kurdish identity, culture, linguistic rights, homeland and own political representation are contested and contained in most cases by the force of arms. Consequently, the combination of authoritarian state ideologies, the systematic and recurrent use of state violence in these countries has led to the rise of Kurdish opposition. In turn, the ruling states have further used the Kurdish resistance as a pretext to reinforce draconian policies of negation, assimilation and elimination of Kurdish national aspirations.

The 20th century has marked the most repressive state policies against the Kurdish quest for self-determination. At the turn of the 21st century, however, various political developments suggest a shift for the Kurds. The regime change in Iraq in 2003, the ongoing civil war in Syria and the emergence of ISIS were among the watershed events that have not only changed the balance of power in the Middle East but also the perception and position of the Kurds in the global political system.

The establishment of the Kurdistan Regional Government in Kurdistan-Iraq, the Democratic Federation of Northern Syria and the rise of pro-Kurdish political parties in Kurdistan-Turkey have given rise to the political visibility of the Kurds in international politics. The old borders and boundaries that separated the Kurds are becoming increasingly ineffective. These crucial developments have deepened the sovereignty crisis of the oppressive regional states. Simultaneously with this emerging new political geography and visibility of the Kurds, the number of scholarly studies on the “Kurdish Question” and “Kurdistan Question” has rapidly increased in recent years. The “Kurdistan Question” is growing into an international political issue that needs a global response to find a peaceful settlement in the region.

Keynote Speaker

Prof Abbas Vali, Emeritus Professor of Sociology
The Conference Organising Committee

Dr Janroj Yilmaz Keles, Middlesex University
Dr Naif Bezwon, University of Innsbruck, Austria, and UCL
Prof Joshua Castellino, Middlesex University and Minority Rights Group International
Ibrahim Dogus, Centre for Kurdish Progress
Ass.Prof Mehmet Ali Dikerdem, Middlesex University
Dr Tunc Aybak, Middlesex University
Dr Edel Huges, Middlesex University
Prof. Dr Abdurrahman Gülşeyaz Nagasaki University
Dr Arzu Yilmaz
Dr Selim Temo, Associate professor
Dr Umut Erel, Open University
Dr Necla Acik, University of Manchester
Dr Kamal Soleimani, El Colegio de México (COLMEX), Mexico
Dr Mohammed Shareef, Independent Scholar & Political Analyst, UK
Dr Sinem Arslan, University Essex
Cristiana Rose, Middlesex University

This conference is organised by the Department of Politics and Law, Law School, Middlesex University, Kurdish Research Network, Minority Rights Group International and Centre for Kurdish Progress.

Department of Politics and Law, Middlesex University
Internationally recognised for our innovative approach to teaching, our School of Law brings together a range of diverse subjects and develops multi-skilled professionals who strive for social justice. From politics to policing, criminology to sociology, and through the lens of law and development, we explore the factors that inhibit equality of opportunity and impact the human experience. We are critical in our approach, and we believe in empowering students to be agents of change in society. The intellectual and practical skills, contemporary knowledge, work experience and global perspective we offer will leave you poised to pursue a range of rewarding careers worldwide.

Kurdish Research Network
Kurdish Research Network is formed in 2019 by academics from a variety of scientific disciplines to advance the education of the public by promoting critical knowledge production and facilitating academic networking amongst scholars working in/on Kurdistan. It aims to provide the basis and resources for academic exchange in cooperation with research institutes, universities and other education to undertake research, publish/disseminate the results of such research in Europe, Kurdistan and elsewhere.

Minority Rights Group International
Minority Rights Group International campaigns worldwide with around 130 partners in over 60 countries to ensure that disadvantaged minorities and indigenous peoples, often the poorest of the poor, can make their voices heard.

Through training and education, legal cases, publications and the media and cultural programmes we support minority and indigenous people as they strive to maintain their rights – to the land they live on, the languages they speak, to equal opportunities in education and employment, and to full participation in public life.

MRG is an international non-governmental organization (NGO) with an international governing Council that meets twice a year. We have consultative status with the United Nations Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC) and observer status with the African Commission for Human and Peoples’ Rights.

Centre for Kurdish Progress
Kurdish Progress is an independent and non-partisan organisation inaugurated June 2014
This new organisation provides expert opinions and debates, focusing on the issue of Kurdistan and Kurdish people in the UK as well as internationally.
As a policy forum, Kurdish Progress organises speaker series, panel discussions and social events, in order to progress the position of Kurdish people in the UK and to offer a space for debating Kurdistan's position in the world. The collaboration with the British Parliament, local and international think tanks and academic institutions frames our core principle of action.
Our mission is straightforward: We want to establish greater significance to the Kurdish question internationally, make society aware of the situation in the region and Diaspora, which has become a historical and intriguing debate. We want future Kurdish generations, to grow up in a society, where they do not neglect their heritage; learn the Kurdish language, and admit once and for all.
The venue of the conference

Middlesex University, Hendon Campus, The Burroughs, London (UK), NW4 4AX, Hendon Town Hall, Committee Room 1, 2 and 3
Conference Fee
Registration fee: £100
Discount fee for students (postgraduate and doctoral): £50
All delegates will be expected to make and pay for their own travel and accommodation arrangements.

REGISTRATION
You can register for the conference by filling out the form in our registration website until 15 June 2019 at https://www.onlinestore.mdx.ac.uk/conferences-and-events/faculty-of-professional-and-social-sciences/conference-law/international-kurdish-studies-conference

Contact: For more information, please contact Dr Janroj Yilmaz Keles at J.Keles@mdx.ac.uk and Dr Naif Bezwan at nbezwan@gmail.com. Alternatively at Kurdishstudies@mdx.ac.uk

Hotel
Please find all the information about the hotels near Middlesex University (attached). Middlesex University’s hotel supplier is the Holiday Inn Brent Cross. You can call the Holiday Inn Brent Cross and state that you are a guest of Middlesex University. You will pay only £94.00 including breakfast, parking and Wi-Fi. However, if you book your room online at the Holiday Inn Brent Cross, they will charge 130.95

Communication among presenters
All the presenters are encouraged to communicate via KURDISTUDIES@JISCMAIL.AC.UK before, during and after the conference. You can subscribe to the KURDISTUDIES list at https://www.jiscmail.ac.uk/cgi-bin/webadmin?SUBED1=KURDISTUDIES&A=1
8:30-9:00 - Registration/ Coffee

**Room 1 - 9:00 - 9:30 – Welcome**

Dr Janroj Yılmaz Keles, Middlesex University, Dr Naif Bezwan, University of Innsbruck, Austria, and UCL, Ass. Prof. Mehmet Dikerdem, Dr Tunc Aybak, Dr Edel Hughes (Middlesex University), Dr Necla Acik (University of Manchester), Dr Umut Erel (Open University) Conference convenors, on behalf of the conference organising committee.

H.E Karwan Jamal Tahir, Kurdistan Regional Government High Representative to the UK

Mr Osman Baydemir, former Mayor of Diyarbakir and MP of HDP, Lawyer and Human Rights Defender

Mr Ibrahim Dogus, Major of Lambeth and Director of Centre for Kurdish Progress

**Room 1 - 9:45 – 10:30 – Plenary session**

Prof Abbas Vali, Emeritus Professor of Sociology

**10:30 - 12:00 - Parallel sessions**

**Room 1 - Self-determination and Kurdish Statehood**

Panel chair: Dr Naif Bezwan

- The State We’re In: Post-Colonial Sequestration and the Kurdish Quest for Independence in Comparative Perspective
  
  *Dr Francis Owtram, University of Exeter*

- Self-Determination Claim of Kurdish Political Movement within the Context of Indigeneity
  
  *Aynur Unal, University of Leicester, UK*

- The impracticality of Self-determination for minorities under international law – a case study of the Kurds
  
  *Lare S. Ismail, Queen Mary University of London, UK*

**Room 2 - Gender, Resistance and Liberation**
Panel chair: Dr Necla Acik, Manchester University (Gender Panel Organiser)

- Gendered State Violence and Women’s Empowerment in Kurdistan: From Victims to Agents of Political Change  
  Ozlem Goner, University of New York, USA

- A struggle within a struggle: the history of the Kurdistan Women’s Liberation Movement  
  Isabel Käser, SOAS, University of London, UK

- From Zin to Zilan: The redefinition of gender and love in the PKK, and how the great love myth became a national heroine  
  Mustafa K. Topal, Roskilde Universitet, Denmark

- Kurdish nationalism and gender equality: the emergence of a ‘new man' in Rojava?  
  Kaveh Ghobadi, PhD in Kurdish Studies, University of Exeter, UK

**Room 3 - The Kurdish national movements in the Middle East**

Panel chair: Dr Tunc Aybak, Middlesex University

- The implications of the transformations in the Kurdish society on the political arena, and political forces of the Kurdish national movement  
  Prof. Michael Eppel, University of Haifa, Israel

- From Mahabad 1946 to Afrin 2018  
  Sait Keskin, University of Exeter, UK

- Rojava: a non-state or a ‘not yet' state?  
  Jamie McCollum Doctoral researcher, Queen’s University Belfast, UK

**12:00 - 13:00 - Lunch Break**

**1:00 – 2:30 – Parallel sessions**

**Room 1 – State violence and genocide**

Chair: Dr Helen Hawthorne, Middlesex University

- The victimization of the Kurds of Southern Kurdistan: A psycho-political perspective  
  Azad Qazaz, KU Leuven / Belgium

- The Cost of Belonging: Economic Impact of Genocide on Ethnic and Religious Minorities in Iraq  
  Farhad Al-Kake, Lebanese French University- Erbil, Kurdistan

**Room 2 - Intra-Kurdish migration and “borders”**

Chair: Dr Kamran Martin, Sussex University

- Re-territorialization of Kurdistan via Migration  
  Dr Arzu Yilmaz, Turkey

- Kurds among Kurds. An ethnography of a camp refugee.  
  Charlotte Watelet, EHESS / CETOBAC, France
Room 3 Challenges and Prospects of the Kurdish Regional Government in Iraq
Chair: Ass. Prof Abdurrahman Guelbeyaz, Nagasaki University

- The (de)securitization of the Kurdistan Regional Government in Iraq in the post-1991 political context.
  
  *Juan Carlos Castillo Quiñones, Autonomous National University of Mexico, Mexico*

- Struggle for Constitutional Power between Baghdad and Erbil: Federal Supreme Court Perspective on Baghdad -Erbil Disputes
  
  *Majida Ismael, University of Liverpool, UK*

- Grievance, Protest and Social Capital: Examining the Years of Deconstruction in Transition to/ from Democracy in Kurdistan Region-Iraq (2009-2018)
  
  *Hewa Haji Khedir, University of Winchester, UK*

- Post-IS challenges and their impact on brain drain in the province of Halabja
  
  *Silvia Nicola, the University of Halabja and the Felsberg Institute, Kurdistan/Germany*

Break 2:30 -2:45

2:45 – 4:15 – Parallel sessions

Room 1–Gendered and political struggle in Kurdistan
Panel chair: Dr Umut Erel, Open University

- The New Approach to Self-Determination and the Rights of Women and Minorities in the Social Contract of Rojava
  
  *Ebad Rouhi, Assistant Professor of Public International Law Head of the Bureau of International Affairs, IAU Sanandaj Branch, Kurdistan, Iran*

- Gender in the Framework of Sustainable Development Goal 4 in Kurdistan Region-Iraq
  
  *Dashty Ismil Jamil, Bashdar Sarbaz Mawlad, Muayad Salah Mohamad, Lebanese French University, Kurdistan*

- Gendered Field of the Clashes in Kurdistan
  
  *Melike Demir, Independent researcher, UK*

Room 2 - Kurdish Diaspora, the struggle for recognition and transnational political activism
Panel chair: Prof Stephen Syrett, Middlesex University (TBC)

- The Kurdish Diaspora in Canada: A Study of Political Activism and The Uses of The Kurdish Language
  
  *Esengul Tasdemir, The School of Sociological and Anthropological Studies, University of Ottawa, Canada*
- The Kurdish diaspora in France: from invisibility to refugee status since the 1980s
  Rondeau Coline, University of Angers (TEMOS CNRS FRE 2015) | University of Liège (CEDEM), France/Belgium
- Change and Continuity: Spatiotemporal dynamics of migrant ‘faith’ Alevism
  Hayal Hanoglu, University of Kent, UK
- Being Kurdish in Denmark: a constant construction
  Tiago Duarte Dias, Fluminense Federal University, Brazil

Room 3 – Kurdish Studies Meeting

Break 4:15 -4:30

4:30 – 6:00 – Parallel sessions

Room 2 - Human Right and Justice
Panel chair: Ass. Prof Mehmet Ali Dikerdem, Middlesex University

- The Turkish Presidential System: Exit from or Recipe for State Crisis?
  Naif Bezwan, University of Klagenfurt, Austria, and UCL, UK
- Three Decades of Seeking Justice for the Disappeared in Turkey
  Melinda Negrón-Gonzales, University of New Hampshire, USA
- Infringing the Sovereign Power of the Electorate: The European Court of Human Rights Awakens to Political Persecution and a Denial of Free Elections in Turkey
  Darren Dinsmore, Co-Founder and Co-Director Mesopotamia Observatory of Justice
- The Kurdish Question: The Influence of the EU Accession Process on Kurdish Rights in Turkey
  Nawroos Shibli, University of Waterloo, Canada

Room 3 - Book Launch

Prof Abbas Vali’s new book will be launched at the conference


26 June 2019
9:00 - 10:30 - Parallel sessions

Room 1 - Theoretical Approaches to the Kurdish Question
Panel chair: Dr Peter Hough, Middlesex University (TBC)
● The Kurdish Solution: A Different Approach  
  Sardar Aziz, Senior Adviser Kurdistan Parliament/Kurdistan
● Kurdish nationalism in Iraq: a critical realist approach  
  Thanos Trappelides Lancaster University, UK
● Kurdish Nationalism in Turkey: a constructivist realistic perspective in the process of building a nation.  
  Irfan Guler, University of Santiago de Compostela, Galicia, Spain
● Global Movement for (Radical) Democracy: The PKK and the New Internationalism  
  Yasin Sunca, Bielefeld University and Ghent University  
  Tobias Reinhardt, Scuola Normale Superiore – Istituto di Scienze Umane e Sociali (SNS), Italy

Room 2 – Gender and LGBT in the Homeland and Diaspora
Panel chair: Dr Lisa Overton, Middlesex University (TBC)
● Intimate Control: Identity, Difference, and Queer Sexualities in Kurdish Turkey  
  Emrah Karakuş, School of Anthropology University of Arizona, USA
● The Narrative of Lesbian Gays and Bisexual (LGB) in Iran and the Chronic Closet  
  Kameel Ahmady, UK/Iran

Break - 10:30 – 10:40

10:40 – 12:00

Room 1- The Kurds and the International Community
Panel chair: Arzu Yilmaz
● Analyzing the Place of the Kurds in USA Strategy After the Emergence of ISIS in Iraq and Syria.  
  Mohammad Taher Bidar, Shahid Beheshti University of Tehran
● The United States Foreign Policy Towards the Kurdistan Region of Iraq after the September 25, 2017 Referendum  
  Ghazi Ghereeb Zorab, Sulaimani Polytechnic University, Kurdistan

Room 2 - Political Economy and Conflict
Panel chair: Dr Melvyn Evans, Middlesex University (TBC)
● Diaspora, Identity and Entrepreneurship  
  Stephen Syrett, Janroj Keles, Middlesex University
The Impact of Political Conflict on Entrepreneurship in Kurdistan
Haval Dhia Kadhem Sorameri & Rejin Zandi, Jönköping International Business School, Sweden

An Outlook to Economic Geography of Kurdistan and Kurdish Question
Ramazan Tunç, Economic analyst, Dicle University, Turkey

Investigation of the Socio-Economic Dimensions of the Forced Migration (2015-2016) in the Sur (Diyarbakır) District Center
Dr Sedat Benek-Mazlum Örme, Dr Mazlum ÖRMEK, Harran University Social Sciences Institute, Şanlıurfa

Room 3 - Nation Building, Media, Language, Literature and Architecture
Panel chair: Hassan Ghazi, Broadcaster

- Kurdish nation-building through children textbooks
  Ofra Bengio, Moshe Dayan Center for Middle Eastern and African Studies, Tel Aviv University

- Kurdish Place-identity: Challenge between Heritage and Globalisation
  Dr. Avar Almukhtar, Brookes University Oxford, UK

- Kurdish Women in Literature: A History of Violence, Displacement and Migration
  Lolav M. Hassan Alhamid, University of Duhok and University of Kent

- Professional Role Orientations of Journalists: Kurdistan Region of Iraq as a case study
  Dr Shwan Adam Aivas, Sulaimani Polytechnic University, Kurdistan

Break: Lunch 12-1:00

1:00- 2:30 - Parallel sessions

Room 1 - Living under Permanent Risk: Exclusion, Discrimination and Genocide of Ezidi Community
Panel chair: Dr Leyla Ferman, Germany

- Non-state actors and genocide: The case of Yazidis
  Ayse Kurul, Queen Mary University of London, UK

- The post-genocide situation of Yezidi women
  Golala Kamangar, University of Oslo, Norway

- The perspective on the Reconstructing the Cultural, language and Heritage in post-war in the case of Yazidi community
  Sardar Faqe Mohammed Ghaidan, Director Office of the Vice President Kurdistan Region, Kurdistan

- Yazidi community, Past, Now and Future (documentary film)
  Abdulsamad Qadir Hussien Ahmed, University of Sulaimani, Kurdistan
Room 2 - The Frontiers of the Ruling States over Kurdistan: The Kurdish Trade and transborder Relations

Panel chair: Dr Sinem Aslan and Dr Cemal Ozkahraman (session organizers)

- Transborder Ethnic Kin and the Dynamics of Peace Processes: Insights from the Kurdish Conflict
  *Sinem Arslan, University of Essex, UK*

- Cross-border’ trade: understanding the socio-economical and political context of Kurds in Syria
  *Cemal Ozkahraman, University of Cambridge, UK*

- The path to Kurdish Statehood: the impact of the Kurdish Regional Government on the possibility of a future Kurdish State.
  *Bamo Nouri, City University London, UK*

- The impact of international politics on the Kurdish question in Iraq and Syria
  *Ibraheem Ahmad Salh, Political Consultant of Kurdistan Region’s Vice President, Kurdistan*

Room 3

Hegemony, Assimilation, Linguistic Policy and Education

Panel chair: Prof Ofra Bengio, Tel Aviv University

- Linguistic Policy, Hegemony, Assimilation and Education
  *Deborah Duman, University of Bath*

- Ethnic Fractionalization, Conflict and Educational Development in Turkey
  *Cem Oyvat, University of Greenwich, UK*
  *Hasan Tekgüç, Kadir Has University, Turkey*

- Kurdish language and its place in Kurdish and Turkish political discourses
  *Ibrahim Seydo Aydogan, Institut National des Langues et Civilisations Orientales (Inalco), Paris*
  *Institut National des Langues et Civilisations Orientales (Inalco), France*

- Between State and Community: Memurluk, the ‘Middle Class’, and Kurdish Civil Society in North Kurdistan
  *Patrick C. Lewis, University of Chicago, USA*

2:30-2:40 Break

2:40 – 16:00 – Parallel sessions

Room 1 - Securitization and Identity politics in Iran

Panel chair: Muhammed Shareef, Independent Scholar & Political Analyst, UK

- Can Non–Persians Speak? The Sovereign’s Narration of “Iranian Identity”
  *Kamal Soleimani*

- Securitization of Environmental Activism in Iranian Kurdistan
  *Allan Hassaniyan, University of Exeter*
- Widening Students’ Participation in Learning in Higher Education: A Case Study of Civil Engineering BSc Programme in an Iranian University in Kurdistan  
  *Kourosh Kouchakpour, University of Sunderland*

- The Kurds and Iranian Islamic Revolution (Recasting the 1979 Revolution(s) of Iran from a Kurdish Perspective)  
  *Hemn Seyedi, University of St Andrews, UK*

**Room 2-Territorial Politics, Identity and Construction of Kurdishness**

Panel chair: Dr Seevan Saeed, Shaanxi Normal University, China

- Territorial Identity, the Essence of the Kurdish Question in Iraq  
  *Sherko Kirmanj, University of Sharjah, UAE*

- The Question of Kurdishness: Comprehension of Political Identity Construction  
  *Seevan Saeed, Shaanxi Normal University, China*

- The Case Of Zaza Identity Construction Process In Turkey  
  *Mithat Ishakoglu, University of Exeter*

**Room 3-Kurdish cultural production and Resistance**

Panel chair: Dr Neelam Raina, Middlesex University, UK (TBC)

- Art and postcolonial perspective in Kurdish space: the political aesthetic of micro-culture  
  *Engin Sustam, University Paris 8/CETOBAC, EHESS, France*

- Kurdish Cinema: the unintended consequences of Kurdish Films from North and East Kurdistan  
  *Mojgan Etemad, Royal Holloway, University of London, UK*

- The power of An Enemy of the people in the Kurdish Society & Theatre a cross history.  
  *Rezan Saleh, University of Oslo - Norway*

- The cultural heritage of Kurdistan  
  *Neelam Raina and Janroj Yilmaz Keles, Middlesex University, UK*

**Room 3- Dynamics of Peace and Conflict and Reconciliation**

Panel chair: Dr Francis Owtram, University of Exeter

- Re-channelling the Conflict: A Study on Perceptions and Attitudes about Peace and Justice among Conflict-affected Communities in Ninawa-Iraq  
  *Muslih Irwani, Public Policy Institute (PPI) Founding Director Public Policy Institute (PPI), Kurdistan*

- Levels of Population Growth between Kurds and Arabs in Kirkuk City  
  *Mohammed Hussein Shwan, Salahadin University –Kurdistan*

- Democracy in the Middle East: Is it working? What model should be implemented?  
  *Parwez Zabihi, Kurdistan*

Break 4:00 -4:10
Room 1 Turkey’s Kurdish Question and Kurdish political movement in Turkey
Panel chair: Omer Tekdemir, Leicester University, UK
- From “there is no conflict” to “there is no resolution” Unpacking the logics of Kurdish Conflict in Turkey
  *Recep Onursal, University of Kent, UK*
- The Rise and Fall of the AKP government’s policy of transforming the Turkish-Kurdish conflict
  *Ufuk Sahin, Freie Universitaet Berlin, Germany*
- The dialectical relation between different concepts of violence exercised by the state and the PKK in Turkey
  *Neslihan Yaklav, EHESS and CNRS, France*

Room 2- The State of the Kurdish studies and emerging Kurdish Diaspora in Japan
Panel chair: Ass. Prof Anastasia Christou, Middlesex University (TBC)
- Representation of Kurdish Asylum Seekers in Japanese Media
  *Vakkas Colak, Tokyo University of Foreign Studies, Japan*
- Identity Formation and Political Mobilization among Kurdish Diaspora in Japan
  *Sohrab Ahmadian, University of Tsukuba, Japan*
- Japan-KRG relations: Challenges, and Outlooks in the Changing World
  *Mahmoud Sheikh Hussein, Tokyo University of Foreign Studies, Japan*
- Kurdish Activism Among the Kurmanji Speaking Kurds in Iran: The Case Study of Margavar Rural District in the Border of Iran, Iraq, and Turkey
  *Mostafa Khalili, Japan Society for the Promotion of Science and Graduate School of Global Studies, Doshisha University, Kyoto, Japan*

Room 3 - History, Art, Conflict and Reconciliation: The case of the Jazire and Kirkuk
Panel chair: Dr Muslih Irwani, Public Policy Institute
- Kirkuk’s Tribal Groups and The Ottoman Policy
  *Dr Rasoul Muhammed Rasoul, Soran University, Kurdistan*
- Kirkuk from the Conflict zone to thriving one
  *Sangar Rasul, Catholic University - Erbil /STANDARD Media and Research Institute, Kurdistan*
- The Question of Kirkuk and the Role of External Actors
  *Dr Nahwi Saeed, Charmu University, Kurdistan*

Conference Concluding remark
Seminar at the British Parliament @7:00pm

The Kurdish Question in the Post Daesh (ISIS) Middle East

Organised by Centre for Kurdish Progress and Kurdish Research Network

Speakers
- Prof Abbas Vali
- Dr Arzu Yilmaz (TBC)
- Ass. Prof Naif Bezwan

Chair: Dr Janroj Yilmaz Keles