

## **Committee: Advanced Security Council**

**Committee Topic:** Kurdish Conflict

### **Background of Committee:**

The United Nations Security Council is one of the six primary organs of the United Nations and is its most effective body. Charged by the Charter with the task of maintaining international peace and security, its powers include the authorization of peacekeeping missions, sanctions, and military action through Security Council resolutions. It is the only UN organ with the authority to issue binding resolutions to member states. It has 15 members—with ten rotating members elected on a region basis on two year terms and five permanent members: Russia, the United Kingdom, France, China, and the United States. The permanent members have the power to veto any Security Council resolution.

As the Security Council, the primary responsibility pertains to world issues in maintaining international peace and security. With the proposed topic, we have stepped outside of the confines of a common theme to open debate on wider, long withstanding problems that the Security Council has responsibility for. Each nation will be permitted to make an opening statement (General Debate) followed by a period of Substantive Debate. There is no formal speaking list and instead it will be round robin style speaking. Each Council member may speak for up to five minutes, each in turn until all 15 members have been given an opportunity. A delegate may pass once per round-robin. Unmoderated caucuses will take place periodically. There may be Moderated Caucuses as well, depending on the flow of the committee and time. In regards to policy, Security Council nations are responsible for representing their entire region, not just their specific country.

### **Goals of the Committee:**

The goal of the Security Council is to construct a comprehensive solution that touches upon most, if not all aspects of the Kurdish conflict, while maintaining a sense of specificity and clarity. As a part of the United Nations, we seek peace above all else - in order to do so, we must understand the root causes that contributed to the situation from both factions. While long term solutions are typical of committee, we will be expecting delegates to understand and find comprehensive, short term solutions to diffuse the conflict. In doing so, we hope to better understand the depth and nature of the conflict between the Kurdish people and surrounding nations, and move forward into the future with greater insight.

### **Background of the Topic:**

The Kurdish people make up one of the largest minority groups in the world and the fourth largest group in the Middle East that do not have their own state. Since the early 1900s, the Kurdish people have been in support of and working towards the establishment of their own

state. The Kurdish people have a large and varied presence in the Middle East with a heavy concentration of Kurds living in Turkey followed by Iraq, Syria, and a small presence in Armenia. The Kurdish conflict remains divided along the lines of countries with sizeable Kurdish populations with different factions attempting to establish forms of autonomy or self-governance.

Of the countries with sizeable Kurdish populations, nearly one-fourth of the general populous are Kurds. In Iraq and Syria ten to fifteen percent of the populous are Kurdish. The presence of large Kurdish enclaves has led to internal conflicts between Kurds and their reigning governments. Turkey has seen conflict between its government and its Kurds for decades with the conflict escalating after the establishment of the Kurdistan Workers Party of PKK in 1978 that has continued to follow conflict with the government and the agenda of a sovereign state for Kurds within Turkey. This conflict has led to multiple clashes between Turkish forces and the PKK that have ended in civilian casualties and perpetuated the trends of dangerous guerilla warfare. Iraqi Kurds have also seen similar conflicts in comparison to those faced by the Turkish Kurds. In the mid 1900s, Iraqi Kurds saw infighting and civil war between supporters of the Democratic Party of Kurdistan or the KDP and the Patriotic Union of Kurdistan or the PUK. Conflict violence did see as decrease in ensuing years especially immediately after 1991 with the creation of the Kurdistan Regional government to which both parties answer. In more recent events, the Iraqi Kurdish forces, the Peshmerga and the Syrian Kurdish fighters have helped win considerable advantage against the islamic state and perporteurs of terrorist influence in the Middle East. The Kurds of Turkey have attempted regional governance and pleas for greater autonomy without very much response. In Iraq, the Kurds have just recently held a referendum to define the wishes of the people for autonomy or a revisitation of the status quo. The extent of the conflict and divisions preventing resolution from either side have led to ethnic tensions between groups of Kurds in different countries as well as harms to civilians caught in the crossfire between militias and governments. Any effective solution to this problem will need to focus on smoothing the political, economic, and social situations of Kurdish communities in order to effectively gauge the effect and success of any implemented measures governing the Kurdish people or working towards granting them autonomy.

### **UN Involvement:**

Since the Kurdish Regional Government (KRG) is a non de jure entity, the UN and other NGOs did not work with the KRG until recently. The United Nations started the Sub-Commission on Prevention of Discrimination and Protection of Minorities, in 1947, to make sure that all people have protected rights. It was later renamed in 1999. The objective of the Sub-Commission was to undertake studies and makes recommendations to the Commission concerning the prevention of discrimination against racial, religious and linguistic minorities. This is applicable to the Kurdish people because they are a minority group being discriminated by countries such as Iraq. The UN Security Council passed Resolution 688 on Iraq in 1991. Resolution 688 condemned Iraq for the repression of its civilian population. The resolution

specifically mentioned the Kurdish people. The resolution stated that this was a threat to “international peace and security.”

International non-governmental organizations have also worked with local Kurdish non-governmental organizations. To name a few there is, the Kurdish Reconstruction Organization (KRO), the Kurdish Relief Association (KRA), and the Kurdish Shelter and Reconstruction Organization (KSRO). Operation Comfort I and II was initiated after Resolution 688 was passed, and this operation established the “No Fly Zones.” This was established in Baghdad, in 1991. Around this time, many international and local NGOs provided services in the new quasi-independent KRG. The UN and various NGOs have tried to help the Kurdish people by passing resolutions, establishing the “No Fly Zones”, and providing help where needed.

### **Bloc Positions:**

#### **African Bloc:**

In general, the African countries’ economic and political policies lie parallel to those of the Middle Eastern regions. The Kurdish people’s fight for autonomy has been placed as a priority on the agenda of countries such as South Africa, even pushing for the ratification of the ANC resolution which further backed up the Kurdish people’s struggle to receive their rights and independence.

#### **Asia-Pacific Bloc:**

Many Asian countries, but China, specifically, support their separatism movement for economic motivations. Before 2009, they did not support this movement because it was not popular at the time. But now they say that it is in their best interest for Kurdistan to become an independent nation. This is because they have a large economic share there in oil wells and other such resources and want to benefit from that.

#### **Middle-Eastern Bloc:**

The Kurds makeup quite a bit of the population in Turkey. However, tensions between Kurds and the Turkish in Turkey are very hostile and tense. There have been many outbreaks of violence between the Turkish government and Kurdish separatist groups. An Iraqi Kurdistan has a much better outlook than the Turkish one. The government is currently in negotiations with the Kurdish, after a majority citizens voted on succession.

#### **Latin American and Caribbean Bloc:**

This bloc is definitely not too concerned or involved with the issue at hand, because they do not have any financial motivations. However, they are still relatively supportive of the Kurdish becoming an independent nation-state. Several Latin American countries declared freedom from

their previous colonizers so these countries can definitely relate to the experience that the Kurdish people are having.

### **Western European Bloc:**

The Western European countries have always been in strong support of promoting civil rights and have sided with the Kurdish people in the Kurdish Conflict. The European seeks for the reform of the anti-terror legislation, believing that it is the key solution to the ongoing conflict. Though the European bloc has not been very public about their position on the issue, they have already taken some measures towards assisting the Kurdish.

### **Questions to Consider:**

1. What are possible actions the international community may take to aid the Kurdish people in their wish to being granted autonomy?
2. Why haven't neighboring countries, such as Turkey, not taken more actions to assist the Iraqi-Kurds?
3. What is the best way to resolve this long-lasting conflict between the Kurdish people and their reigning governments?
4. What economic aspect of this conflict needs to be addressed in order to bring peace to this situation?
5. How effective have the United Nations' actions been in helping the Kurdish people? If it hasn't been very effective, what further steps can they take to help resolve this ongoing conflict?

### **Works Cited**

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