

S. Res. 8 Human Rights in Kurdish-Populated Territories

The National Convention of the United Nations Association of the United States of America,

Whereas the Kurdish people joined to reaffirm respect for the principle of equal rights and self-determination of peoples as outlined by the first article of the Charter of the United Nations;

Recalling that despite President Woodrow Wilson's call for "an absolutely unmolested opportunity of autonomous development" for "nationalities which are now under Turkish rule," the one major nationality group that was marginalized in the post-war division of Ottoman lands was the Kurds, who found themselves as minorities in the present states of Turkey, Iran, Iraq, and Syria but without the autonomy Wilson had urged;

Recognizing that after decades of denial of Kurds' political and cultural rights in these countries, Kurds gained effective autonomy in Iraq after the 1991 Kuwait war and are now free to determine their political future peacefully and democratically in the Kurdistan region of federal Iraq;

Noting that in Turkey, where the majority's adamant denial of minority language and identity had triggered a violent independence movement in past decades, leaders have signaled courageous and welcome change in that country's position, pointing the way to unhindered Kurdish political participation, peacefully and democratically;

Hopeful that the governments of Iran and Syria will likewise initiate a similar democratization process inclusive of their Kurdish populations, and stop violation of human rights such as the abuses against Kurds by the Iranian government that were documented by an Amnesty International report as recently as 2008;

Concerned about the status of other ethnic minorities in these countries, including the reports of adverse treatment of Turkmens, Assyrian and Chaldean Christians, and Nestorians in the Kurdish regions of Iraq, Iran, Turkey, and Syria; and

Applauding the efforts of the United Nations mission in Iraq to bring peaceful resolution to clashing political claims to disputed, ethnically mixed areas of Diyala, Kirkuk, Saladin and Nineveh in Iraq, through dialogue, negotiation, resettlement of internally-displaced people, census-taking, elections, and referendums;

Therefore,

Calls on the United States to urgently press the United Nations Human Rights Council to monitor governments' respect for human rights in the Kurdish-populated areas of Iran, Iraq, Syria, and Turkey; and

Calls on the United Nations Association of the United States of America to direct copies of this resolution to the U.S. Department of State, the Secretary General of the United Nations, the U.N. High Commissioner for Human Rights, and the president of the U.N. Human Rights Council.