

## An open letter to Mr. Clive Stafford Smith the human rights lawyer

Tuesday, September 05, 2006

KurdishMedia.com - By Ata Mala Karim

[www.klawrojna.com](http://www.klawrojna.com) 06 Sep. 06

I saw your name in the Independent's the good list 2006 of 'fifty men and women who make our world a better place'. You deserve it as a human rights activist for many years part from your 50 pages defence of Saddam Hussein; which I believe is either a mistake or something else. It is your responsibility to explain which one is right.

As a Kurd and as a victim of torture, I had tried to contact you when I was in Saddam Hussein's jail in Kirkuk, which is known as the 'Enterprise of Special Investigations' together with many other prisoners who were convicted of the following serious crimes: asking for freedom of press, rights of the Kurdish children to be educated in their own mother tongue, reading Marxist literature, writing poems, not being ready to go to war, being freedom fighters or helping the freedom fighters, not joining the Arab Bath Socialist Party and etc...

At the 'Enterprise of Special Investigations' we had no right to talk even to the guards. We were out twice a day for toilet which should only take few seconds because of the great number of us and as a means of torture. At other times we were provided with buckets in our rooms. We had to look at the ground only and it was the most serious offence to look at the guard. Every day in the morning they read some names loudly and those people were out. After blindfolding them they had asked them few questions and when they did not like their answers they started using the following methods of torture:

1. Beating the subject by water pipes by two strongly built men each from one side.
2. Using electrical shocks on the tongue, the anus, and on the genitals.
3. Putting the subject's genitals in a knot and lifting it until he was unconscious.
4. Beating the subject's sole of feet by water pipes or electricity cables by two men from both sides known as "falaqa"
5. A subject was blind folded in a room and they tortured somebody else till he hear his sufferings and bring his morale down.
6. Hanging the subject by a rope from behind and beating him from both sides regularly.
7. Burning the subject's body by cigarettes.
8. Threats of rape and attempt to rape.

All these kinds of torture were practiced while the subject was naked as he was born.

This list is not exclusive as there were many other ways of torture practiced against other prisoners. You may ask the 'Medical Foundation caring for Victims of Torture' if you need further information about me and my colleagues. Unfortunately we could not contact you at the time and when you heard about Iraq you did believe that only Saddam and a handful of his men need human rights not others.

Dear Sir,

In 1988 Saddam ordered his men to bombard Halabja by chemical weapons and killed more than 5000 men, women and children. People from Halabja had tried to contact you at time but it was in vain. Again when you prepared your 50 pages document to defend Saddam you did not know about Halabja or you thought it was merely propaganda.

Do you know anything about Anfal? Do you believe that the man you prepared 50 pages to defend him had ordered his men in 1988 to capture 182,000 men, women and children to bury them alive in the deserts of Arabia. All but few most attractive girls who sold them in an open market to other brother Muslim Arab countries to employ them in their nightclubs and brothels.

Did you hear of the 8000 Barzani men, women and children who buried alive in the desert just because they were from Barzan a small town in Kurdistan? Do you know who Ali Hassan Al-Majeed is? Do you know why he is known as Chemical Ali!?

I feel sick when I see the best human rights defenders are ready to defend Saddam and try to minimize and simplify his crimes of genocide and crimes against humanity. When first time I heard about human rights in my small village it sounded like a miracle. We could not contact anyone like you to defend us. We could not watch TV to see countries which we did believe human rights was their concern. We had only a radio to listen to it secretly. We were dreaming we could talk to the radio, to tell them we are Kurds; we have not the minimum rights of human beings. We are tortured, killed and they practice genocide against us. One day our dreams come true. We have satellite dishes and internet in our hands, but unfortunately by this time the human rights see Saddam as a victim.

Saddam and his followers are criminals of war, criminals against humanity and those who practiced genocide and race cleansing against the Kurdish people years before the American war. Anybody who tries to attract the emotions of the world against America's policy may make a deadly mistake if he uses Saddam as an example.

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## Have your say: Should Kurdish genocide become an Iraqi and UN resolution?

Monday, August 21, 2006

KurdishMedia.com

Saddam Hussein and six members of his close circle have gone on trial for crimes of Anfal, which is the Iraqi government's codename for the genocide of the Kurdish people.

During 1987, 180,000 people, mostly members of the same family, extended family, clan or tribe were taken away from their places of residence to be buried in mass graves in the deserts of Iraq. Sometimes the entire population of a town or a village or a province was taken away in one go. Saddam's plan, which left a blueprint for the Turkish regime, was to reduce Kurdistan into a handful of big cities and then eliminate these too. He destroyed villages but did not go as far as the cities.



[Have Your Say Now](#)

Saddam Hussein's regime was ousted by the US-led coalition, allegedly aiming to re-build a just Iraq. However, it is questionable whether a justice has been done to the victims of Anfal.

The Iraqi Constitution does not recognise Anfal as the genocide of Kurdish people. This Constitution is approved by the Kurdish people, following a heavy campaign by the Kurdish leadership via their media outlets. Why do you think the Kurdish leadership have adopted a constitution that does not recognise Anfal as the Kurdish genocide? Do you think this stemming from the inexperience of the Kurdish leadership or due to their lack of understanding of the importance of the Kurdish genocide?

A number of individuals that conducted Anfal are now occupying high-ranking positions in the Iraqi government and in the Kurdistan's administration. For example, Wefiq al-Samarrayy whose hands were deep in Kurdish blood during Anfal and who was one of the architects of Kurdish genocide is at present a senior adviser to the Iraqi President Jalal Talabani.

The Iraqi government have not recognised Anfal as the Kurdish genocide. What is the reason for this? Is it because they think that admitting the genocide would prompt Kurds to exercise their right of self-determination?

Only a handful of criminals have gone on trial. Do Iraqi authorities try to lead us to believe that only a few people close to Saddam Hussein were responsible for years of suffering of Kurds and Iraqis?

What do you expect to be revealed during this trial? Should people know what

happened to their beloved ones? Should all those involved in one way or another give witness' statements in this trial? Should the victims' family members give witness' statements? Should few surviving Anfales give witness' statements in the trial? Do you think without these we would never learn what happen to the victims? What lessons should be learnt from this trial?

A number of western and regional regimes assisted Saddam during Anfal genocide. Do you think these countries should appear in court too?

The UN and the EU Parliaments have not recognised Anfal as Kurdish genocide either. Should they do so? If yes - what should be done to achieve this?

What do you think?

### **Have your say now!**

Please write your comments as brief as possible with good and simple English. Please give your full name, position and the place of residence.

We consider publishing your comments, if suitable, in KurdishMedia.com. You agree on that we may modify your comments for typographical errors and may only publish a section of it. You may find it useful to read the previous comments, if any, in order to not repeat what has been said already.

You may read the KurdishMedia.com Code of Conduct before responding. Please click on the link: [Code of Conduct](#)

### **Your replies:**

\* \* \*

Look at the history of the Jewish people and take a lesson from them, how they demanded their rights and made their sufferings well known and globally recognized. When I read the Old Testament, I understood how they value not only their men, women and children but their belongings including their cattle, dishes, plates and spoons; when they returned from exile in Babylon. After the Holocaust by the Nazi regime in Germany, they did not try only their subjects but also how many people were engaged and had golden rings, how many women had jewelries and so on. It is not important if they hang Saddam or they torn him to pieces as some of the victims suggest. The important thing is to make the issue globally recognized as a Kurdish Holocaust and genocide at the last quarter of the 20th century.

If the court hearings were in Hague it could be more recognized as a big trial for genocide criminals and war criminals who murdered thousands, raped thousands and killed thousands of children, not as an interior trial which is only mentioned in the news very briefly and as a minor trial. All criminals who have a hand in that atrocity should face justice regardless of their nationality, ethnicity or present political position otherwise it will not deserve the name of justice.

Unfortunately Saddam's trial does not attract the support it deserves and expected by the Kurdish and Iraqi people due to the current tense situation in Iraq. There are many people in the Islamic countries and in exile in the west who believe that Saddam was right because the current situation is wrong. It is the

responsibility of this court to show the world that Saddam is not a prophet but a mass murderer and he and his men should face justice in the same way as the Nazi criminals of war.

Ata Mala Karim - UK

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### **It is time for Kurdish women to tell their stories ...** Ata Mala Karim

[www.klawrojna.com](http://www.klawrojna.com) 29 June 2006 [KurdishMedia.com](http://KurdishMedia.com) [www.kurdmedia.com](http://www.kurdmedia.com)

Wednesday, July 12, 2006

It is not far behind for history when English women have started to tell their own stories about domestic violence and abuse in the 1970's. In the 1970's with the growing of feminism in the UK the English women were invited to tell their own stories. What was very interesting in those stories was the fact that when they were talking about their hard lives in the present, they took flashbacks to their miserable lives in the childhood.

Muncie & McLaughlin (2001) argue that although domestic violence is recognized long before child abuse, however when women told their stories about domestic violence they revealed that they have experienced sexual and physical abuse as children and domestic violence as adults. So, the feminist activists in the 1970's England did not only bring domestic violence to light but child abuse as well; which was a hidden crime behind closed doors.

Family is traditionally known as a place of privacy and safety in contrast to the dangerous outside world. People usually feel safe when they are at home or even close to home, however family can be a dangerous place and a site of crime. Crime such as child abuse; physically, sexually, emotionally and mentally are mostly practiced at home, although this is not specific as child abuse may happen at care, and other places such as schools, churches, mosques and in the hands of the criminals justice officials. Domestic violence does not need any further explanation, as it is a specific crime for home and family, both traditional and contemporary friendship relationships.

Hale et al. (2005) mention some reasons for domestic violence such as low socio-economic status, dysfunctional families, pathological and medical reasons, patriarchy, the marginal role of women at home, alcoholism and drug addiction, weak community sanctions and male culture- machismo. If we look at the Kurdish society we can easily recognize many of these groundings for domestic violence, as well as some other conditions not mentioned or known by the authors.

Honour killing is part of Kurdish tradition both at home and in the Diaspora. Many articles are written regarding honour killing and many researches have been carried on in that field. Honour killing is a brutal crime, a worse kind of crimes and of murder as well. It is one of the most pre-planned and deliberately executed murder crimes. However domestic violence is not only murder and so called honour killing, it may have many forms from rape within marriage, physical abuse, mental abuse and emotional abuse.

Kurdish family, same as other cultures, is known as a safe castle against the dangerous outside world. However there are many crimes which happen behind closed doors and within that safe castle, without any interference from the criminal justice agencies. Muncie, McLaughlin (2001) argue that if a man hit another man in the street it is well recognized as assault and crime, however if a man hits his wife or children it is known as a private matter; dealing with a trouble child, taming a bad wife, discipline, stress and etc... It can be argued that even honour killing is widely

accepted in the eastern communities as a right of a man to take care of the so called honour of his family or relatives by killing a woman who has sex with a man outside of marriage. In this situation instead of blaming and criticism he may get a lot of support from the community. It is worth mentioning that there is evidence of some progress in this area; however it is still in its primitive stage.

Even in the developed industrialized countries domestic violence is widely practiced, however not all of it is reported to the police for many reasons, such as shame, to keep the family together, economical reasons, not wanting to hurt the husband, believing it is normal and it is her fault, so blaming herself, not seen and even when seen not considered as a crime. [Muncie and McLaughlin (2001)] In the Kurdish society, same as all the other oriental societies, marriage is not always a private relationship between two adults, but there are so many traditional and tribal ties which put it in a tight net that it is difficult to flee away from it. The relationship is considered as a relationship between the wider families of cousins, far cousins, uncles, aunts and all the other relatives. In this context any criticism of the husband is an insult against the man's wider family which may bring bigger problems for the woman's wider family. In this case many Kurdish women keep their problems for themselves and suffer in silence.

I have not a full investigation or research of the way the criminal justice agencies, the police and the courts deal with domestic violence in Kurdistan right now. From my personal experience as an adult male member of that society I have a lifelong wealth of information about domestic violence in the Kurdish society.

Since the uprising of 1991 a feminist movement in Kurdistan grew and it can be argued that they have contributed to the awareness of women and men as well in that society of the dangers of fatal abuses such as honour killings, girl circumcision, forced marriage, under age marriage and domestic violence. However, unfortunately these women organizations are part of the political scenario and it is apparent that each political party has its own women organization, such as Zhinan from the PUK (Patriotic Union of Kurdistan) and Afratan from KDP (Kurdistan Democratic Party). Ironically both Zhinan and Afratan mean women in Kurdish language and they choose two synonyms to make them recognized as two different organizations. In some regions of Kurdistan they use zhin (singular of Zhinan) for married women and Afrat (singular of Afratan) for female adults in the society, same as woman in English. The other political parties have formed their own women organizations and it is interesting to know that the Workers Communist Party called their organization the Neutral Women's Organization, but it is very difficult to find a real Neutral organization in Kurdistan!

Kurdistan now has a unified regional government, they are planning for unification of all the government institutions, they have a president, prime-minister and a parliament; so it can be argued that it is time for Kurdish women to form their own independent professional women society far from the political parties and the political conflicts. They can concentrate on women rights and lobby for reforms in the Kurdish parliament for the benefits of women, regardless of their political or ideological belongings.

If Kurdish women have a chance to tell their own stories in their own words, we will realize how they are oppressed and how much they suffer. Without research and data, without campaigns and lobbies, without a voice to represent them, only a small minority may know about domestic violence, or more specifically, few people recognize it as a crime and even anti-social behaviour and deviance.

It is obvious that domestic violence and child abuse is not specified to the eastern or the third world countries, it is present almost every where, but by different degrees. A research in the UK in 1999 has revealed that:

- One in four women experience domestic violence.
- Every week two women are killed by their current or former partners.
- Everyday thousands of children witness cruelty and violence behind closed doors.
- One fourth of all violent crime is domestic violence.

[Muncie, & McLaughlin, 2001]

It can be argued that domestic violence and child abuse in the Kurdish society needs scientific and filed research. Children and the younger generation need better education and training in order to know their rights and the rights of others. Women have to get a chance to express themselves and have a voice to be heard outside the political circle of the political parties. Without a good progress in the fields of women and children rights any argument about human rights in Kurdistan is just waste of time and paper and nothing else.

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Different Kurdish websites and e-Journals online.

## **The position of the Kurds in the Sunni and Shiite conflict**

**Sunday, March 12, 2006 KurdishMedia.com - By Atai Mala Karim**

Violence and especially interior wars are highly destructive. They affect the lives of hundreds of children, disabled, women and elderly who have no any physical contribution to those bloodied conflicts. We, as humans of the 21st century, have to stand against any bloodshed anywhere and anytime. However, the current situation in Iraq as fighting between Shiites and Sunnis is just about to become, or it is, a nationwide civil war. This situation may arise some questions for the Kurdish people. The first question is that: If the Sunnis and the Shiites continue to fight each others in a continuous civil war, what the Kurds have to do? Should Kurds exercise their right to self-determination, i.e. independence, join the conflict and fight one side against another or remain neutral, and the latter is the most likely scenario. The second question is that: if Sunni and Shiite communities have reached an agreement, how the Kurd can be reassured that they are not the scapegoat; as we have seen it many times during the contemporary history of Iraq. It is apparent that both sides of the conflict

have their own expectations and their own views of the Kurdish issue. The Sunnis have ruled Iraq for over 80 years and the results were genocide in the shape of Anfal and the chemical bombardment of Halabja. The Shiites have been oppressed, so they need the attention of the Kurdish people. The Kurds have offered them any kinds of help and assistance. However, when Saddam's government collapsed the Shiites started perceive Kurdish people as their enemy; this is clear from the acts of their Prime Minister, Jaffari. Kurds have been suffering in so called Iraq. Hopefully the bloodshed between Sunni and Shiite communities will not continue and they decide to live in peace. However Kurds do not want to be the scapegoat for their peace agreement. At the same time if Sunni and Shiite communities continue to fight, the Kurds have the right to declare their right to self determination.

### **Have your say: Shiia militants occupy Kirkuk whilst Turkish-Iranian troops coming from other sides of Kurdistan'**

Wednesday, April 26, 2006

[KurdishMedia.com](http://KurdishMedia.com)

London (KurdishMedia.com) 26 April 2006: While the Turkish and Iranian troops are massing on the Southern Kurdistan's borders and threatening to destabilise the Kurdish self-ruling region, a large number of Shi'i militants belonging to Mahdi Army of Muqtada al-Sadr and the Badr Brigade of SCIRI have moved to the Kurdish city of Kirkuk. Politicians aligned with both of these groups are major components of the Shi'i bloc that will again dominate the central government of Iraq.



The Turkish and Iranian regimes justify their recent military actions as part of an effort to pursue the PKK and PJAK. Meanwhile, the Shi'i militants in Kirkuk seemingly have no pretext for their presence in the province, though they appear to be increasing pressure on the de facto state in Southern Kurdistan.

On what may appear to be an isolated incident, Iraq's former Prime Minister, Dr. Ibrahim al-Ja'fari, a member of the Shi'i Islamist Da'wa Party, visited Turkey last February without backing or the knowledge of the Iraqi presidential council or the national assembly. Dr. Ja'fari met with the Turkish officials, including the Turkish Foreign Minister. He was not accompanied by Iraq's Foreign Minister, Hoshiyar Zebari, who is a Kurd and a high ranking member of the Kurdistan Democratic Party led by Kurdistan President Mas'ud Barzani. Furthermore, just before his visit, he brought Muqtada al-Sadr and his followers, a militantly anti-American group, into the United Iraqi Alliance, the dominant Shi'i list.

It must be in every observer's mind whether all of these apparently isolated incidents can be linked meaningfully, what was planned first, and what will

happen in the near and more distant future.

The US, with well over 100,000 soldiers in Iraq, continues to exert pressure on Iraq's political process but has remained silent on these pressures on the Kurdish people of Iraq. What is the US role in this, and what will it be as this situation unfolds?

What do you think? Have your say.

### **Your Replies:**

The simple question is: who is responsible for the national security of Kurdistan? Whoever can answer this question, he may tell us what we should do. In Kurdistan there is no independent authority from the political parties, and it is obvious that everywhere on this globe the political parties are working for their private political ends. However, what makes the difference is that there should be a national security body independent from the political parties and their immediate interests to work for the national security of the country; regardless of which party is on power or which one is disappointed. Unless the Kurdish people form that body for protecting their national security we have not to expect a better situation. Ironically until now in Kurdistan if somebody tries to be recruited as a policeman he has to be from one of the ruling parties! The same is true for cleaners, nurses and etc... That may give a better explanation why so many individuals, especially the most educated and professionals are outside the authority and the government inside and outside Kurdistan.

Ata Mala Karim - UK

## **Have your say: The establishment of the Iraqi government**

**Monday, April 24, 2006**

**KurdishMedia.com**

London (KurdishMedia.com) 24 April 2006: The key positions have been agreed upon and the Iraqi government is about to be established.



Jalal Talabani & Jawad al-Maliki

- Iraq is in chaos now and observers describe the situation as "sectarian killing" or as "civil war". Does this government help to establish peace and security in Iraq?

- The current government is stuck in the Green Zone; it has been described as "The Iraqi Republic of the Green Zone". Do you think in the next four years, the government can come out of the Green Zone?

- The previous government totally ignored the de-Arabisation issue. Does this government take effective steps?

- The current Prime Minister is from the al-Dawa Party, the party of the previous Prime Minister. Does he ignore the Kurdish demands?

- The Kurdish bloc had 77 seats in the previous Iraqi Assembly and they were not effective at all. They complained that Ibrahim al-Jaafari eliminated them from decision-making. In this Assembly, they only have 53. Do you think that the Kurdish bloc would be effective to pursue Kurdish cause in the next term of the Assembly?

### **Have your say!**

Please write your comments as brief as possible with good and simple English. Please give your full name, position and the place of residence.

We consider publishing your comments, if suitable, in KurdishMedia.com. You agree on that we may modify your comments for typographical errors and may only publish a section of it. You may find it useful to read the previous comments, if any, in order to not repeat what has been said already.

### **Your replies:**

Kurdish people have to benefit from the current situation for their ends, otherwise one day they may be left with empty hands. Kurdistan is now recognized as the safest place in Iraq; however most of the Arabs do not even say Kurdistan but still they use north of Iraq. Kurdistan has to be recognized as a federal region within Iraq and this status should be legalized and formally announced by the new government. Kurdish people's right for self-determination should be at the heart of the discussions not to be marginalized in favour of subjective differences of the government ministers or prime ministers.

Ata Mala Karim, Criminology Student – UK

## **Have your say: Reversing the Arabisation of Kurdistan**

Saturday, May 20, 2006

[KurdishMedia.com](http://KurdishMedia.com)

London (KurdishMedia.com) 20 May 2006: The Kurdistan political leadership has not taken very serious steps during al-Jaafari's government to implement article 58 of Transitional Administrative Law for Iraq (TAL), now article 140 in the Iraqi Constitution, which called for a remedying some of the injustice caused by the previous regime's alteration of the demographic character of southern Kurdistan. Kurds blamed al-Jaafari; however, al-Jaafari accused the Iraqi president, Talabani, for not implementing the Article. Negotiations on Kirkuk remain stalled.



Implementing article 58

In the negotiations on Kurdish autonomy in 1970, a previous Iraqi regime postponed negotiations on Kirkuk, and four years later in 1974 the Iraqi government found itself in a position to eliminate the Kurdish armed movement of Mulla Mustafa Barzani.

The Kurdish leadership has decided to postpone a reversal of the Arabisation of Kirkuk until the end of formation of the Iraqi government.

Now, 3 years after the removal of Saddam Hussein's regime, Kirkuk has been re-Arabised in two ways. Arab Islamic fundamentalists are threatening Kurds and many Kurds have left, in particular members of the Kurdish business community. Certain Shi'ite groups have moved over 1,000 militants to Kirkuk in an apparent attempt to increase their influence in the city. In Kurdish circles and the Kurdish media, this has been termed Arabisation Phase II.

At the moment, the American military forces are making sure that Kurdish peshmerga are not present in Kirkuk and that Kurds cannot be armed in Kirkuk. Americans have taken drastic measures against the presence of Kurds in Kirkuk. They have even removed Kurdistan flag on some private buildings such as "Kurdistan Restaurant" in Kirkuk.

What do you think about these statements?

- The Kurdistan bloc in the Iraqi Parliament is a very passive group and has not worked for Kirkuk.
- The Kurdistan Parliament is not interested in Kirkuk, and only addresses the issue to keep the furious Kurdish people calm.
- The US and multinational forces do not want Kirkuk to be considered part of Kurdistan and are trying to weaken the Kurds in Kirkuk.
- The Iraqi president, a Kurd, does not want to lose his position over the Kirkuk issue and thus keeps quiet.
- Arab states, the Turkish government, and the Iranian government are working together against any move to bring Kirkuk under Kurdish control.

Do you think that Kurds have taken any practical steps to de-Arabise Kirkuk?  
Does Kurdistan's leadership understand how to deal with Kirkuk issue?

What do you think?

### **Have your say!**

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### **Your replies:**

When Kurds were fighting Iraqi regime in the 1970s and 1980s, they already knew that the regime was powerful, had a lot of support from other Arab

countries, Islamic countries and from the west as well. They knew that countries like Iran, Turkey and Syria were hostile to anything called Kurd, Kurdish or Kurdistan, and they were ready to cooperate and forget about their own hostilities for the sake of their mutual hatred to Kurds.

However, they did fight and told the Kurdish people that they were stronger than any enemy. The Kurdish people got nothing from those wars except chemical bombardment of Halabja and the Anfal campaign. What I do not understand is that why they are now so cautious about what Turkey may say or do about Kurds and Kurdistan? I am confident that nothing worse will happen from what already happened for the Kurdish people, but for the Kurdish leaders and their \$\$\$s per se, that I cannot guess!

Ata Mala Karim – UK

## **Have your say: Freedom to oppress freedom of press in Kurdistan**

**Saturday, May 06, 2006**

**KurdishMedia.com**

On 03 May, U.S. Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice said, "We hail the courageous sacrifices made by journalists around the world to report the facts, even at the cost of their lives and their freedom." Meanwhile, in Kurdistan two journalists working for the only two independent weekly in Kurdistan, Awene and Hawlati, were given six month suspended sentences.



Freedom of press is under pressure in Kurdistan.

Freedom of Press in Kurdistan

Dr. Kamal Sayid Qadir sentenced to 30 years in prison late last year by a KDP court for defaming KDP leaders. He was released after months of international pressure. Interestingly, there is no punishment more severe than life imprisonment in the Iraqi penal code, which is 25 years (Article 85). Dr Sayid Qadir was sentenced by a law issued by the Kurdistan Parliament.

Mohammad Barzi, an engineer in Private Projects Commission, wrote a piece criticising Kurdish authorities. He was questioned by his boss and his name has been removed from a list of people who were supposed to be sent outside of Iraq for training.

Najad Ahmad, a student wrote an article about education issues at Salahaddin University. He reported that a committee is investigating his actions.

Hawlati reporter Hawez Hawezi, was arrested twice over the past few weeks. The first time he was arrested for article he published in Hawlati called "Era of Shame" and when he was released on bail, Hawezi wrote another describing his ill-treatment at a PUK detention centre.

A court in Suleimani sentenced Hawlati's former editor-in-chief, Asos Hardi, and his successor, Twana Osman, each to six months suspended sentences and fined the both 75,000 Iraqi dinars.

While virtually all the major media outlets are controlled by the two major Kurdish parties, the KDP and PUK, a draft bill is under discussion by the Kurdistan Parliament to restrict the freedom of press further.

The Iraqi penal code of Saddam Hussein's government has been used in restricting the freedom of press in Kurdistan. The Iraqi Penal Code is an oppressive tool used by Saddam Hussein's government to restrict civil liberties and does not address the corruption of the authorities, which may include abuse of power, nepotism, and misuse of public funds.

Should the former government's penal code be used to govern the current press?

Does Kurdistan need a law that restricts freedom of press?

How should Kurds react to the current situation with respect to the rights of the press and right of free expression in Kurdistan?

### **Have your say!**

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### **Your replies:**

Once upon a time a king gathered his subjects and said: "My sons and daughters you are all free to express yourselves! You can say whatever you like and criticize without fear!"

People started to write, speak and criticize his Majesty, his disciples and men. However, every critic disappeared without even a trace of their dead bodies. His subjects came back to the king and asked him: "Your Majesty, you yourself said that we are all free to express ourselves, but now anybody says a word would disappear forever!"

The King laughed and said, "You don't understand!" You are free to criticize my enemies, not myself or my men!

Ata Mala Karim – Uk

## **Have your say: Should Kurds back off from their challenge to Ja'afari?**

Sunday, March 05, 2006

[KurdishMedia.com](http://KurdishMedia.com)

London (KurdishMedia.com) 04 March 2006: In his official visit to Turkey, Ja'afari totally undermined his alliance with Kurds, and travelled to Turkey without Iraqi Foreign Minister Hoshyar Zebari, a Kurd. Ja'afari, however, was accompanied by some Turkmens, according to Dr Mahmud Othman.

While in Turkey, Iraqi President Jalal Talabani, a Kurd, strongly criticised Ja'afari

and now the Kurds and Sunni Arabs have formally asked Shia list to withdraw the candidacy of Ja'afari for post of Prime Minister in the new Iraqi government.

Ja'afari was given the candidacy for Prime Minister following an internal vote among members of his list. Support from members allied with Muqtada al-Sadr proved instrumental in his victory in this internal vote. Now the United Iraqi Alliance, Iraq's dominant Shi'i list, is backing Ja'afari and the Shi'i bloc seemingly does not see any issue with Ja'afari's visit to Turkey.

What do you think will happen from here?

- Do you think that the Shi'a are now planning with Turkey and hardline Turkmen to disregard previous guarantees of de-Arabisation?

- What will the Kurds do? Do you think Kurds will accept Ja'afari as PM? If they do, do you think they will lose credibility? From past experience, one can anticipate that Kurdish bloc will back off from their position. What do you think?

- Do you think Kurds can work with someone like Muqtada al-Sadr, who has openly declared a war against Kurds and federalism, the backbone of Kurdish bloc's policy?

**This Have your say is closed for posting more comment**

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It is obvious that Jaffari stood against the Kurdish rights in Iraq from the first day he came to power. The Kurdish politicians, it looks like, are not acting in the cycle of politics and political fights, but they decide upon their own emotional perspectives. Kurdish leaders are ruling according to their expectations not according to the realities. They do not trust any member of their own nation because they know them before hand; However for others they just open their hearts and eagerly expecting the same from them; although they are always disappointed.

Jaffari defiantly standing against the Kurds and the Kurdish issue, this is apparent from his first days as PM. However, the problem lies in the expectations of the Kurds and the Kurdish leaders from Jafarri and from any other Iraqi government which does not recognize the full rights of the Kurdish people for self-determination.

It can be argued that as long as Kurdistan is part of Iraq and as long as people like Jaffari are in power we can not expect much better than previous regimes of Iraq. Iraq can not become a democratic state same as we find them in the western world, in an overnight, so the Kurds, as a minority, can not enjoy their national rights if they do not have a kind of independence or at least federalism.

Atai Mala Karim - UK