



كۆرپه ندى كۆمه ئايه تى كوردستان
المنتدى الاجتماعي الكوردستاني
Kurdistan social forum

Kurdistan Social Forum

Another Kurdistan is Possible
A Kurdistan of Diversity and Human Rights and Social Justice

Introduction

After many efforts engaged by several civil society activists, Peace and Freedom organization has launched worked to establishing the Kurdistan Social Forum (KSF) in Northern Iraq.

On 15th October 2016, a first meeting of the KSF gathered about 65 civil society activists, members of the workers' and teachers' syndicates and students' unions.

This meeting resulted in determining the basic principles characterizing the Kurdistan Social Forum.

Background Information:

After participating to World Social Forum movements during the previous years, Kurdish members of organizations and Kurdish personalities came together to launch the Kurdistan Social in a mean to promote social justice movements in Kurdistan. Partners in this project intend to launch the Kurdistan Social Forum as an open space for movements, organizations and individuals who believe in the principle of social justice and human rights in its global sense and who wish to bridge divisions between political, civil, social, economic and cultural interests.

These people are working to make the Kurdistan Region of Iraq a region where parliamentary and civic democracy is governing. Kurdistan should promote the freedom of thought, the freedom of religion and belief, and should abide to the principles of full equality and non-discrimination according to gender, color or sectarian and ethnic affiliation as well as protecting its diversity. Kurdistan should become a region where the principles of individual and collective freedom, social justice are applied.

Considering the current context in the Kurdistan Region, Iraq and at the international level, the following factors must be taken into account as negatively impacting the Kurdistan Region:

1. The continuation of the war on ISIS and its military, political, economic, social impacts.
2. The continuation of the ongoing dispute between the governments of Erbil and Baghdad over the files linked to oil, economy and the disputed territories.
3. The continuation of the economic and financial crisis in the Kurdistan region and the freeze of economic and investment projects down to the inability of the regional government to pay the salaries of state employees for months.
4. Threaten and risk of International Monetary Bank (IMB) in the frame work of new liberalism policy is led to decrease the level of poverty and unemployment in Kurdistan. From other part is decreasing different type of taxis on people and selling the public sector to private in the frame work of failed policy.
5. The presence of hundreds of thousands of Syrian refugees and internally displaced persons (IDPs), amounting to approximately a million and a half people living in the region.
6. The political conflict and crisis between political parties and the fundamental disagreements on reactivating the work of parliament, coupled with the expiration of the legal mandate of the presidency resulting in a negative governance system in the Kurdistan region.
7. The high level of corruption and bribery in the region coupled with the lack of transparency towards the files of oil contracts and oil revenues.
8. The poor health, municipal, electricity and water services, and living standards of citizens.
9. The increasing rate of unemployment and forced layoffs of workers in companies, linked to the bankruptcy of companies, work agents and projects.
10. The lack of Rule of Law and the questionable independence of the judiciary.

11. The Kurdish youth emigration to Europe.
12. The restrictions on freedom of opinion and expression and violations against human rights defenders.
13. The high level of violence against women and murder of women motivated by the defense of honor.
14. The regional interference in the affairs of the Kurdistan Region.
15. The impacts of sectarian and religious wars in the region, particularly the Sunni-Shia conflict file and its effects on the Kurdistan Region.

We seek to make the Kurdistan Social Forum an active factor that gives a strong push to civil movements in Kurdistan working towards political, economic and social reform. The organization of the 1st instance of the KSF should be considered as a key milestone announcing the launch of the work towards building a parliamentary and civil democracy. The KSF means to create an open space for those who share our values and concepts so that we can work hand in hand, and contribute evenly towards developing alternative options to the weary scenario in which we find ourselves today.

The Principles and Ethics of the Kurdistan Social Forum

We aim to make use of the experience of the Social Forum and its continuing struggle for human freedom and dignity which has already experienced tangible victories, on several levels. The Social Forum, organized in different countries, gathering people to discuss and debate about diverse issues, offers rich experiences and lessons that are available to us.

Abiding by the Charter of Principles of the World Social Forum organized in 2001 in Porto Alegre in Brazil which confirms that World Social Forum is an open meeting place, the Kurdistan Social Forum draws from it and aims to promote the following principles and ethics:

- To ensure interactive thinking and a democratic dialogue of ideas.
- To promote the formulation of proposals and free exchange of experiences.
- To create connections for high-impact activities.
- To fight for a more just world.
- To establish productive relationships between man and women.
- To fight against poverty, hunger and need.
- To eradicate illiteracy and underdevelopment.
- To ensure health treatment and the provision of free medical care.
- To promote a culture of humanity, while respecting the cultural peculiarities.
- Attention to neglected groups and communities to let them presenting themselves in different levels
- Attention to agriculture and farmers and ensure their compensation by oil companies
- Creation of critical groups to claim and protect justice for the society
- Working toward activating the parliament
- Standing against international monetary bank taxes and new liberalism policy system by the Kurdistan region government
- Working against politicization of Peshmergas and other security forces and using them during political conflicts
- Advocating to protect freedom of expression, human rights defenders, activists and journalists

Inspired by the experience of the World Social Forum that was discovered by Kurds through their participation in the activities of the World Social Forum, they concluded a number of points, including:

1. Participants in this forum believe that the Kurdistan Region of Iraq, is a federal parliamentary civic democracy that should not conduct distinction per gender sex, color, religion, ethnicity, nationality and should protect diversity.
2. We believe in the non-violent option as the only option for reform, change and expression, and defend it by using all nonviolent struggle methods against any attempts to confiscate or change it.
3. The Kurdistan Social Forum is committed to cooperation and voluntary work and it rejects the lavish principle of organization of events and the unjustified spending of funds for any participation.
4. Civil society is an essential partner and not a secondary one in building a federal, parliamentary, civic democratic secular Kurdistan, far from dictatorship and authoritarianism and individual judgment, and individuals and social movements have the right to demand non-violent means for reform and change.
5. Civil society to for us is all individuals, institutions and organizations and events that work with methods of nonviolent to help people in need and the fight against corruption and to be itself immune to corruption, violence or sectarianism and adopt voluntary and the non-profit work, which is based on the concept of providing the service and assistance at the lowest possible cost.
6. Kurdish social movements are civil gatherings that are non-religious and stand against ethnic or gender discrimination, that promote non-violent methods to demand reform and social justice. They can use means such as rallies, gatherings or use information technology to achieve its noble objectives, such as social networking communities via the internet.
7. The Kurdistan Social Forum is working with the Iraqi Social Forum in the framework of coordinating, cooperating and striving together towards their goals by using non-violent means. The two forums decide the mechanisms of coordination and work within the framework of an optional joint action.
8. The Kurdistan Social Forum is working to find mechanisms to coordinate with safe social and mass movements with the forum's targets in other parts of Kurdistan like in Syria, Turkey and Iran.
9. The forum aims to include participation from the following:
 - Social and mass movements
 - Trade unions and professional associations
 - Civil society organizations and non-governmental organizations
 - Defenders of human rights and public freedoms
 - Activists and movements of minorities
 - Feminist movements
 - Youth movements
 - Male and female activists for social justice

Objectives of the Forum:

- Opening a free open space to support the civic democratic parliamentary system project that was built on the basis of respecting individual freedoms and promoting social justice.
- Working toward enhancing general situation and developments in terms of the political, social and economic aspects.

- Discussing the reality and the role of civil society and social movements in Kurdistan and ensuring the activation of their role to build a real democracy.
- Discussing the role of the international community in supporting of Kurdistan, as well as supporting the social movement in Kurdistan.

Map of the forum:

- Presenting the draft document: “towards the establishment of the Kurdistan Social Forum” for public discussion and collecting observations and suggestions.
- Holding discussion sessions to agree on the basic principles, broaden the debate to include the largest number of networks, organizations, social movements and individuals as possible who share the values and principles of the forum.
- Holding an expanded meeting in Erbil for all those interested to join the Kurdistan Social Forum.

The mobilization of human and financial resources to implement the following activities:

- Conference about the situation of women in the Kurdistan region at the end of March 2017
- Conference about the promotion of freedom of opinion and expression in Kurdistan at the end of May 2017
- The festival on the protection of workers' rights in May 2017.
- The first Kurdistan Social Forum event in Erbil at the end of the year 2017

The mechanism and methods of KSF:

The KSF working team consists of several committees open to all who are interested in holding the forum's activities and in participating. There will be facilitators nominated to supervise the work of these committees. The most important committees in the team are:

- A. **The Strategic Planning Committee:** it is assigned to deal and discuss the completion of the pact of the Forum and approve the contributions and activities and the mobilization of financial and human resources. The duty of this committee is to follow up on the work of the other committees.
- B. **Communication and Relationships Committee:** this committee will develop connections with all actors who may be interested to join the forum.
- C. **The Forum's preparation Committee:** will oversee the logistic organization of the Forum.
- D. **Media and Documentation Committee:** is responsible for of the follow-up media coverage and documentation of the forum.
- E. **Political Committee:** will monitor the political situation and document the political movement and governance
- F. **Social Committee:** is responsible to address social issues and monitor all social aspects
- G. **Economic Committee:** is responsible to monitor the economic and financial issues and standing against new liberalism policy system
- H. **Women Committee:** is responsible to monitor and follow up women issues and gender based violence in KR.I, in addition working to increase women participation in decision making processes
- I. Voting on decisions is opened only to members of these committees and the majority rule will be followed
- J. Regular meeting of these committees will be conducted face to face or online

If you have any comments and suggestions, please contact us at the following email address:

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