

## **Human rights violation continues against Kurds in Syria**

Syrian authorities have escalated their campaign against the Kurdish minority in Syria through killings, arrests, and the deliberate policy of exacerbating the economic disparity of the Kurdish region. In the past few months, a number of concerning events have taken place in Syria that requires serious attention from the international community.

Syrian authorities have routinely prevented members of the Kurdish minority to peacefully assemble. On 14 June 2010, the Kurdish political council, comprised of eight Kurdish political parties in Syria, was holding its 53rd anniversary, commemorating the foundation of the first Kurdish party in Syria. Syrian security forces raided the assembly of the Kurdish political council and forced them to shut down the event.

Furthermore, two weeks prior to university final examinations, the Syrian security forces raided the University of Damascus and the University of Aleppo, and specifically targeted a number of Kurdish students and human rights activists. The Kurdish students and rights activists were removed from the university premises by Syrian authorities and reportedly intimidated through severe torture for their human rights activities.

Recently, the number of suspicious deaths of young Kurdish soldiers serving in the Syrian military has also been on the rise. More than 40 soldiers of Kurdish descent have died suspiciously while serving in active military service. In addition, the families of the victims have been prevented from recovering the bodies of their relatives. Instead, Syrian authorities have ordered burials to be carried out by military personnel and have allowed only the mothers of the dead to attend the burials. These policies violate the rights of the dead and their families and have effectively prevented a proper investigation into the reason behind the deaths of the soldiers.

The Syrian government has recently taken measures to halt the activities of human rights activists by collaborating with other governments such as those in Germany, Norway, and Cyprus, to arrest, and extradite Kurdish refugees back to Syria. Regrettably, some of these countries have succumbed to the wishes of the Syrian Ba'ath regime and have directly placed the lives of the Kurdish refugees in serious danger by extraditing them to Syria. Many of these refugees have been imprisoned without any proper legal procedures and tortured upon their arrival in Syria. The actions of the participating governments are a clear violation of article 3 of the UN Convention, which forbids extradition or deportation of individuals to countries practicing torture.

The Kurdish national congress of North America is deeply concerned about consistent reports concerning routine arrest, killings, and disappearances of Kurds in Syria. We appeal to the international community and international human rights organizations to do everything in their capacity to stop the brutality of the totalitarian regime of Syria against the Kurdish population.

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