

Presenters and their topics at KNC-NA 24th Annual Conference



The 24th KNC-NA annual conference was held in Washington DC on May 12-13, 2012. The program started with a minute of silence, followed by singing Ay Raqib by the participants, and the introduction by Mrs. Muazaz Aziz, the MC of the program. 30 guest speakers, panelists, and moderators presented in the conference. The panels which were moderated by the KNC-NA's board of directors included: Diaspora, Human Rights, Unity, Reconciliation and Independence.

Mrs. Muazaz Aziz, was born in Hawlair. She completed law school at the University of Baghdad practiced as a lawyer until she immigrated to Canada. Meanwhile she lived in Switzerland for 8 years. She has been actively involved in the community, through as an accredited court interpreter, as a settlement counselor, and later as a public appointee at the Health Professionals and Appeal Board in Toronto. She also graduated from the Humber College in 2007 as a Certified Canadian Immigration Consultant and started her private practice. She has been an active member of KNC-NA, the Kurdish House, and the Canadian for Genocide Education and organized fundraising events for the victims of Halabja and for the Iraqi children. As MC, she introduced the guests.



Dr. Ebdul Hakim Bashar, is from Qamishlo Kurdistan of Syria. He specializes in Pediatric medicine. He is the leader of Kurdish Democratic Party- Syria (KDPS), and the head of Kurdish National Council and a member of its committee for foreigner relations. He gave an update on Kurdistan of Syria.



Mr. Arash Saleh was born in Paveh and raised in Kermashan. He graduated from college of law in Sanandaj. He was a co-founder and active member of Kurdish Student Movement in Iran, the only Kurdish student organization in Iran from 2004 to 2009. He used to work as a journalist in Kurdistan as the correspondent of Payam-e-Mardom and Didgah, two independent Kurdish weekly papers. Arash is currently a graduate student in political science at the New York State University. The topic of his presentation was "The Rise and Decline of Civil Society in Kurdistan of Iran". It considers the previous trend of new movements in Kurdistan including their demands and structures.



Mr. Alan Attoof was born in Slemani and obtained a BA in English from the University of Slemani. He has worked for international NGO's such as the Mines Advisory Group and Help Age International, provided support to vulnerable communities and victims of the Anfal genocide. He has reported for the Institute for War and Peace Reporting (IWPR) on various political and security issues, and trained junior journalists. He also has worked as the Media and Cultural Specialist with the U.S. Consulate General's Public Diplomacy Section in Erbil. Currently, Alan is the Director of Public Affairs at the Kurdistan Regional Government's Representation in the United States. He talked about the KRG-US Relations.



Mr. Issa Mosa was born in Zakho, obtained a diploma in teaching education in Duhok. He studied law at Musol University but had to move Canada in 1993. He has worked as commissioner for Oath, as a Notary Public in, and as a team leader at the Center for Newcomers in Alberta. He volunteered at a UN refugee camp and Red Cross in Calgary. He is the vice chairman of Kurdish Community in Calgary, attended various conferences about Kurdistan and participated in a Research Analysis on the Kurds by 2000 planet in Calgary. He has been a board member of KNC-NA since 2008 and its Vice President since 2010. This year he was a candidate for the board of directors and was re-elected. He moderated the Diaspora Panel.



Mr. Ari Besefki Was born in Dohuk, Kurdistan. At age 13 he had to leave his homeland, went to the mountains, migrated to Turkey, and ended up in a refugee camp for 4 years. Later he migrated to US, settled in Richardson, TX, and attended high school, college, and graduate school there. He obtained a master's degree in business administration. His leadership positions had included Equity Trader, Managing Director, and volunteering treasurer at DFW International Community Alliance and North Texas Council for International Visitors. Currently he is the Principal at Opportune Capital Partners. He speaks Kurdish, English, Arabic, Turkish, and Spanish. He talked about Promoting and Improving Kurdistan-U.S. Economical Ties.



Dr. Azad Moradian is from Eastern Kurdistan. He was a prisoner of conscious in Iran and sought political asylum in Europe. In 2001 he immigrated to the US. He specializes in Kurdish and Iranian politics, works with several NGOs, and has founded VOK Radio. He received his degree in Clinical Psychology in Iran and his MFT at the Chicago School of Professional Psychology. He is currently working as a behavioral consultant. His articles are regularly published in several media outlets and magazines. He is a former member of the board of directors of KNC-NA and gives regular political comments on radio broadcasts. He talked about "The Kurds in the United States; the Challenge of Reconciling Hyphenated Identities".



Mr. Samuel Jordan is a veteran human rights defender with a special emphasis on matters of enfranchisement for national minorities. As an advocate for full political equality and Chairman of the DC Statehood Party, Jordan traveled throughout the United States and abroad urging support for US compliance with the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights. In 1997, Jordan was appointed Director of the Program to Abolish the Death Penalty for Amnesty International USA, where he campaigned to end capital punishment worldwide. An attorney, Jordan is currently involved in the international effort to eliminate the negative impacts of globalization on civil liberties. His talked about "US Kurdish Solidarity Initiative".



Dr. Pary Karadaghi completed her MD degree at Bucharest School of Medicine in Romania and her Post Doctorate studies in France and Georgetown University. She is Executive Director of KHRW and supports refugees' and women's equality and building self-sufficient communities. She oversees human rights training, IDP assistance, housing construction, and women-led Non-Governmental Organizations and Civil Society Organizations' capacity-building in Iraq. She gives presentations on Kurdish and Iraqi peoples' plight on televisions shows, including CNN and Nightline. Awards she received include the Human Rights Award, KRG; three Leadership Award in NGO Humanitarian Work in Iraq, Nomination for the UN Human Rights Award; and Top Ten Nationwide Most Resourceful Women Distinction Award, USA. She talked about "Kurdish Diaspora and Lobbying Efforts".



Dr. Ihsan Efrini was born in Efrin. He moved to Hungary and completed a degree in dentistry there. He practiced as a dentist for 4 years in Ukraine. He then went to Syria and attempted to practice his profession but was prohibited due to political issues. He was then forced to leave Syria in search of a safer life in Canada. He is an active member of the Canadian liberal party, as well as a representative for a Syrian Kurdish political assembly in North America. He is also a member of the board of directors of KNC-NA, and moderated the Human Rights Panel. He was a candidate for presidency of KNC-NA this year and won half of the votes (Mr. L. Barwari won the other half). Next year he will lead KNC-NA as its president.



Mr. Shamal Bishir was born in Mahabad, Eastern Kurdistan in 1980s. At age 16 he migrated to Sweden, where he studied sociology. He is a political activist and gives talks about the role of PJAK in Kurdistan and Iran. At this conference he talked about "Kurdistan in the New World System for the Middle East and Iran".



Mr. Jake Hess is a freelance writer based in Washington, DC. His work has been published by the London Independent, Middle East Report, Inter Press Service, and other outlets. He spent a year and a half in North Kurdistan, where he lived in Amed and Sirnak and worked as a journalist, translator, and teacher. He talked about "North Kurdistan: Human Rights and Recent Developments."



Dr. Arash Alaei is from Kermashan and studied Medicine at Isfahan University. As an expert in International Health and HIV/AIDS he directed the International Education and Research Cooperation in Iran. He and his brother were co-founders of the first "Triangular Clinic" documented by WHO/EMR as the region's "Best practice model", which was awarded \$16 million by the Global Fund. They extended their work to Afghanistan and Tajikistan, received Ford Foundation AIDS fellowship, a distinguished award from the New York Academy of Science, a Jonathan Mann Award, and the first leadership award in Health and Human Rights by PAHO/WHO. As a humanist and former prisoner of conscience, he talked about "The Price of Promoting Health and Human Rights in Kermashan, Iran".



Mr. Sartip Kakaee was born in Kerkuk. He immigrated to Canada in 2002, has worked as engineer, as Project Manager, and as Executive Board member and the Treasurer of the Greater Toronto Kurdish House. He was a co-founder of Canada Kurdistan Business Council in 2007 which promote a Business relationship between Canada and Kurdistan. He arranged an official visit for a first Canadian MP to Kurdistan in August 2009 which fruited out of passing a motion at the Canadian House of Commons to recognize the Chemical attack by Saddam's regime as crimes against humanity. He now is the Chairman of Kurdish House in Toronto and a Board Member of KNC-NA. He for the board this year too and was re-elected.



Ms. Golaleh Sharafkandi was born in Mahabad, and came to Sweden in 2001. She studied Linguistics and English in Iran and International Education in Sweden. Since 2003 she has been formally involved in Politics. She has worked on projects with Kurdish women having different ideological backgrounds. She is a member of Leading Board of Kurdistan Democratic Party (KDP-Iran). She works with the abroad committee and international relation office. The topic of her presentation was: “Towards Unity and Obstacles to overcome (with a focus on Eastern part of Kurdistan)”.



Mr. Sinan Önal was born in Malazgirt-Muş of Kurdish region of Turkey in 1978. He graduated from Political Science and Economics BA in İstanbul Bilgi University in 2005. He has an MA degree in Urban Policy and Local Governments from Middle East Technical University. He speaks Kurdish-Turkish and English fluently. He has worked as policy consultant to Mr. Ahmet Turk in Democratic Society Congress and to Mr Selahattin Demirtaş in Peace and Democracy Party. He became a representative of Peace and Democracy Party in Washington DC in 2012. His speech was about “The Status of Turkey and the Kurds In The Changing Middle East”.



Dr. Kamiran Haj Abdo, is from Efrin Kurdistan of Syria. He is an oncology specialist. He is member of politic bureau of Kurdish Democratic Union Party, and a member of committee of Kurdish National Council for foreigner relations. He talked about “Unity and Political Principles of the Kurdish National Council”.



Dr. Asad Khailany, an emeritus professor at Eastern Michigan University, is from Southern Kurdistan. He had numerous publications on Computer Science. He was the President of Kurdistan Student Union, accompanied Late Mustafa Barzani to Baghdad, and established connections with the embassies of US, England, India, and Egypt in Baghdad. He was the first Kurd to address the US Secretary of States on the “US Policy Toward Kurdish Problems” in 1962, to invite Madam Mitterrand to a conference on Kurdistan in the US. He introduced Jalal Talebani, Barham Salih, and Hoshiar Zibari to the state department. He is a co-founder of KNC-NA. He presented “The Road to Achieve Kurdish National Right is Through Unity”.



Ms. Gissou Nia is the Executive Director of the Iran Human Rights Documentation Center. She had worked on war crimes and crimes against humanity trials at the International Criminal Tribunal for the former Yugoslavia and the International Criminal Court. She is a frequent lecturer on human rights developments in Iran and has interviewed 200+ survivors of human rights abuses perpetrated by the government of the Islamic Republic of Iran and produced comprehensive reports documenting these abuses, with a particular focus on the rights of women and ethnic minorities. She spoke about IHRDC's latest report on abuses against Kurdish activists in Iran. The report is titled: "On the Margins: Arrest, Imprisonment and Execution of Kurdish Activists in Iran Today".



Mr. Luqman Barwari was born in Southern Kurdistan. He has been living in the USA since 1982. He obtained his education in the USA, and worked as an Associate Scientist in a major Biotechnology company in Southern CA. He is advisory member of Kurdish American Youth Group and former vice president of Kurdish American Education Society. He is the author and co-author of several Scientific, and political papers. He has been the chair of Public Relations Committee of KNC-NA since 2008. He moderated the Reconciliation Panel. He was a candidate for presidency of KNC-NA this year, won half of the votes (Dr. I Efrini won the other half) and will lead the organization this year.



Dr. Mohammad Sadik is from Hawler, Kurdistan. He has MPhil and PhD in Educational Planning, taught at East London, Salahaddin and Cihan Universities and published 10 research papers on Education. He was the President of Salahaddin University for 6 years. Now he is qualified as a Solicitor in England and Wales and works as the Senior Advisor for Cihan University in Hawler. he worked as the Director of Migrant Training, a cross-London training organization between 1990 to 2003, as Chair of the Kurdish Cultural Centre in London from 1991 to 1992 and as President of the Kurdish Academic Network, UK from 1998 to 2003. He talked about "The Role of Education in Kurdish National Reconciliation".



Mr. Fazil Kurdi is form Hawler, Southern Kurdistan. He has extensive experience working with the United Nations in Iraq, Turkey, Bosnia and Afghanistan. Currently he is the president of IBAV, LLC, a contractor with US government that supports, develops and executes pre- deployment training courses/modules for Implementation of Emergency Relief and Short Term Rehabilitation Response in Support of the Near East Regional Program for USAID, State Dept. and other US government agencies in Iraq and Afghanistan. He has been an activist with Change Movement (Gorran) in the United States since May 2009. He talked about "Kurdistan from Gorran's Perspective".



Dr. Kirmanj Gundi migrated to US from Kurdistan, obtained a PhD in Educational Administration from Tennessee State University (TSU), where he is a Full Professor now. He has numerous publications on leadership, teaching strategies, educational psychology, etc. Kirmanj has published two books, "Thirty Years of Struggle and Devastated Country" and "Dictation of English Grammar in Kurdish." His upcoming is about the ancient history of the Kurds' ancestors, the Medes. He also analyzed Kurdish politics and internal fratricide between political factions, and its dire consequences. He founded Kurdistan Cultural Institute and was the President of the KNC-NA in 2008-2010 and promoted the Halabja's to go to a Federal Court. He talked about "Kurdish National Reconciliation from a Historical Perspective".



Mr. Nyma Ardalan was born in Sine, Kurdistan and migrated to the US in 1977. He studied Industrial Engineering and holds a MS degree from CSUN. Currently he works as a Network Engineer for BT. He has been an activist for Kurdish and Human rights and worked with various organizations that promote Kurdish cause for many years. He is a board member of Kurdish Community Center of Southern California. He joined KNC-NA in its beginning years of inception and worked as one of its board of directors for several years. He moderated the Independence Panel. Currently he is the secretary of KNC-NA and a runs as candidate for the next board and was re-elected for the next board.



Dr. Kajal Rahmani is from Senah, studied at Universities of Jundi Shapur and Oklahoma. As a former professor of anthropology with special interests in Mesopotamia, Kurds, women, and religious minorities, she is considered as a scholar, a thinker, and a visionary. She has given numerous talks on Kurds and ethnic minorities in the Middle East. Her research project is on Yezidis. Her upcoming book, "That was then and this is now" is the story of a Kurdish woman who has been through Shiite, Sunni, Kurdish and Non-Kurdish entanglements. She is a research fellow with Department of Near Eastern Languages and Civilizations at Harvard University and the director of KJPA. She presented "Obstacles Toward Independence". She is a candidate for the board of director of KNC-NA.



Dr. Mohammad Yussif is from Western Kurdistan. He has Pharmacist and a Human Rights Activist in London, GB. He talked about "The Syrian Uprising and the Future of the Kurds".



Dr. Faraydon Karim is from Southern Kurdistan. He joined Kurdistan Students Union in the 1960 and exiled to Southern Iraq in 1963. Together with few friends he re-established the dissolved Kurdish Student Union in 1967. He joined the peshmarga in 1972 and migrated to USA 1976. He authored over 100 patents, technical disclosures, and technical papers. He has chaired, and spoken in many scientific conferences around the world. He participated in most Kurdish activities and joined KNC-NA in the first days of its establishment and once held the position of director in it. He is currently, the Chief Technical officer of the NBCTR corp, specialized in supercomputing. His talked about: "Independence through Setting Higher Goals".



Mr. Kani Xulam has studied at the University of Toronto, UC Santa Barbara, and obtained his MA from American University in Washington, DC. He has worked closely with members of the U.S. Congress, participated in a 32nd day hunger strike on behalf of imprisoned Kurds, and is in a documentary, "Good Kurds, Bad Kurds: No Friends But the Mountains". He participated in a 221 days vigil in front of the Turkish Ambassador's residence. He is the founder and director of AKIN. All his work is geared towards advancing the level of awareness about the Kurds and Kurdistan. He presented "Is Gandhi Relevant to the Kurds?"



The chair of this year's conference (current president of KNC-NA) joined the last panel, reviewed the archetype of a Meds' descendant, and wondered how long to wait for independence in the Holli Chawarwani, the waiting room.

