



Conference Report

25th Anniversary of the Halabja Massacre: Recognition as a tool to prevent Genocide

Nieuwspoort

18 March 2013

The Hague – the Netherlands



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Unrepresented Nations and People Organization

Laan van Meerdervoort 70
2517 AN The Hague
The Netherlands
Tel: +31 (0)70 36 46 504
Fax: +31 (0)70 36 46 608

unpo@unpo.org
www.unpo.org

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Massacre:
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Foreword


On the 16th of March 1988, Saddam Hussein unleashed a large scale chemical weapons attack against the rebellious Kurdish town of Halabja. It is estimated that a combination of mustard gas and other nerve agent chemicals were responsible for the deaths of at least 5000 civilians.

25 years later, the movement to recognize the exactions perpetrated against the Iraqi Kurds as genocide is finally gathering steam in the international arena. Several States have already embarked on the initiative, including Sweden, Canada, the United Kingdom, France and Norway.

The genocide against the Iraqi Kurds is not only considered a crime committed against the rules of war, but also a crime against humanity. Consequently, the recognition of this event implicates the acknowledgement of the blatant persecution of the Kurds and the terror inflicted upon them, as well as the lack of action by the international community to protect them and further bring to justice its perpetrators. During its first commemoration of the Halabja Massacre in 2009, the United Nations urged for its recognition as genocide to deter future atrocities. Therefore, the importance of this recognition lies also on the prevention of future acts of genocide.

In December, 2012 the city of The Hague unanimously approved a plan to build a monument commemorating the Halabja genocide. The city's continuous efforts to promote human rights have brought international attention to its unique position as the "City of Peace and Justice". Adding to this is the fact that The Hague hosts the headquarters of the Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons. For all these reasons, UNPO decided to bring together scholars, politicians and activists for a conference to mark the 25th Anniversary of the Halabja Massacre and to provide a platform for discussions on key issues regarding the recognition of the Kurdish Genocide. The Conference was divided in two parts : The first panel was shaped to explore the Halabja Massacre and the role of the Kurdish and the International community to prevent similar events from happening in the future, the second panel discussed the necessity to recognize the Kurdish Genocide in the Netherlands.

In the aftermath of the conference, UNPO will remain committed to support the recognition of this genocide, in particular through the petition campaign that recently has been launched.



Marino Busdachin,
UNPO Secretary General

Conference Program

13: 30 – Opening statement

Mr. Abdollah Hejab, Representative of Iranian Kurdistan at UNPO

13.45 – Panel I: The Halabja Massacre: 25 years later

- **25th Commemoration of the Halabja Massacre**
Mr. Bakir Lashkari, Halabja Committee & Foundation Halabja Monument (EN)
- **Kurdish Advocacy on Genocide Recognition**
Mr. Latif Tali, Federatie Koerden in Nederland (FedKom) (NL)
- **The Importance of Remembering the Kurdish Genocide**
Mr. Keywan Faramarzi, Komala (NL)
- **The Halabja and Anfal Operation: the Causes and Consequences & the Role of the International Community.**
Dhr. dr. Mariwan Kanie, University of Amsterdam (NL)

Q&A (NL)

15.15 – Panel II: The Necessity to Recognize Genocide in the Netherlands

- **Differences between the Legal Definition of Genocide and Genocide in the Public Imagination**
Prof.mr.dr. Harmen van der Wilt, University of Amsterdam (EN)
- **Passions and Expects of the People of Halabja 25 years after the Genocide**
Mr.Abdollah Hejab, Representative of the Iranian Kurdistan and member of the UNPO Presidency (EN)
- **Dutch country visits to Chemical Attacks Locations -**
Mr. Khass Naseri, expert on religious minorities in Kurdistan (NL)
- **Achieving Political Recognition of Genocide**
Mr. Harry van Bommel, Member of the Dutch Parliament – SP (EN)
- **Petition for the Recognition of the Genocide**
Mr. Dana N. A. Cheragwandi, Member of VON, Writer of the Petition (EN)

Q&A (EN)

17:00 Conference Close

Opening Statement

Mr. Abdollah Hejab

Representative of Iranian Kurdistan at UNPO



Opening Statement by Mr. Abdollah Hejab

Representative of Iranian Kurdistan at UNPO



Ladies and gentlemen thank you very much for coming here, for participating in this event, and for being with us. As Alicia said, we miss Mr. Marino Busdachin; he unfortunately could not come here. But you are here, the presidency is here, and the Secretary of the Organization is here. Thank you very much for doing this job, for your contribution.

The aim of this conference is not only the traditional remembrance of the victims of the Halabja massacre that happened 25 years ago, but the aim is to bring human rights activists, politicians, political activists together, and to work systematically with the aim to highlight how important it is to have international movements working together for recognizing Halabja as a Genocide against the people of Kurdistan, the people of Southern Kurdistan by the fault of the Iraqi regime, the mentality behind this terrible attack is crucial in this case, to recognize this genocide as a genocide against the people of Kurdistan would help us to prevent the same actions to happen in the future. So my hope is that the work of scholars, politicians, human rights activists does not end here because it is the beginning, it is the continuity of work that has been started for a long time and it has been too long.

I think we did not attend any aim without working systematically and without working seriously in a long future. This is why an issue will come and I hope this conference and these panels will itself recognize the massacre of Halabja as genocide against the people of Kurdistan because every single step towards the recognition of the Halabja genocide will help to raise international attention to the case.

Thank you very much again for your participation and very welcome to the panelist.



Panel I

The Halabja Massacre: 25 years later

- **25th Commemoration of the Halabja Massacre**
Mr. Bakir Lashkari, *Halabja Committee & Foundation Halabja Monument (EN)*
- **Kurdish Advocacy on Genocide Recognition**
Mr. Latif Tali, *Federatie Koerden in Nederland (FedKom) (NL)*
- **The Importance of Remembering the Kurdish Genocide**
Mr. Keywan Faramarzi, *Komala (NL)*
- **The Halabja and Anfal Operation: Causes and Consequences & the Role of the International Community**
Dr. Mariwan Kanie, *Expert in Middle East and Islamic World - University of Amsterdam (NL)*



From left to right B. Lashkari, L. Tali, K. Faramarzi, M. Kanie

Speech by Mr. Bakir Lashkari

Halabja Committee and Foundation Halabja Monument

25th Commemoration of the Halabja Massacre Why Halabja? From Tears to Hope!

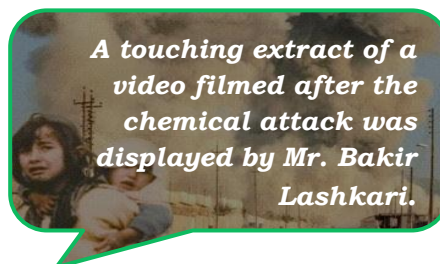


On Saturday the 16th of March in The Hague, twenty-five years later, the chemical attack on the Kurds in Halabja was commemorated. During the commemoration the Mayor of The Hague Van Aartsen, the Ambassador of Iraq HE Saaid and SP Member of Parliament Van Bommel gave a speech.

In the late eighties in Iraq, during the regime of Saddam Hussein, the Anfal campaign took place. Tens of thousands of Kurds were then eradicated in a genocidal campaign. The chemical attack on Halabja in 1988, with five thousand deaths, was the tragic nadir of this genocide. Annually, this attack is commemorated in The Hague.

The commemoration took place next to the building of the Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons (OPCW) on Johan de Wittlaan 32 and started at 13.30. It was organized by the Committee Halabja Commemoration. The Halabja Commemoration Committee last year had a citizens initiative for a memorial in The Hague for the victims of the poison gas attack in Halabja. The initiative was unanimously adopted in December 2012 by the Hague city council.

“In December 2012, The Hague city council unanimously adopted the citizens initiative for a memorial in The Hague, for the victims of the poison attack in Halabja.”



We urge the Dutch Government to formally recognize the Genocide against the people of Iraqi Kurdistan and to encourage the EU and UN to do likewise. This will enable Kurdish people, many in the Netherlands, to achieve justice for their considerable loss. It would also enable the Netherlands, capital of the Peace palace and international court of Justice, the home of democracy and freedom, to send out a message of support for international conventions and human rights. The Genocide perpetrated over decades, known collectively as the Anfal, began with the arabization of villages around Kirkuk in 1963. It involved the deportation and disappearances of Faylee Kurds in the 1970s-80s, the murder of 8,000 male Barzanis in 1983, the use of chemical weapons in the late 1980s, most notably against Halabja, and finally the Anfal campaign of 1987-88. Hundreds of thousands of innocent people perished, families were torn apart, with continuing health problems, and 4,500 villages were destroyed between 1976 and 1988 undermining the potential of Iraqi Kurdistan's agricultural resources.

“The chemical attack on Halabja in 1988, with five thousand deaths, was the tragic nadir of this genocide.”

The Iraqi regime under Saddam Hussein systematically persecuted and oppressed ethnic and religious groups over many years. No group suffered more than the Iraqi Kurds. This year we will remember, in particular, the atrocity of the attack on Halabja in 1988, when Iraqi planes used poison gas to kill thousands of Iraqi Kurds.



Speech by Mr. Latif Tali

Federatie Koerden in Nederland (FedKom)

Kurdish Advocacy on Genocide Recognition



Beste aanwezigen, beste Koerden, beste vrienden van de Koerden, en misschien ook wel de nabestaanden onder ons. Het zijn moeilijke tijden geweest voor de Koerdische gemeenschap, niet alleen bij de Koerden in het zuiden, maar ook bij alle andere Koerden uit andere steden; *barkoush*, *rozureth*, *wozjawah* hebben dit allemaal meegemaakt. Daarom wil ik de mensen die hier van verschillende steden aanwezig zijn om zo'n dag te herdenken van harte bedanken. Niet alleen ten tijde van blijdschap dienen wij bij elkaar te zijn, maar ook ten tijde van verdriet en pijn. Dit is een bijzondere dag, een bijzondere bijeenkomst. Een bijeenkomst die ons meer aan elkaar verbindt, een bijeenkomst om elkaar steun te bieden. Vandaag zijn we bijeen om Halabja te herdenken. Een wond die vers is gebleven, een wond die na 25 jaar nog steeds bloedt.

Koerdistan kent een lang verleden van onderhandelingen, van onderdrukking, systematische assimilatie en een onmenselijke behandeling. Elk bezet dorp van Koerdistan is bekend met haar eigen pijnlijke voorvallen uit de geschiedenis. Denk aan Zilan 1930, Dersim 1938, Iran in 1979 en Halabja in 1988. Genocide en moord op Koerden zijn niet alleen een onderdeel uit het verleden, maar anno 2013 zijn Koerden nog steeds het doelwit van laffe aanvallen en systematische onderdrukkingen. Op dit moment in Turkije zitten 10 000 Koerden vast; linkse democraten, academici, politici, journalisten enzovoort. Dit zonder enige vorm van een eerlijk proces. In 2011 bombardeerde Turkije 4000 Koerdische burgers neer, en nog steeds is hier geen excuus voor. In Iran zijn de Koerden regelmatig het slachtoffer van intimidatie, vervolging en executie, zonder enig proces. De Koerden in Syrië op dit moment, die zijn niet veel beter af. Ook daar worden zij onderdrukt, niet erkend en verjaagd uit hun leefomgeving.



***“Ik geloof dat het enige
medicijn voor de wonden van
de Koerden, de eenheid
binnen de Koerden zelf is.”***

De enige manier om dit tegen te gaan is één worden, alle Koerden. Ik geloof dat het enige medicijn voor de wonden van de Koerden, de eenheid binnen de Koerden zelf is. Het is allang tijd om de krachten te bundelen en één te worden zodat we in de toekomst geen nieuwe Halabja's meemaken. Daarom is er ook in dit thema een Koerdisch platform opgericht dat *Platform Koerden Nederland* heet, waar ook Fedkom onder valt. Ik hoop dat meer Koerdische organisaties zich daarbij aansluiten, zodat de eenheid in Nederland eindelijk bereikt kan worden, zodat we hiertegen met volle kracht aan kunnen.

Nogmaals, 25 jaar na dato betuig ik, namens Federatie Koerden in Nederland Fedkom, steun aan en medeleven aan de nabestaanden van Halabja en vraag ik ook even stil te staan bij deze brute daad. Wij vragen aandacht voor alle nabestaanden van Halabja, aandacht voor slachtoffers van deze massamoord. Wij vragen ook aan de Nederlandse autoriteiten om Halabja te erkennen als genocide. Als laatste, vraag ik aan iedereen hier om openlijk zijn steun te geven aan de onderhandelingen die op dit moment in Turkije tussen de Turken en de Koerden gaande zijn en om daar steun aan te geven zodat ook zij niet meer onderdrukt worden.



Speech by Mr. Keywan Faramarzi

Komala Party of Iranian Kurdistan

The Importance of Remembering the Kurdish Genocide



Dames en heren,

Vandaag zijn we hier aanwezig om de slachtoffers van de gifgasaanval op Halabja te herdenken. De gifgasaanval vond plaats tijdens de laatste maanden van de oorlog tussen de twee dictators van Iran en Irak, en kostte meer dan 5000 burgers het leven, en ook 72 intellectuele partizanen van Komala, "Gordan shwan", die na de vergiftiging door het Iraanse regime allemaal zijn dood geschoten. Er zijn ook nog op een andere datum in dezelfde provincie 27 Politici van Komala in het kamp van Bote door een gifgasaanval gedood.

Vandaag denken we met zijn allen aan 16 maart 1988. We denken aan de slachtoffers, en aan iedereen die onderdeel is van het drama.

Beste mensen,

- Het klopt dat gifgashandelaar Frans van Anraat, die Saddam Hoessein van grondstoffen voor chemische wapens voorzag, op 23 december 2005 door de rechtbank in Den Haag is veroordeeld voor het leveren van de grondstoffen voor het gifgas.
- Het klopt dat de Iraakse minister van defensie Ali Hassan al-Majid, die door deze aanval de bijnaam Ali Chemicali verkreeg, voor deze daden ter dood veroordeeld werd in januari 2010.
- Het klopt dat Koerdistan nu als een voorbeeld van een democratisch gebied van het Midden-Oosten wordt genoemd.

"Het lijden van de slachtoffers herinneren, in diep respect, is een voorwaarde voor onze solidariteit van nu. We hopen op een toekomst van Vrijheid en Vrede in Koerdistan en in de hele wereld.."

Maar ondanks genoemde voorbeelden, weten we dat meerdere generaties in de toekomst schade zullen blijven ondervinden van de gifgasaanval op Halabja, en we weten dat beelden van deze genocide voor iedereen, maar vooral voor de Koerden van de komende generatie ongelofelijk pijnlijk zullen zijn.

Wij weten ook dat Koerden meer van dergelijke genoemde genocide hebben gezien zo als city Sardasht of dorp Qarne en Qalatan. Jammergenoeg zien we dat er nog steeds genocide is, door dictatoren zoals Khamanai in Iran en Bashar Asad in Syrië. Ook antidemocratische groeperingen plegen deze misdaden tegen de Koerden. Dus zien we ook nog steeds dat Iran, Syrië en ook Turkije op vele plaatsen in Koerdistan gifgas gebruiken. Daarom moeten wij als Koerden allemaal samen strijden met behulp van anderen die een democratie in Koerdistan willen bouwen, om te voorkomen dat er op nog andere plaatsen zulke dingen gebeuren als in Halabja, en ook moeten we samen strijden tegen de dictators die in Iran en Syrië nog steeds Koerden ophangen, stenigen en hele groepen mensen levend begraven.

We zijn aan de gevallen en de slachtoffers van deze genocide in Koerdistan verplicht om te strijden tegen de dictaturen die genocide plegen. We moeten proberen te zorgen dat dat in de toekomst voorkomen wordt. En we verwachten van de internationale gemeenschap, wereld regeringen en de VN om te voorkomen dat het Iraanse regime kernwapens maakt, want dit is een wereld bedreiging.

Namens Komala bedanken we de UNPO, andere mensen en ook de SP, in het bijzonder de heer Harry van Bommel, die meewerken omdat ze willen dat misdaden op Koerden zoals 'genocide' internationaal erkend worden.

Het lijden van de slachtoffers herinneren in diep respect, is een voorwaarde voor onze solidariteit van nu. We hopen op een toekomst van Vrijheid en Vrede in Koerdistan en in de hele wereld.



Speech by Dr. Mariwan Kanie

Expert in Middle East and Islamic Studies - University of Amsterdam

The Halabja and Anfal Operation:

Causes & Consequences, and the Role of the International Community



Goedendag dames en heren,

Ik probeer een verhaal te vertellen dat iets te maken heeft met de oorzaken van genocide en waarom zo iets als Halabja en daarna de Anfal operatie heeft plaatsgevonden in 1988 in Irak. Iedere genocide, iedere massamoord, heeft zowel unieke eigenschappen, die die massamoord op dat moment uniek maakt, maar er zijn ook een aantal globale, algemene kenmerken die naar mijn mening geldig zijn voor grotendeels de massamoorden in de 20ste eeuw. Dus ik probeer hier een aantal van die karakters en eigenschappen te bespreken. Dat is de enige manier eigenlijk om te begrijpen waarom Halabja en de Anfal operatie hebben plaatsgevonden.

“Op het moment dat de Anfal operatie plaatsvond, was de belangrijkste politieke elite in het land gereduceerd tot de familie van Saddam Hussein en de Tikrit stam.”

Het eerste wat wij heel goed in de gaten moeten houden is het proces van het ontstaan van een absolute macht van de staat. Dat je een moderne staat hebt en dat die in het proces van state building en ook nation building zich uiteindelijk reduceert tot een zeer absolutistische macht. Dat gaat met name ten koste van het politiek pluralisme. Als je naar de geschiedenis van Irak kijkt, vanaf 1968, toen de Ba'ath partij aan de macht kwam, toen waren er in Irak een aantal politieke partijen, de Koerden hebben hun eigen politieke partij gehad, dit was een communistische partij, de Ba'ath partij zelf had verschillende vleugels binnen de partij. Maar dan op het moment, 10 jaar later, als Saddam aan de macht komt, waren de Koerden

gedwongen de bergen in te gaan en om een gewapende strijd te voeren. De Iraakse communistische partij was volledig uitgeschakeld en leden van de partij werden opgepakt, opgehangen en gedwongen om weg te gaan. Alle vleugels binnen de Ba'ath partij zelf werden de ene naar de andere uitgeschakeld door Saddam en de vleugel van Saddam zelf. Dus het is, dat zien wij, een proces van het doodmaken van het politiek pluralisme, dat heeft plaatsgevonden op het niveau van de staat zelf. De Iraakse staat heeft dus in de 20ste eeuw een geschiedenis meegemaakt waarin de politieke elite langzamerhand vanaf 1968 kleiner en kleiner werd. Op het moment dat de Anfal operatie heeft plaatsgevonden, was de belangrijkste politieke elite in het land gereduceerd tot de familie van Saddam Hussein zelf en de Tikrit stam. Dat is een van de belangrijke oorzaken, bij bijna alle genocide in de wereld heeft er van te voren een proces plaatsgevonden van het uitroeien en kapot maken en het uitschakelen van het politiek pluralisme.

Het tweede is de creatie van een volledige, beheersbare en beheerste wereld. Dat de staat voor elkaar krijgt om niet alleen maar op het niveau van politiek pluralisme kapot te maken maar ook op het niveau van de samenleving. Dat betekent dat de staat probeert alle vormen van de civil society, organisaties, onafhankelijke organisaties, de een na de andere te penetreren en ook alle vormen van onafhankelijkheid en autonomie van dat soort organisaties te ontnemen en uiteindelijk eigenlijk geen verschil te zien tussen de staat zelf en de samenleving. Dat het één geheel wordt en binnen dat geheel beslist een kleine elite voor de rest van de samenleving. Dat is een ding dat bijna bij alle genocides gebeurt, waarin je een absolute staat hebt die het voor elkaar heeft gekregen politieke diversiteit kapot te maken en ook de samenleving volledig onder controle te krijgen en alle vormen van autonomie, sociale, politieke, culturele autonomie uit het land te verwijderen en te vernietigen. Dat is dus één eigenschap en ik denk dat de Iraakse staat in 1988 er in geslaagd was om alle vormen van politieke, sociale en culturele vormen van pluralisme uit de Iraakse geschiedenis uit te roeien en kapot te maken.

Het volgende element is dat dit soort staten vaak geleid worden door een soort van crimineel leiderschap, mensen die bepaalde soorten eigenschappen hebben en vaak zijn zij heel laag opgeleid en hebben ze ook vaak een soort militaire achtergrond. Als je alleen al naar de twee belangrijkste mannen van Irak kijkt in de jaren 1980, dat zijn Saddam zelf en Ali Hassam al-Majid. Zijn neef Ali Hassam al-Majid heeft een opleiding van basisschool gehad en zijn oorspronkelijke baan was een autorijder in het Iraakse leger. Dat is het laagste wat iemand binnen het leger kan krijgen, dat je chauffeur bent, dat was zijn functie. Saddam zelf heeft nooit meer dan de middelbare school afgemaakt en is een paar jaar in Egypte naar de

Universiteit gegaan maar heeft dit nooit afgerond. Mensen met een heel laag niveau en ook vaak mensen uit het platteland die verhuist zijn naar grote steden, en die lijden aan een soort vervreemding, individuele vervreemding. Alleen al als je naar Ali Hassam al-Majid kijkt, iemand die zonder opleiding Minister van Defensie was in Irak, Minister van Binnenlandse Zaken was en het hoofd van de inlichtingendienst van Irak was. Toen Irak werd bezet was hij de gouverneur van Koeweit. Dan zie je dat de Iraakse staat in die periode eigenlijk werd gereduceerd tot deze criminele familiestaat.

Een ander aspect van dit soort genocide die plaatsvindt, is de staat die het voor elkaar krijgt om moord te organiseren. Dus een georganiseerde vorm van moord, en zorgvuldige plannen maken om bepaalde groepen in de samenleving die niet passen bij de fantasie van een staat en bij de ideeën en ideologie van de dominante elite die worden op een planmatige, goed georganiseerde manier gedood. Dat wil zeggen dat de staat het voor elkaar krijgt om medewerking van verschillende staatsinstellingen en instituten te garanderen. In het geval van Halabja is hiermee de nauwe samenwerking tussen het Iraakse leger, de Iraakse bureaucratie en andere Iraakse staatsinstellingen, tussen het leger en de veiligheidsdienst en zelfs tussen het leger en een aantal organisaties van de civil society. Het idee is dat de staat het voor elkaar krijgt om al die instituties die er zijn en bestaan, allemaal rond één moordpartij te mobiliseren en die moordpartij heel duidelijk van te voren goed te organiseren, tot aan de details. Dat was het geval, met name in Halabja, en ook bij de Anfal operatie.

Andere aspecten van dit soort genocide hebben te maken met de cultuur van minachting voor minderheden. Heel vaak heb je een cultuur van minachting voor groepen die niet tot de dominante groep horen. Dat is in de geschiedenis van Irak, minachting met name en in de eerste plaats voor de Koerden. Niet alleen maar voor de Koerden, maar de Koerden die krijgen gewoon een heel groot deel van de minachting van de Iraakse staat. Dat zien wij gedurende de hele geschiedenis in Irak aanwezig maar in de tijd van Saddam is dit veel radicaler geworden en op een gegeven moment werden de Koerden gewoon letterlijk gezien als een vijfde colonne en als een verrader en werden ze met name door mensen die op het platteland wonen en die de basis vormde in de omgeving van het Koerdische verzet, die werden radicaal gedehumaniseerd en raakte gewoon alle soorten van rechten kwijt. Dat dehumanisering's proces heeft gedurende de jaren 1980 en eigenlijk ook eerder heel radicaal plaatsgevonden en werden deze mensen zo grootschalig gedood.

“Volgens mij is geen enkele dictator in het Midden Oosten alleen maar het product van de samenlevingen in het Midden Oosten zelf.”

Een ander aspect van dit soort genocide, het laatste aspect waar ik over ga praten, is de rol van de buitenwereld. Naar mijn mening heel erg belangrijk. Volgens mij is geen enkele dictator in het Midden Oosten alleen maar het product van de samenlevingen in het Midden Oosten zelf. Saddam is niet het product van de Iraakse samenleving alleen, Hafez al-Assad is niet alleen maar het product van Syrië, en andere, zij zijn het product van de hele internationale gemeenschap. De gifgas industrie en de militaire industrie van Irak kwamen voor een deel uit India, Singapore, Egypte, Nederland, Duitsland, Rusland en zelfs uit Amerika. De hele internationale gemeenschap was op de een of andere manier betrokken bij de creatie van zo'n moorddadig regime. Het is dus niet alleen een creatie van de

mensen en hun cultuur en religie en sociale configuraties daar, nee het is veel breder dan dat. De hele internationale samenleving, de hele internationale politiek is betrokken geweest, in de context van de koude oorlog, bij de creatie van dat soort type staten, type leiders, en type politieke gezaghebbers in de regio. Vandaar dat de rol van de internationale gemeenschap zo belangrijk is om dit te corrigeren en vandaar dat het belangrijk is dat Halabja en de Anfal operatie in zijn geheel als genocide erkend dienen te worden. Het is inderdaad ook vaak heel erg moeilijk in de huidige toestand om interne en externe factoren van elkaar te onderscheiden in de creatie van een nieuw politiek model van de wereld. In de jaren 1980, een van de oorzaken waarom genocide heeft kunnen plaatsvinden, heeft te maken met de steun van de internationale gemeenschap en de steun van de buitenwereld aan zo'n moorddadig politiek systeem.



Panel II

The Necessity to Recognize Genocide in the Netherlands

- **Differences between the Legal Definition of Genocide and Genocide in the Public Imagination**
Prof. dr. Harmen van der Wilt, *professor of International Criminal Law– University of Amsterdam* (EN)
- **Dutch country visits to Chemical Attacks Locations**
Mr. Khass Naseri, *expert on religious minorities in Kurdistan* (NL)
- **Passions and Expects of the People of Halabja 25 years after the Genocide**
Mr. Abdollah Hejab, *Representative of Iranian Kurdistan at UNPO* (EN)
- **Achieving Political Recognition of Genocide**
Mr. Harry van Bommel, *Member of the Dutch Parliament - SP* (EN)
- **Recognition of Kurdish Genocide - Dutch- and EuroPetition**
Mr. Dana Cheragwandi, *Member of the Board of Directors at VON and writer of the petitions* (EN)



From left to right H. van Bommel, H. van der Wilt, A.Hejab, D.N.A. Cheragwandi, K. Naseri

Speech by Dr. Harmen van der Wilt

Expert in Genocide Studies – University of Amsterdam

Differences between the Legal Definition of Genocide and Genocide in the Public Imagination



I have been asked to tell you something about the legal definition of genocide and the possible distortions with the public understanding of that concept.

I will start with the Genocide Convention. This enumerates, as you may know, some rather gruesome activities:

- ✓ Killing people,
- ✓ Causing serious bodily or mental harm
- ✓ Deliberately inflicting conditions of life calculated to bring about their physical destruction
- ✓ Imposing measures intended to prevent births
- ✓ Forcibly transferring children.

If these actions are committed with the special intent to destroy a group in whole or in part, it is genocide, according to the Convention. And this definition has been copied, and has been adopted by the statutes of the International Criminal Tribunal for the former Yugoslavia (ICTY), the International Criminal Tribunal for Rwanda (ICTR), and more recently the International Criminal Court (ICC).

The term genocide, as you may know, was coined by the Polish jurist Rafael Lemkin. And it is actually a neologism of the Greek word 'genos' – which means people, or tribe – and the Latin word 'caedere', that means to kill. And we know the combination for patricide for instance or homicide and now he invented the word genocide.

As all legal terms the definition is formal and rather detached, but it covers a most disconcerting reality.

“The gist of genocide is the denial of the right to be different, and not only the right to be different, but the factual and inescapable truth and reality that people are different.”



The gist of genocide is the denial of the right to be different, and not only the right to be different, but the factual and inescapable truth and reality that people are different. So genocide is targeted against human diversity and this is one of the profound observations by one of my favourite philosophers Hannah Arendt.

Well the mental element is I think very important: This is the 'special intent to destroy a group'. What does that mean? You wish to wipe people from the earth, not because of what they do, but because of what they are.

I want to make some – actually three – observations on the notion of 'special intent', which is so central to this concept, and to the consequences of this special intent. I will end up with some comments on the cases in which genocide has been recognized by courts of law because these cases shed some light on the blinding reality of genocide.

Firstly, a precondition for 'special intent' in respect of genocide is that people can be identified or singled out as 'members of the group'. It does not matter whether you are guilty or innocent of having committed an offence or having done something wrong, as those moral categories are immaterial to the génocidaire, to the one that commits genocide. Perhaps the most distressing aspect for the victim is that he or she cannot escape his or her fate. And that is precisely the reason why the targeted groups in the legal definition are restricted to groups exhibiting more or less stable features, such as race, nationality, ethnicity and religion.

The ICTR has elaborated on the content of these concepts in the first and the famous Akayesu-case:

- ✓ 'A national group is defined as a collection of people who are perceived to share a legal bond based on a common citizenship, coupled with reciprocity rights and duties' (§ 512)
- ✓ 'An ethnic group is generally defined as a group whose members share a common language or culture' (§ 513)
- ✓ 'The conventional definition of racial group is based on the hereditary physical traits often identified with a geographical region, irrespective of linguistic, cultural national or religious factors.' (§ 514)
- ✓ 'The religious group is one whose members share the same religion, denomination or mode of worship.' (§ 515)

The Genocide Convention – nor the Statutes of the international criminal tribunals and ICC, do not acknowledge political or cultural genocide. This was much to the dismay of Lemkin, who certainly recognized the cultural aspects of genocide.

Well what is my opinion about the issue? I think we have to differentiate. It is certainly possible to commit 'cultural genocide' by, for instance, denying a group to commemorate their heroes or historical events or prohibiting the use of language at school. That refers to the means of committing genocide: it is not restricted to biological or physical destruction.



However, I am in favour of restricting the targeted groups to groups having a more or less fixed and stable composition. An adversary to a regime can escape his fate by changing his conduct – at least on the surface -. A Jew or a Kurd could not even choose that strategy. The point is that someone is really identified by a perpetrator but also as a victim himself, he or she considers himself to be one of the group that is targeted and who cannot escape his fate. Don't get me wrong, systematic oppression of political adversaries by Pinochet or Gaddafi were very serious crimes, arguably perhaps even crimes against humanity, but they were not genocide.

My second observation is that special intent is a difficult concept in criminal law, because it resembles and it comes very near to the concept of 'motive'. We, criminal lawyers, are relatively simple people; we say well intend is already difficult to identify, let alone something as a motive. How can you speak of motive? Because that's a deeper and more profound physical reality which is not recognizable on the surface unless someone indeed expresses the motive and even then it can be doubted whether it is really true. I think it is important to distinguish between the two, between special intent and personal motives, because they should not be confused. In the context of Rwanda for instance, the personal motive of eliminating Tutsi business competitors did not preclude the specific intent to destroy the Tutsi's as a group. I may say it was not the idea to destroy as a prime motive, no but it came of course as the usable consequence. Similarly, the killing of about 50% of the Northern Aché Indians in Paraguay in the sixties and seventies was done under the pretext that they obstructed economic development. But the manifest effect of this campaign was their virtual destruction, so I would have no problems in qualifying it as genocide.

My third observation is closely related to the previous one. If it is so difficult to prove 'special intent', why not abolish it entirely and replace it by a less demanding 'mental standard'. I, personally, would be in favour of an alternative solution: differentiation. The main perpetrator, the one who organizes the event, must be shown to have possessed 'specific intent'. The accomplice need only have knowledge that his/her assistance facilitated the crime of destruction. He need not share the special intent to annihilate a group in whole or in part. The issue came to the fore, as you probably know, in the famous Van Anraat case. I think that you all know who he was. He was involved in the selling of DGD to Saddam Hussein. He stood trial in the Netherlands and the fact that he did not share Saddam Hussein intent to massacre the Kurds did not rule out that he would qualify as an accomplice in genocide. He could not get away with it, by pleading that he was only in it for the money. He was, however, acquitted on that count, because the courts did not find sufficient evidence that at the time he even knew about Saddam's vile intent.

"The legal definition in the Genocide Convention has the potential of preventing genocide, because it qualifies conspiracy and incitement to genocide on the same par as genocide itself."

What can we learn from the case law about the legal concept of genocide? Obviously, the Holocaust was the paradigmatic case, although the Nuremberg Tribunal preceded the birth of the Genocide Convention and no one was convicted for genocide at Nuremberg. Eichmann was, for that matter, 25 years later in Jerusalem. Since then, accused have stood trial on the count of genocide before the International Criminal Tribunal for the Former Yugoslavia and the Rwanda Tribunal. And they have been convicted on that account. Srebrenica was qualified as genocide, as you may know, and of course there has been lots of pieces of evidence of the genocide in Rwanda. The definition is not perfect, but it provides a workable standard. Moreover, the legal definition in the Genocide Convention has the potential of preventing genocide, because it qualifies conspiracy and incitement to genocide on the same par as genocide itself. I have been of course involved in a very interesting trial before the ICTR, the so-called media case in which the inciting of people to commit genocide by broadcasting of the *Télévision Libre des Mille Collines* was qualified as incitement to genocide and that precedes by definition the commission of genocide itself.

I think we must be cautious in using the concept, at the risk of diluting it. But in my view the genocide convention leaves ample room to depict the massacre of the Kurds by Saddam Hussein, the imposed famine on the Ukrainians by Stalin and the slaughter of Armenians by the Turks as the ‘crime of crimes’, thus as genocide.



Speech by Mr. Khass Naseri

Expert on Religious Minorities in Kurdistan

Dutch country visits to Chemical Attacks Location



I heard from my colleague Harry van Bommel that the speaking language at the moment is Dutch, so I'll try to switch to Dutch and talk in Dutch.

De Yarsan Democratische organisatie, of the Yarsan Democratic Organisation, is een organisatie opgericht in 1981, maar helaas, wegens de politieke atmosfeer in Iraans Koerdistan is het op een gegeven moment opgeheven en daarna uiteindelijk heropgericht. Ik ben één van de cofounders, oftewel een van de medeoprichters van de partij. Wij hebben gelukkig best wel uitgebreide contacten met zowel de Iraanse oppositiegroepen als met de regerende partij in de regionale regering van Koerdistan in Hewlêr.

Waar ik het graag over wil hebben is het feit dat, binnen de Koerdische gemeenschap de belangen van de mensen die niet tot de hoofdstroom van het moslim geloof behoren gemarginaliseerd worden. Ik ben een aantal jaren geleden in Koerdistan geweest, waar puk en kdpi over regeren. Wat me opviel was dat er mensen zijn binnen de Koerdische gemeenschap in Zuid Koerdistan die zich niet op hun gemak voelen, terwijl ze de basis vormen van het Koerd zijn. Ik heb het dan over de Kakaïs. De grondwet van Koerdistan, ik was toen de woordvoerder van de partij waar ik het over had, ik heb toen telefonische en ook persoonlijke gesprekken gehad met de leiders van de beide regerende politieke partijen in Koerdistan om te praten of in het kader van het Koerdische volk en het Koerdische nationalisme voor eens en altijd een grondwet te kunnen maken, dat het recht van iedereen daar gewaarborgd wordt. Helaas is dit niet gebeurd, uiteindelijk is de grondwet in Zuid Koerdistan opgesteld aan de hand van Islam Sharia. Dat betekend nogmaals Dames en Heren, (*De heer Naseri reageert naar het publiek: "Dat is wel zo de heer Lashkari helaas". De heer Lashkari reageert vanuit het publiek: "Daar ben ik het niet mee eens". Naseri reageert: "Daar kunt u straks een vraag over stellen en dan zal ik daar op reageren"*). Daarin, in zo'n grondwet, betekend automatisch het uitsluiten van andere geloven, waar we hebben daar het ministerie van Okaaf.

Dan kom ik even terug naar Iraans Koerdistan, daar wil ik ook bij betrekken de Iraanse politieke partijen, onder andere meneer Keywan Faramarzi en de heer Abdollah Hejab. Het verbaast me dat deze stad (*houdt plaatje op met daarop geschreven Zardah*) die als eerste in Iraans Koerdistan is gebombardeerd door Saddam Hussein, door middel van chemische wapens, en er wordt geen woord over gerept. Waarom!? Omdat hier alleen maar de Kakaïs wonen. Op 5 Juni 2009, is de heer Fred Teeven, de huidige staatssecretaris van het Ministerie van Justitie, toen als openbaar ministerie naar Iran, naar Iraans Koerdistan afgereisd om daar ter plekke de gewonden te zien en heeft daar geconstateerd dat daar daadwerkelijk problemen zijn geweest en als eerst zal erkennen dat daar chemische wapens zijn gebruikt. Wat me verbaast want nog steeds he, ik wil het even over de Koerden onderling hebben, dat geen enkele politieke partij van Iraans Koerdistan, het nooit en te nimmer, over de rechten van andere religieuze minderheden in Iraans Koerdistan hebben. Tenzij het in hun eigen politieke belang en straatje past. Dat is het probleem dat we hebben, we moeten van Zuid Koerdistan leren, dat geldt niet alleen voor de Kakaïs en de Yarsani's in Iraans Koerdistan, dat geldt voor Assyriërs, dat geldt voor Joden in Koerdistan, dat geldt ook voor andere plaatsen waar religieuze minderheden wonen.

*"Ik ben een Koerd en ik ben er trots op.....
maar dat betekend niet dat ik als Koerd de
rechten van andere Koerden die niet mijn
geloof aanhangen moet negeren en
onderdrukken.."*

Op het moment dat we de vragen over genocide erkend proberen te krijgen door het parlement, in dat geval de heer van Bommel die zich daar ook sterk voor maakt, heb ik gisteravond een telefonisch gesprek gehad met meneer *Atam Boeraan*, die is gouverneur van Halabja. Hij heeft een drukke agenda, het is een goede vriend van mij, die hangt ook het zelfde geloof aan dat ik aanhang. 4 jaar geleden, als ik me niet vergis, was ik in Koerdistan. De geestelijke leiders van Koerdistan, die financieel gesteund worden en huisvesting krijgen door de Iraaks Koerdische regering, die waren tegen *Atam Boeraan*, als een niet moslim de gouverneur van Halabja kon worden. Kunnen we aan de hand van deze problematiek, een

onafhankelijke Koerdische staat oprichten? Kan dat wel Bakir Lashkari? (*Uit het publiek spreek de heer Lashkari: "U vraagt het aan mij?"*). De heer van Bommel lukt dit? (*De heer Naseri richt zich naar de heer Lashkari en antwoord: "omdat u dit verdedigde namelijk, u had het over democratie, een democratie zonder democraten".*) Laat ik het zo stellen, ik ben er heilig van overtuigd dat zolang de rechten van de religieuze minderheden in Koerdistan niet erkend worden, niet grondwettelijk erkend worden, we een groot probleem op internationaal niveau hebben. Ik ben een Koerd en ik ben er trots op, maar dat betekent niet dat ik als Koerd de rechten van andere Koerden die niet mijn geloof aanhangen moet negeren, onderdrukken. Democratie is er, dames en heren, niet en alleen om puur je eigen soortgenoten en geloofsgenoten te verdedigen, het is veel meer. Juist is het er, zoals in Nederland het democratische stelsel, ook om andersdenkenden te beschermen. Dit verwacht ik van de Iraaks Koerdische regering, ik ga me er hard voor maken.

Wat ik veel belangrijker vind is dat de Koerdische regering ook een grotere bijdrage moet leveren aan dit soort conferenties. Ik mis hier, in alle eerlijkheid, de aanwezigheid van de vertegenwoordiger van de regionale regering van Koerdistan. (*Dat hebben we niet.*) Terwijl zo'n belangrijk onderwerp, in dit geval op nationaal niveau in Nederland, besproken wordt. We proberen de Nederlandse Tweede Kamer te overtuigen en over te halen om de genocide in Halabja tegen de Koerden in Iraaks Koerdistan erkend te krijgen. Waar is de vertegenwoordiger van de regering? Ik vind op het moment, kijk naar Armeniërs dames en heren, ik ben in Parijs geweest, daar was een grote vergadering waar de Armeniërs bij betrokken waren. De minister van Buitenlandse Zaken zat in de conferentie. Hij zei, desnoods doen we alles om de Turkse regering in het internationaal tribunaal Den Haag te krijgen. Waar is de vertegenwoordiger van de Koerdische regering dan? (*Rumoer vanuit het publiek, Naseri antwoord: "Het zal me verbazen, ik denk het ook niet."*). Ik probeer het kort te houden, er moet ook nog tijd zijn voor vragen eventueel.

Via deze weg, namens een organisatie die opkomt voor de belangen van alle Koerden in het algemeen en mensenrechten in het algemeen, en het recht van de volgelingen van de Kakaï in Iraaks Koerdistan, wil ik namens deze mensen, Harry van Bommel en de Tweede Kamer, vragen om genocide op de Koerden, zoals andere landen binnen Europa al gedaan hebben, ook te erkennen. Desnoods zijn we bereid om hierover documenten te leveren die in het belang kunnen zijn van het proces om de erkenning voor elkaar te krijgen.



Speech by Mr. Abdollah Hejab

Representative of Iranian Kurdistan at UNPO

The Passion and Expects of the People of Halabja, 25 years after the Genocide



First of all, I would like to thank my colleagues at The Unrepresented Nations and Peoples Organization (UNPO) for holding this conference about the recognition of the Kurdish Genocide in South Kurdistan/Iraq, here in the city of the Hague, the seat of the International Criminal Court.

25 years ago, on 16 March 1988, Iraqi authorities launched a large scale attack by chemical weapons, including nerve gases against the Kurdish city of Halabja, killing at least 5000 civilians and injuring more than 10 000 people within a few minutes. While this horrendous assault was taking place, the same barbaric regime launched the first phase of the notorious Anfal operations against the Kurdish People, in which 182 thousand people were systematically massacred.

Even now, 25 years after the attack, where thousands of people died in the most terrifying way imaginable, men and women are developing rare forms of cancers, which may well be linked to the chemical effects of the bombing. The life of inhabitants and the environment still show signs of poison. Cancer along with many other diseases have become prevalent among the survivors, and many Kurdish children are now being born with defects. Very little, if anything at all, was done for the Kurds of Halabja to overcome the problems caused by chemical weapons. The city of Halabja needs total reconstruction and a new infrastructure. The people need jobs, health and welfare. The victims of Halabja and their relatives deserve justice.

“In December 2005, a court in The Hague ruled that the Anfal operation against Kurds in Iraq in the 1980s was indeed an act of genocide.”

The BBC reporter John Simpson reported just a few days ago that: “yet a quarter of a century later [after the tragedy of Halabja], the horror is not over as traces of the mustard gas which was used is found in the cellars where people took refuge during the bombing of the town”.

Article 2 of the 1949 United Nations Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of the Crime of Genocide defines Genocide as "acts committed with intent to destroy, in whole or in part, a national, ethnical, racial or religious group". There is no doubt that what happened in Halabja 25 years ago was a plan of genocide against the Kurdish People.



In December 2005 a court in The Hague ruled that the Anfal operation against the Kurds in Iraq in the 1980s was indeed an act of genocide. The Dutch court considered it legally and convincingly proven that the Kurdish population meets the requirement under the Genocide Conventions as an ethnic group. The court has no other conclusion other than that these attacks were committed with the intent to destroy the Kurdish population of Iraq. Today, 25 years later, the movement to recognize this act of total extraction perpetrated against the Kurdish people of South Kurdistan as genocide is gaining international attention and understanding, but still not enough support to get the international decision makers to hear the voice of the People of Halabja.

Since the decision by the court in The Hague, the parliaments of Sweden and the United Kingdom have recognized the massacre of Halabja as Genocide. Several representatives of states, International organizations, politicians, officials and Human Rights activists have visited the city of Halabja and promised to take actions towards recognition of Halabja and the rest of the Anfal campaign as genocide against Kurdish People. In Canada, Norway, France, Germany, and even in the Netherlands and a lot of other countries petitions have been submitted to parliaments to recognize the Halabja massacre as an act of genocide. In spite of those campaigns, none of these countries have taken any serious actions towards recognition

of the genocide. Even the German parliament refused to recognize it. The International Criminal Court in this city, the UN, the Government of the USA, The Arab League, The Organization of Non Alliance Countries, Muslim Countries and the EU have neither recognized the genocide, nor did they do anything for the victims of Halabja.

Neither the new Iraqi Government has fulfilled its moral and political obligations towards the people of Halabja and the Kurdish nation, nor the companies and countries that supplied the Iraqi army with chemical weapons have taken responsibility. The case here in the Netherlands is an example of it.

The crime of Halabja is the most brutal act of the toppled Iraqi regime's to eliminate the Kurdish nation. Today, 25 years after these horrible attacks, Halabja is a free city and the majority of the People of South Kurdistan live in peace and some of them even in prosperity. But in spite of a regime change in Iraq, the mentality that caused the tragic attack in Halabja and Anfal campaigns exists in a new form with a new face. In other words, the fear of new tragedies against the people of Halabja and the Kurdish Nation has unfortunately not been swept away by the fall of Saddam Hussain. The situation is in some ways similar to what the speaker of the US House of Representatives Theodore Sedgwick Fay said in 1831: "There is something hideous in the contemplation of these hidden dangers- these terrible things suspended over our heads in the midst of the festivity, like the Sword of Damocles by a single hair".

"The immediate act is to ask the international community not to undermine the suffering, and say it loud and clear that those crimes were acts of genocide against the Kurdish people."

During its first commemoration of the Halabja Massacre in 2009, the United Nations urged for its recognition as genocide to deter future atrocities. Therefore, the importance of recognition lies on the prevention of future acts of genocide. It will also implicate the acknowledgement of the persecution of the Kurds and the terror inflicted upon them, as well as the lack of action by the international community to protect them, and further bring to justice its perpetrators.

Due to the sever repression of human rights in Iraq, the extensive needs of the people of Halabja which remain unmet, due to the lack of mutual trust and continuous threat of using force against the Kurdish people, even by the new authority of Iraq, it is necessary to require the International Community to:

- 1) Insure full protection of the Kurdish People against any form of aggression by the new Iraqi government, or any other threats in the region,
- 2) Ask the new government of Iraq to pay compensation to the families of martyrs and survived victims whose lives were ruined because of the crimes of Iraqi government against the civilians in Halabja,
- 3) Immediately start a wider plan for rehabilitation of the environment in Kurdistan especially in the region of Halabja, and work for renovation of all damages in the region,
- 4) Establish an International research centre sponsored by the WHO or any other international organization for research on the consequences of chemical weapons on life and nature in Halabja,
- 5) Establish a committee of experts in law in order to investigate the crimes that have been committed against the Kurdish people in Iraq.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

Justice and humanity are basic values that should always remain firm put into practice. It is a responsibility on all of us to do justice and stand up to what we believe in. I therefore urge your conscious to spear no means in order to recognize and acknowledge the massacre of Halabja and the Anfal campaigns against the Kurdish people as two acts of genocide and work systematically and very hard for the prevention of their recurrence. Especially at this historic moment when peace and stability in the Middle East has become more fragile than ever, and Iraq is heading a new era, there is a new radical anti-Kurdish drive building momentum to transform it into a policy of a powerful and centralized state again. It is therefore very crucial to prevent future acts of genocide against the Kurdish people, and to eliminate weapons of mass destruction worldwide and especially in the Middle East. The two devastating tragedies however are events that can never be wiped out from the history of Kurds and humankind.



Speech by Mr. Harry van Bommel

Member of the Dutch Parliament (SP)

Achieving Political Recognition of Genocide



After the genocides of the Second World War, many world leaders were in agreement that something must be done to ensure that genocide of the kind visited upon the Jews must never happen again. Shortly after that war, in 1948, the General Assembly of the United Nations therefore adopted the Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of Genocide. In this Convention it states that genocide is a crime which is contrary to the spirit and goals of the UN and that the civilised world condemns it. It further states that genocide has caused humanity enormous losses and that international cooperation is necessary in order to redeem mankind from this horrific scourge.

Sixty-five years after the adoption of this convention we are forced to ask ourselves what has been achieved. Despite international cooperation to prevent genocide, humanity is still not safe from this scourge. Since the Holocaust many other instances of genocide have taken place, such as the slaughter in Rwanda in 1994. In that African country, according to estimates by Human Rights Watch, more than half a million Rwandans lost their lives in a hundred days.

“Something must be done to ensure that genocide of the kind visited upon the Jews must never happen again.”

Closer to my homeland was the fall of Srebrenica. On 11th July 1995 the seizure of the Bosnian town of Srebrenica was followed by the deportation and genocide of an estimated 7- to 8,000 Muslim boys and men. They were formally under the protection of a UN battalion consisting of Dutch soldiers, but to no avail. Both genocides will leave deep scars on the survivors for a very long time.

But today we are gathered here because of another gruesome episode from history, the genocide of the Kurds during the Anfal campaign. In the 1980s, when Iraq was fighting an unscrupulous war with neighbouring Iran, Saddam Hussein’s army also fought ruthlessly against the Kurds in the north. This was a genocidal campaign. At the end of the 1980s thousands of Kurdish villages were systematically razed to the ground and hundreds of thousands of people driven from their homes. In this operation, according to Human Rights Watch, between 50,000 and 100,000 Kurdish citizens lost their lives.



In Kurdistan, I hear more often a figure closer to 200,000. Probably Saddam Hussein’s most gruesome deed committed against the Kurds was when the inhabitants of Halabja, on 16th March 1988, were bombarded with chemical weapons. Last Saturday, twenty-five years after the event, I spoke at the commemoration in The Hague. This commemoration was held in front of the building of the Organisation for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons. I am happy to say that the city council of the city of The Hague has decided that a monument should be erected in commemoration of the victims of the Anfal campaign.

By far the most important goal of the aforementioned UN Convention is the prevention of gruesome genocides such as this. It should be obvious that greater international effort is needed to accomplish this. I see the question of the political recognition of genocide, on both the national and international level, most emphatically in this light. Political recognition is one means to prevent this huge source of misery. That’s why it would be good if countries, including the Netherlands, proceed towards such recognition.

Anyone who, along with me, advocates the recognition of the genocide against the Kurds, would do well to pay careful attention to the judgement against the poison gas trader Frans van Anraat. During the first ruling on 23rd December 2005, the court in The Hague expressed condemnation of the genocidal character of the mass killings. In that ruling, in which Van Anraat was found guilty of complicity in war crimes, it was stated in relation to Saddam Hussein's actions against the Kurds that "the (...) evidence in the court's judgment permits no conclusion other than that the proven attacks were committed with the aim of destroying the Kurdish people in Iraq."

The judgement of the court indicated thereby a number of aspects which taken together point towards genocide:

- the general framework of the systematic oppression of the Kurdish population;
- the very large number of fatal victims within the Kurdish population;
- the widespread deployment of chemical weapons against the Kurdish population, weapons which by their very nature, when deployed against villages, cannot discriminate between civilians and combatants, and which not only cause great suffering amongst the people, but also create fear and anxiety, making the towns and villages affected uninhabitable for a long time;
- the widespread destruction of Kurdish villages in northern Iraq and the deportations of the civilian population which followed; and statements by representatives of the regime which poured scorn on the Kurdish people."

On the basis of these the court was "of the opinion that all the proven attacks were committed with genocidal intent towards the Kurdish population."

In a later judgement in this case however, in May 2007, after an appeal, it was stated that the court needed more information to establish the genocidal character of the Anfal operation, but it was also said that there are "at least strong clues that the leaders of the Iraqi regime (...) have been guided by a genocidal intent considering at least a substantial part of the Kurdish population in (North) Iraq." Those who believe that these judgments make it easy for Dutch politicians to proceed to recognition, are wrong.

"Every argument against recognition fails because of the simple fact that recognition demonstrates respect for the victims and survivors of these gruesome deeds."

In March 2008 I put a question on the genocide of the Kurds to the then Ministers of Justice and of Foreign Affairs. The question which I posed was simple, namely - what was the Dutch standpoint on the Anfal operation and the gas attacks on the Kurdish population in Iraq and whether the ministers were in agreement with me that this was a case of genocide? The answer was wholly evasive. I quote: "the Dutch government condemns the attack on the civilian population of Halabja in the context of the Anfal campaign and in particular the means used in this. It is one of the most gruesome examples of the misdeeds of Saddam Hussein's rule." The word genocide was carefully avoided.

From the answer it was wholly unclear what the reasons were for the Dutch government not to call this genocide. As far as my party, the Socialist Party, is concerned, every argument against recognition fails because of the simple fact that recognition demonstrates respect for the victims and survivors of these gruesome deeds. It's a matter of recognition of the suffering of this population. The Kurds have – and moreover completely understandably – long complained that the mountains were their only friends. Political recognition would be a fine token of friendship.

We are now five years on from that absolutely disappointing answer from the Dutch government. Hope glimmers on the horizon. In the time that has passed since there have been some interesting developments, particularly on the international level, in regards to recognition.

In Canada for example, there is movement in relation to this. The day after tomorrow, exactly twenty-five years after the tragedy in Halabja, a motion will be announced by a Canadian MP calling on the government to recognise the genocide. Whether this motion will be adopted is uncertain, but it is a hopeful sign that three years ago in Canada a motion was adopted in which the attack on Halabja was called a crime against humanity. A number of countries in Europe have already taken this important step. Only a few months ago, on 5th December 2012, the Swedish parliament adopted a motion in which the Anfal campaign was labelled 'genocide against the Kurds'. This success is the result of years of lobbying by Kurdish groups in Sweden. On two previous occasions attempts to gain recognition were blocked, but the third time saw success. In Norway too, parliament has already moved towards recognition.

The most important victory to date is, however, the recognition by the British parliament on 28th February 2013. A little earlier a petition had been started in the country in which the petitioners stated in clear language that “we urge the Government to recognise formally the Genocide against the people of Iraqi Kurdistan and to encourage the EU and UN to do likewise. This will enable Kurdish people, many in the UK, to achieve justice for their considerable loss.”

From the government’s reaction to this petition it seems clear that they are not happy with it: “It remains the Government’s view that it is not for governments to decide whether a genocide has been committed in this case, as this is a complex legal question. Where an international judicial body finds a crime to have been a genocide, however, this will often play an important part in whether we will recognise one as such.” Parliament has fortunately taken nothing away from this government position and has recognised the genocide as genocide. The question now is what attitude the government will now adopt. Let’s hope that they are going to stand on the right side of history and accept and adopt this motion.

Back to the Netherlands. Recently I received an answer from the new Minister of Foreign Affairs that I believe offers space for recognition by the Netherlands. I asked the Minister whether he agreed that international diplomatic recognition of genocide could serve as a means to prevent it. The minister answered that “the government (views) it as of great importance that international attention is paid to the prevention of genocide. The Genocide Convention is a symbol of this international attention. Attention to serious crimes from the past can in addition indeed have a preventive effect.” This answer I see as real encouragement to everyone who is of the opinion that the genocide against the Kurds should be given political recognition by the Netherlands. What’s needed now is pressure to realise such recognition.

As a result of the recent international developments the moment has in my view arrived in which my question to the government from 2008 asking it to recognise the gruesome deeds against the Kurds as genocide can be posed afresh. And in doing so I’ll accept no other answer other than a clear yes!



“The moment has in my view arrived in which my question to the government from 2008 asking it to recognize the gruesome deeds against the Kurds as genocide can be posed afresh. And in doing so I’ll accept no answer other than a clear yes!”

Speech by Mr. Dana Noor Aldien Cheragwandi

Member of the Board of Directors at Vluchtelingen-Organisaties Nederland

Recognition of Kurdish Genocide Dutch- and Euro Petition



Dear guests, ladies and gentlemen,

My name is Dana Cheragwandi, member of the board of Refugee Organizations Netherlands, an organization that has represented the Kurds in the Netherlands for over 25 years. I stand here before you, on behalf of a group of young academics that work independently on a project to recognize the Kurdish Genocide in the Dutch and European Parliament. I would like to thank UNPO for giving permission to speak at this event.

We have heard many speakers stating what should have been common sense for all people that know about the atrocities the Kurds have experienced, recognition of the Kurdish Genocide is a must.

As a Faylee Kurd I grew up with many stories of the 16 family members that have been killed and/or have been used for the chemical weapons testing before disappearing. I grew up hearing stories of survivors in my family that were tortured or deported. These are stories not to be taken lightly.

To my despair the international community has not unanimously recognized these crimes against humanity as genocide. But the cause has taken some positive steps; Sweden and the UK have politically recognized the Kurdish Genocide.

With a group of young academics, that are willing and able, we are lobbying in the Netherlands and in Europe to raise awareness of the Kurds and their history and to make recognition of the Kurdish Genocide a political fact.

What are we truly doing? We are not asking for help from the EU, KRG or the Netherlands. Our goal is to approach this cause academically. Lectures and seminars are being held, newspaper articles are written, and relations with Dutch and other European politicians are being developed and most importantly to the cause, more awareness in the Dutch and European society is on its way. Awareness is key and proof of it, is essential. Because of this, two petitions have been launched, in order to be presented at the Dutch and European parliament. The European petition is available in at least 5 different European countries, the Netherlands, Italy, Spain, Sweden and the United Kingdom. We hope, that it will be well signed. All sympathizers should sign both petitions.

Therefore I would like to ask all of you to distribute these petitions as your own amongst your members. I'm sure that all of you will support these petitions because it will express your interests in human rights, justice and respect for the 'Genocide Treaty'. We would like to present our gratitude to each and everyone that puts in this effort. Flyers with the addresses of the petitions will be sent to each organization here today. So let's join hands for the cause.



"I grew up with many stories of the 16 family members that have been killed and/or have been used for the chemical weapons testing before disappearing."





Both petitions are available online from:

Dutch citizens:

<http://petities.nl/petitie/recognise-the-kurdish-genocide-in-iraq>

European citizens

<http://petities.nl/petitie/erken-de-koerdische-genocide--2>

“ We are lobbying in the Netherlands and in Europe to raise awareness of the Kurds and their history and to make recognition of the Kurdish Genocide a political fact.”

Erken de Koerdische Genocide



Wij verzoeken het Europese en het Nederlandse parlement de Koerdische Genocide te erkennen.

Vanaf de jaren 60 voerde Saddam Hoesseins regime een gewelddadig campagne uit op de Koerden. Met als dieptepunt het gebruik van chemische wapens op o.a. de stad Halabja.

Zweden, Noorwegen en het Verenigd Koninkrijk zijn Nederland al voor geweest en de Europese Unie zal snel volgen.

Steun deze zaak en erken de Koerdische Genocide door de petitie te ondertekenen.

Voor Nederland

<http://erkengenocideopkoerden.petities.nl/>

Voor de Europese Unie

<http://kurdishgenocide.petities.nl/>

Speakers Biographies



Mr. Bakir Lashkari

www.lashkari.nl

Halabja Committee and Foundation Halabja Monument

Entrepreneur and business development manager, Bakir Lashkari is very active in the Kurdish community as he is a member of the Kurdish Dutch Business Community. Bakir Lashkari is also part of the Halabja Committee and the Foundation for the Halabja Monument; he organized the Halabja remembrance on the 16th of March 2013 at the OPCW in The Hague.

Mr Latif Tali

www.fedkom.nl

Federatie Koerden in Nederland (FedKom)

Latif Tali was born in Dersim and, in the early 1990's, came to the Netherlands where he studied public administration and public management. In his spare time, he is also working for Fedkom, an organization of Kurdish associations in the Netherlands which counts 8 member associations. Internationally, FedKom is part of the Confederation of Kurdish associations in Europe (Kon Kurd), whose office is in Brussels and which gathers 170 member associations.



Mr Keywan Faramarzi

www.komala.org

Komala

Keywan Faramarzi is a representative of Komala, the Kurdish political party in Iran that was formed in autumn 1969 among Kurdish leftist students and intellectuals in Tehran and other Kurdish towns.

Dr. Mariwan Kanie

www.mariwankanie.blogspot.nl

University of Amsterdam

Mariwan Kanie is a Kurdish intellectual, writer, and political scientist. He has been living in the Netherlands since 1993, upon fleeing from Iraq. He studied at the University of Amsterdam, where he completed his PhD in 2010. The title of his thesis is "Martyrdom between nation and religion. Political love, poetry, and self-sacrifice in Kurdish nationalism". His current position at the University of Amsterdam is in the department of Hebrew, Aramaic and Jewish studies. In 2004, Dr. Kanie won the prize for best non-fiction work, issued by the Kurdish Ministry of Culture, with the book titled "Complex Identities".





Dr. Harmen van der Wilt

www.uva.nl

University of Amsterdam

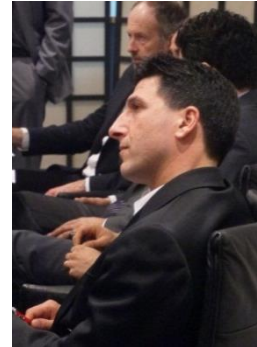
Dr. van der Wilt is a Professor of International Criminal Law at the University of Amsterdam, and a Research fellow at the Amsterdam Center of International Law. A former lecturer at the University of Maastricht and ad litem judge at the District Court of Roermond, Dr. Harmen has written numerous publications including articles on Complicity in Genocide (the van Anraat-case) and Joint Criminal Enterprise in the Journal of International Criminal Justice.

Mr. Khass Naseri

www.yarsanmedia.com

Yarsan Democratic Organization

Khass Naseri is a Kurdish Iranian, former English teacher, who fled to Holland for political reasons. He is the co-founder of the Yarsan Democratic Organization, which is a human rights organization defending in particular the religious minority of Yarsan in Iran and Kurdistan. Khass Naseri is currently the representative of YDO in Benelux and works at the ministry of Justice and Security.



Mr. Abdollah Hejab

Representative Iranian Kurdistan at UNPO

Mr. Abdollah Hejab is the Kurdish representative of Iranian Kurdistan to the Unrepresented Nations and Peoples Organization (UNPO). Upon moving to Norway in 1991, Mr. Hejab obtained a Master's degree in Political Science from the University of Oslo. He has since published a series of articles addressing national identity and contemporary political and social conditions in Kurdistan, including a book he co-authored, entitled "An introduction to Human Rights", published in Kurdistan in 2012. Mr. Hejab has been actively involved in promoting the Kurdish cause for years, not only in Iran, but in all parts of Kurdistan.

Mr. Harry van Bommel

harryvanbommel.sp.nl/weblog

Member of Dutch Parliament - SP

Mr. van Bommel is a Dutch politician of the Socialist Party (SP) and has been a member of parliament since 1998. He also worked as an English and Dutch teacher and was member of the municipal Council in Amsterdam. Mr. Van Bommel focuses on Foreign and European Affairs and also has a strong interest in the Middle East and more especially in Kurdish issues. Some of his ideals are "an active peace policy and a fair distribution of wealth".



Mr. Dana.N.A. Cheragwandi

www.vluchtelingenorganisaties.nl

Member of the Board of Direction of VON

Dana N.A. Cheragwandi is a member of the Board of Directors at Vluchtelingen-Organisaties Nederland (VON); he studies at the University of Amsterdam and works as a freelance journalist and as a businessman in the Netherlands. Mr. Cheragwandi is very active in the Kurdish community as a former board member of the Kurdish Student Organisation (KSVN) and C.H.A.K.; He is the initiator of the petitions asking the recognition of the Kurdish Genocide. Many members of his family, Kurds from Bagdad, were victims of the Kurdish Genocide in Iraq.

About UNPO

The Unrepresented Nations and Peoples Organization (UNPO) is an international, nonviolent, and democratic membership organization. Its members are indigenous peoples, minorities, and unrecognized or occupied territories who have joined together to protect and promote their human and cultural rights, to preserve their environments, and to find nonviolent solutions to conflicts which affect them.

Although the aspirations of UNPO Members differ greatly, they are all united by one shared condition: they are not adequately represented at major international fora, such as the United Nations. As a consequence, their opportunity to participate on the international stage is significantly limited, as is their ability to access and draw upon the support of the global bodies mandated to defend their rights, protect their environments, and mitigate the effects of conflict.

In a world where over 90 per cent of conflicts are intra-state, the UNPO has been established to fill this gap by providing an international forum through which its Members can become effective participants and contributors to the international community. In an increasingly interdependent world, it is ever more important that those who continue to be denied their rights or remain excluded be given an opportunity to present their cases. The UNPO therefore works to address the consequences of marginalization, working with its Members to promote their democratic causes, to provide information, and to articulate creative and nonviolent strategies for progress. Above all, the UNPO works to ensure that the voices of its members are heard.

Founded in 1991 at the Peace Palace in The Hague, the UNPO is unique as an international organization in that it is built entirely by its Members. Through this strong connection to those suffering the consequences of exclusion that the organization seeks to address, the UNPO has since grown into a prominent and respected international organization.

The UNPO's membership has also grown steadily from its original fifteen founders, and now represents almost 50 Members worldwide. The work of the UNPO adapts continually to meet the challenges of its Members and the nature of the international political climate. Members remain committed to respecting the five principles enshrined in the UNPO Covenant: nonviolence, human rights, democracy and self-determination, environmental protection, and tolerance.

The UNPO remains committed to offering an increasing number of nations and peoples an entry point into the international community, enabling its Members to learn from one another, lending support where setbacks are encountered, and sharing successful experiences.



Media Coverage

Several examples:

18 March 2013

Justice for Genocide:
The campaign in the News

http://www.justice4genocide.com/campaign_news.php



18 March 2013

Leiden University:
Press Release

<http://media.leidenuniv.nl/legacy/unpo-kurdish-genocide-conference.pdf>



18 March 2013

eKurd.net:
Conference on Halabja Massacre in The
Hague

<http://www.ekurd.net/mismas/articles/misc2013/3/state6915.htm#RelatedArticles>



Appendix

Appendix 1: Press Release 06 March 2013

<http://www.unpo.org/article/15600>

PRESS RELEASE

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

25th Anniversary of the Halabja Massacre: Recognition as a Tool to Prevent Genocide

Monday, 18 March 2013, 13.00 - 17.00
Nieuwspoor - Lange Poten 10, The Hague

The Hague, 6 March 2013 - The Unrepresented Nations and Peoples Organization (UNPO) is holding a conference about the recognition of the Iraqi Kurdish Genocide on **18 March 2013** in The Hague, to commemorate the 25th anniversary of the **Halabja Massacre**. The conference will bring together academics, Kurdish Organizations, NGOs and politicians with an interest in the Kurdish question.

On 16 March 1988, Saddam Hussein unleashed a large scale chemical weapons attack against the rebellious Kurdish town of Halabja that caused for the deaths of at least 5000 civilians. 25 years later, the movement to recognize the exactions perpetrated against the Iraqi Kurds as genocide is finally gathering steam in the **international arena**. Several States have already embarked on the initiative, including Canada, France, Norway, Sweden and the United Kingdom.

The recognition of this event implicates the acknowledgement of the persecution of the Kurds and the terror inflicted upon them, as well as the lack of action by the international community to protect them and further bring to justice its perpetrators. During the first commemoration of the Halabja Massacre in 2009, the United Nations urged for its **recognition as genocide** to deter future atrocities. Therefore, the importance of this recognition lies also on the prevention of future acts of genocide.

In December, 2012 the city of The Hague approved a plan to build a monument commemorating the Halabja genocide. The city's continuous efforts to promote human rights have brought international attention to its unique position as the "**City of Peace and Justice**". Adding to this is the fact that The Hague hosts the headquarter of the Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons, the very weapons that killed more than 5000 Kurds in Halabja 25 years ago. This unique position makes The Hague the perfect location for a conference to **commemorate** the Halabja Massacre, **raise awareness** of genocide recognition as a tool against future exactions and facilitate the dialogue about **recognition in the Netherlands**.

More detailed information on the Conference will be available soon on www.unpo.org and on our Facebook page.

To attend, please fill in the registration form on our website.

UNPO Office
Laan van Meerdervoort 70
2517 AN The Hague
The Netherlands
Tel: +31 (0)70 3646504
Email: unpo@unpo.org



Appendix 2:

Flyer

18 March 2013
13.00-17.00
Nieuwspoor
Lange Poten 10
The Hague

Find out more
online

f UNPO

UNPO
www.unpo.org

Program

- The Halabja Massacre: 25 years later
- The Necessity to Recognize Genocide in the Netherlands

25th Anniversary of the Halabja Massacre:
Recognition as a Tool to Prevent Genocide

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Appendix 3:

Banner

25th Anniversary of the Halabja Massacre:
Recognition as a Tool to Prevent Genocide

18 March 2013 in The Hague

UNPO

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Appendix 4: Fact sheet



25th Anniversary of the Halabja Massacre: Recognition as a Tool to Prevent Genocide Fact Sheet



Iraqi Kurdistan - Overview

Kurdistan refers to a territory of 520,000 km², spread over different countries in the Middle East (Iran, Iraq, Turkey and Syria). The total population of the Kurds is 30 million people. In *Iraq*, the Kurds live in the north, in an autonomous area of 36,000 km². The capital is Erbil; there are 4 million Kurds, who run their own administration.

Iraqi Kurdistan - Historical background

Kurdistan was for centuries the scene of disputes by the big powers. In 1245 the Mongolians conquered the territory and 250 years later the Ottomans followed. After the dissolution of the Ottoman Empire in 1920, the Kurds were promised their own state (Treaty of *Sèvres*, 1920) but this never materialized. In the end, the victory powers of World War I changed their minds and only founded two Arab states, Syria and Iraq. As a result, the southern part of Kurdistan was incorporated into Iraq.

The Kurdish genocide took place over decades, starting in the 1960s with arabisation programs, deportation and killings. In the *early 1980s*, Iraqi President Saddam Hussein began a systematic deportation and genocide of the Kurdish population. This so-called "Anfal" campaign led to the disappearance of over 180.000 Kurds.

The Halabja massacre



On *16 March 1988*, Saddam Hussein unleashed a large scale chemical weapons attack against the rebellious Kurdish town of Halabja. It is estimated that a combination of mustard gas and other nerve agent chemicals were responsible for the deaths of at least 5000 civilians. The corpses, mostly unidentifiable, were hastily buried in mass graves, due to continued risk of poisoning. Traces of mustard gas remaining in cellars in the town continue to make them inaccessible to this day.

After being defeated by the allied forces in the Gulf War, the Iraqi forces withdrew from most areas of Iraqi Kurdistan, in *October 1991*. In order to protect the Kurdish civilian population and to provide humanitarian assistance, the United Nations created a *safe-haven* in the Kurdish area north of the 36th parallel. It also facilitated the formation of independent political structures.

Recognition of the Genocide

Twenty-five years after the Halabja Massacre, the movement to recognize the exactions perpetrated against the Iraqi Kurds as genocide is finally gathering steam in the international arena. Several States have already embarked on the initiative, including Sweden, Canada, the United Kingdom, and Norway. While the movement has yet to gain momentum, politicians, journalists and civil society leaders have remained active in their attempts to raise greater awareness for the atrocities committed against the Kurds. In the last few years, conferences and meetings regarding the genocide have been held throughout the world, reaffirming an international commitment to this movement.

The genocide against the Iraqi Kurds is not only considered a crime committed against the rules of war, but also a crime against humanity. Consequently, the recognition of this event implicates the acknowledgement of the blatant persecution of the Kurds and the terror inflicted upon them, as well as the lack of action by the international community to protect them and further bring to justice its perpetrators. During its first commemoration of the Halabja Massacre in 2009, the United Nations urged for its recognition as genocide to deter future atrocities. Therefore, the importance of this recognition lies also on the prevention of future acts of genocide.

Two petitions asking both European and Dutch Parliament to politically recognize the Kurdish Genocide has recently been launched. Not only does this petition aim at bringing acknowledgment and justice to all the victims and survivors of this massacre, but it also aims at preventing futures acts of genocide.

To sign these petitions, go to:

<http://eshengenocideopkoerden.petities.nl/> & <http://kurdishgenocide.petities.nl/>



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Laan van Meerdervoort 70, 2517 AN The Hague, The Netherlands, www.unpo.org



Appendix 5:

Program Handout - back and front

**Program "25th Anniversary of the Halabja Massacre:
Recognition as a Tool to Prevent Genocide"**
Monday, 18 March 2013, 13.00 - 17.00
Nieuwspoor - Lange Poten 10, The Hague

13:30 – Opening statement

- Mr. Marino Busdachin, Secretary General UNPO

13.45 – Panel I: The Halabja Massacre: 25 years later

- Mr. Bakir Lashkari, Halabja Committee & Foundation Halabja Monument: *25th Commemoration of the Halabja Massacre*
- Mr. Latif Tali, Federatie Koerden in Nederland (FedKom) : *Kurdish advocacy on Genocide recognition* (Dutch)
- Mr. Keywan Faramarzi, Komala (Dutch)
- Dr. Mariwan Kanie, University of Amsterdam: *The Halabja and Anfal Operation: the causes and consequences & the role of the international community.* (Dutch)

Q&A

15.15 – Panel II: The Necessity to Recognize Genocide in the Netherlands

- Prof. mr. dr. H. van der Wilt, expert in Genocide studies: *Differences between the legal definition of genocide and genocide in the public imagination*
- Mr. Abdullah Hejab, Representative of the Iranian Kurdistan and member of the UNPO Presidency: *Passions and expects of the People of Halabja 25 years after the genocide*
- Mr. Khass Naseri, expert on religious minorities in Kurdistan: *Dutch country visits to chemical attacks locations*
- Personal message of the governor of Halabja (read out)
- Mr. Harry van Bommel, Member of the Dutch Parliament (SP) : *Achieving political recognition of genocide*

Q&A

17:00 Conference Close



25th Anniversary of the Halabja Massacre: Recognition as a Tool to Prevent Genocide

18 March 2013 in The Hague



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Program Handout - Inside

Speakers

Mr. Bakir Lashkari is an entrepreneur and works as a business development manager. He is very active in the Kurdish community and is a member of the Kurdish Dutch Business Community. He is also part of the Halabja Committee and the Foundation for the Halabja Monument; he organized the Halabja remembrance on the 16th of March 2013 at the OPCW in The Hague.

De Federatie Koerden in Nederland (FedKom) is an organisation of Kurdish associations in the Netherlands with 8 member associations. Internationally FedKom is part of the Confederation of Kurdish associations in Europe (Kon Kurd) in Brussels which has 170 member associations.

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Dr. Mariwan Kanie is a Kurdish intellectual, writer, and political scientist. He has been living in the Netherlands since 1993, upon fleeing from Iraq. He studied at the University of Amsterdam, where he completed his PhD in 2010. The title of his thesis is "Martyrdom between nation and religion. Political love, poetry, and self sacrifice in Kurdish nationalism". His current position at the University of Amsterdam is in the department of Hebrew, Aramaic and Jewish studies. In 2004, Dr. Kanie won the prize for best non-fiction work, issued by the Kurdish Ministry of Culture, with the book titled "Complex Identities".

Dr. Harmen van der Wilt is a Professor of International Criminal Law at the University of Amsterdam, and a Research fellow at the Amsterdam Center of International Law. A former lecturer at the University of Maastricht and *ad litem* judge at the District Court of Roermond, Dr. Harmen has written numerous publications including articles on Complicity in Genocide (the *van Anraat-case*) and Joint Criminal Enterprise in the Journal of International Criminal Justice.

Mr. Khass Naseri is a Kurdish Iranian, former English teacher, who fled to Holland for political reasons. He is the co-founder of the Yarsan Democratic Organization, which is a human rights organization defending in particular the religious minority of Yarsan in Iran and Kurdistan. Khass Naseri is currently the representative of YDO in Benelux and works at the ministry of Justice and Security.

Mr. Abdullah Hejab is the Kurdish representative of Iranian Kurdistan to the Unrepresented Nations and Peoples Organization (UNPO). Upon moving to Norway in 1991, Mr. Hejab obtained a Master's degree in Political Science from the University of Oslo. He has since published a series of articles addressing national identity and contemporary political and social conditions in Kurdistan, including a book he co-authored, entitled "An introduction to Human Rights", published in Kurdistan in 2012. Mr. Hejab has been actively involved in promoting the Kurdish cause for years, not only in Iran, but in all parts of Kurdistan.

Mr. Harry van Bommel is a Dutch politician of the Socialist Party (SP) and has been a member of parliament since 1998. He also worked as an English and Dutch teacher and was member of the municipal Council in Amsterdam. Mr. Van Bommel focuses on Foreign and European Affairs and also has a strong interest in the Middle East and more especially in Kurdish issues. Some of his ideals are "an active peace policy and a fair distribution of wealth".



Unrepresented Nations and People Organization

Laan van Meerdervoort 70
2517 AN The Hague
The Netherlands
Tel: +31 (0)70 36 46 504
Fax: +31 (0)70 36 46 608

unpo@unpo.org
www.unpo.org