



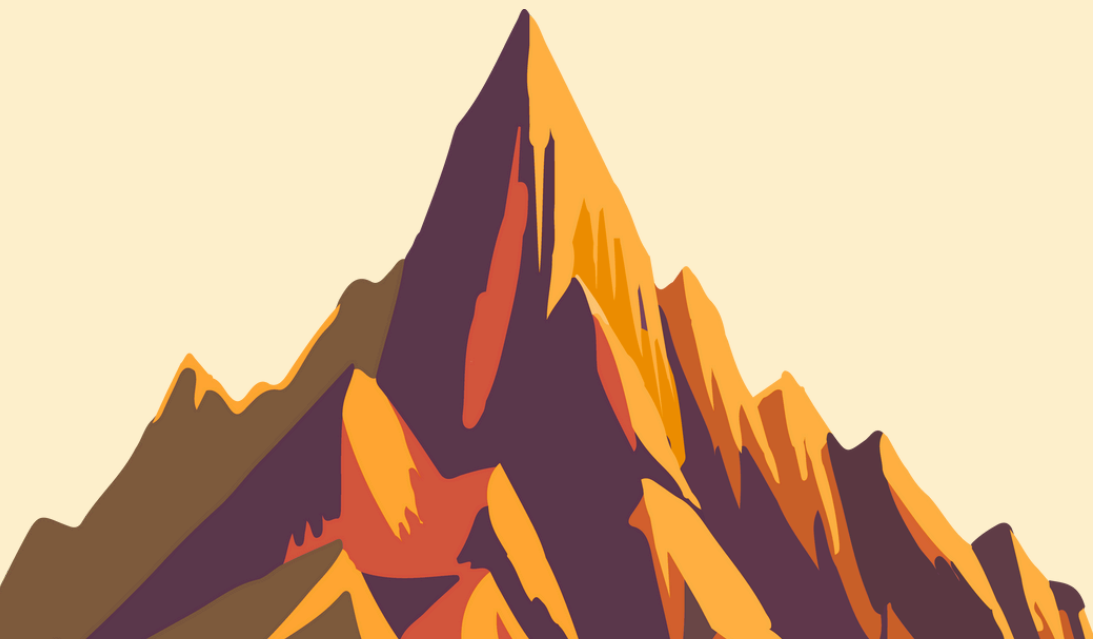
W i l l t h e K u r d s
g e t a s t a t e ?

A decorative banner featuring the horizontal stripes of the Kurdish flag: red at the top, white in the middle, and green at the bottom. The banner is curved and has a sunburst symbol on each end. The words "kurdish summit" are written across the white stripe in a black, lowercase, sans-serif font.

k u r d i s h s u m m i t

K u r d i s h S u m m i t : W h a t i s i t ?

The Kurdish summit will discuss and debate the complicated Stateless Kurds' dilemma by delving into possible solutions, strategic thinking, and unusual methods of resolving global-scale problems. There are endless clashes and endless opportunities for unexpected alliances and strategies, which evolve into a solution for the Kurds and the surrounding countries. Delegates must discuss and explore ways to overcome this issue, ending with either a solution for the stateless Kurds or a mutual agreement by all neighbouring countries.



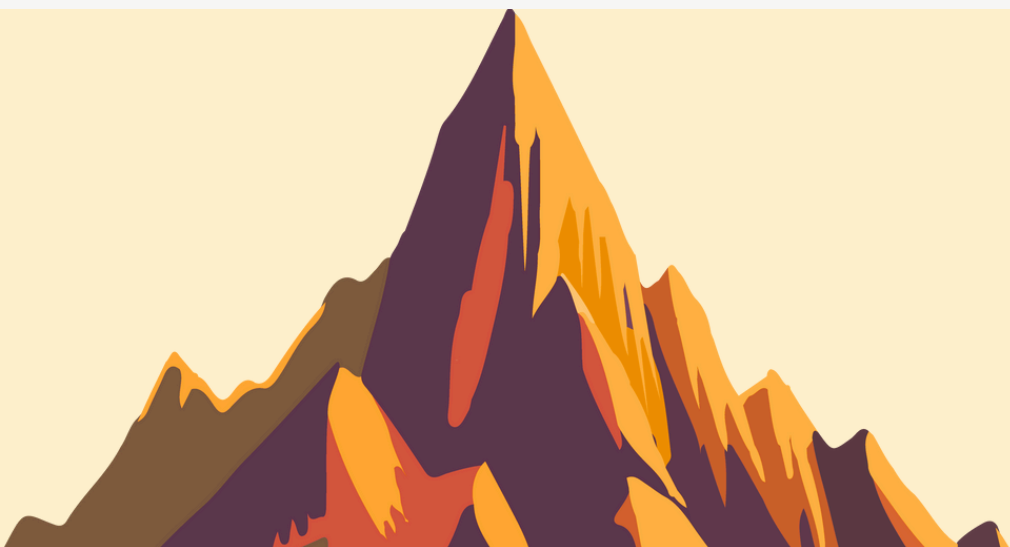
A decorative banner featuring the horizontal stripes of the Kurdish flag: red at the top, white in the middle, and green at the bottom. The banner is curved and has three stylized yellow suns with black outlines. One sun is at the top center, and two are at the bottom corners. The words "kurdish summit" are written in a black, lowercase, sans-serif font across the white stripe.

kurdish summit

History:

The Kurdish ethnic group are native to a mountainous region known as Kurdistan, which spreads into western Iran, northern Iraq, southeastern Turkey and northern Syria. The Kurds are about 30 million people, making them the largest stateless population. During 1920-1923, after the fall of the Ottoman Empire and the end of WWI, the Treaty of Sevres (1920) promised a Kurdish state to the Kurdish people, however, this was later negated by the Treaty of Lausanne (1923) which led to the division of the Kurds to the newly formed states of Turkey, Syria, Iran, and Iraq.

However, their struggle does not end there, as the Kurds faced many difficulties with assimilationist policies, being ethnically repressed, and systematically underrepresented. In 1978, the Kurds in Turkey grew tired and therefore founded the PKK (Kurdistan Workers' Party), and then later they began their insurgency in 1984. In the 1980's Saddam Hussein conducted the Anfal campaign, which was an attempt at wiping out a huge amount of the Kurdish population in Iraq.

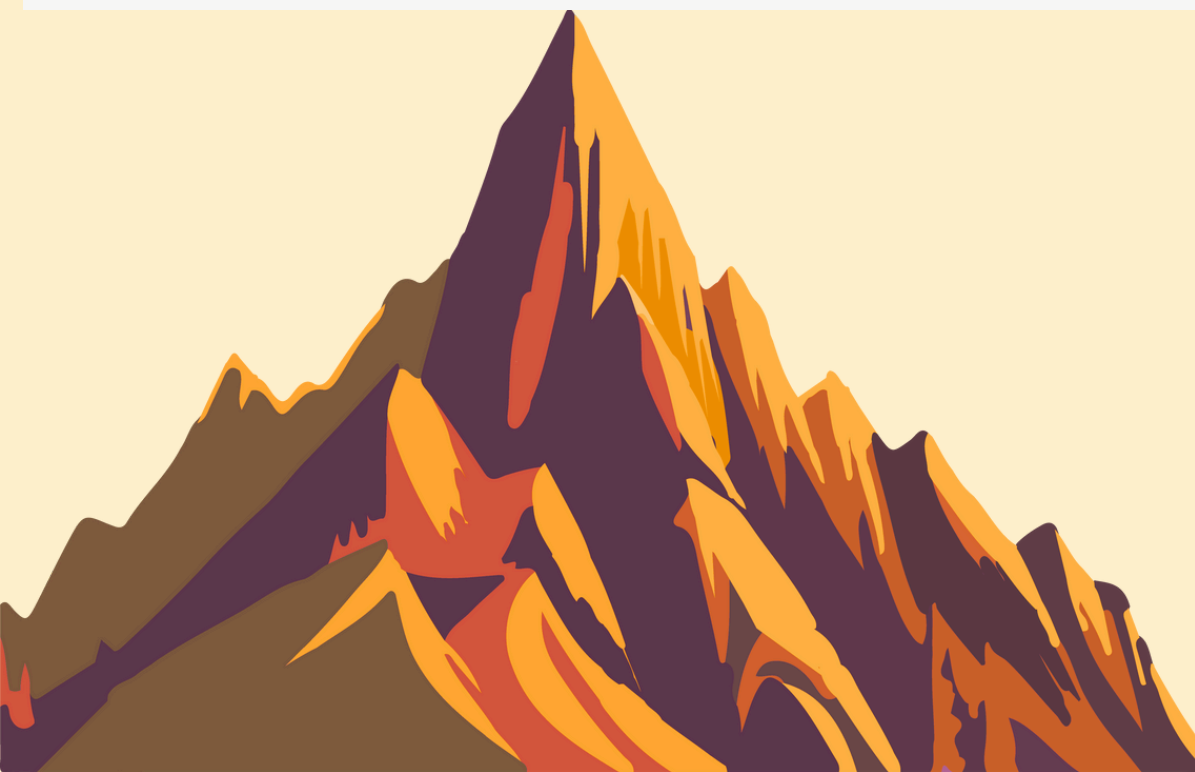




kurdish summit

About 180,000 people were killed during the years 1986-1989. It ended due to the Gulf War, which gave the Kurds temporary autonomy over Northern Iraq.

Post the US invasion of Iraq in 2003, the KRG (Kurdistan Regional Government) was created as a semi-autonomous region with separate military forces and government. During the Syrian civil war, 2011-2025, the YPG (People's Protection Units), with an umbrella of other groups such as the SDF (Syrian Democratic Forces). This growing group and the autonomy they had over the region alarmed Turkey. Currently, the Kurdish desire for a state remains unfulfilled due to geopolitical factors and the interests of other states. The different Kurdish militant groups have attempted to hold referendums and call for their independence; however, it has failed and they have yet to gain recognition.





kurdish summit

timeline:

1914-1918: Kurds had a conflict with the Ottoman Empire, and there were many Kurdish rebels

1920: The Treaty of Sèvres promises Kurdish independence post WWI and promises to provide a state for the Kurdish population

1923: The Treaty of Lausanne dismissed the idea of Kurdish statehood, leading several groups of Kurds to create rebellion groups, such as the Koçgiri and Beytussebab, which were often fueled by nationalist ideologies and caused damage to Turkey.

1946: Mahabad, a Kurdish state, was created in Iran; however, it did not last long.

1961-1970: The September revolution, the first Iraqi-Kurdish War, was led by Mustafa Barzani, trying to gain autonomy against the Iraqi government.

1974: formation of the PPK in Turkey

1978: The PKK launched an uprising against Turkey, which escalated into a violent conflict over the years





kurdish summit

1980s: Kurdish rebels were appearing on both sides of the Iran-Iraq war

1991: After the Gulf War, the US decided to make northern Iraq a no-fly zone as a way to protect the Kurds from Saddam Hussein's regime

1994-1997: Kurdish civil war, which led to more complications in the region

2003: The US invasion of Iraq led to the establishment of the Kurdistan Region, creating a semi-autonomous entity in Iraq.

2004-present: Despite ceasefires between the PKK and Turkey, there always seems to be renewed conflict that continues.

2011: due to the arab spring, which led to a lot of destabilisation in the region, the Kurdish groups took action in Syria and Iraq.

2014: With the rise of ISIS, the peshmerga were key to fighting off the terrorist group

2017: after holding a referendum for independence, a conflict erupted between the Iraqi's and Kurds, which led to the loss of territory like Kirkuk to Iraqi forces.

2022: There have been many clashes between Iran and the Kurdish groups, specifically after the merger of Kurdish parties and nationwide protests in Iran.



kurdish summit

important parties:

Kurdistan Workers Party (PKK): a Kurdish militant group based in Turkey and Iraq, creating conflict and chaos in Turkey since the 1980s. The group's political ideologies have changed over the years, where they started out as a Marxist-Leninist group and developed into advocates of democratic confederalism. It's classified as a terrorist by Turkey, the US, and the EU.

People's Protection Units (YPG): created in December 2016, it's the backbone of the SDF, and is seen by many as an extension of the PKK. It's supported by the US militarily and has control over some parts of northeastern Syria. It's been in a cooperation against ISIS since 2014. There's a whole military wing in the YPG for women, called the YPJ.






kurdish summit

important parties:

Kurdistan Regional Government (KRG): has an autonomous Kurdish government in northern Iraq. It has its territories and armed forces, the peshemrga, and has been included in oil deals. There was a referendum held by the KRG in 2017 that was rejected by Iraq and its allies. It's not as political as the PKK; however, it remains an important part of the Kurdish political identity.

Peshmerga Forces: They are a militant group central to the defence in Iraq, as they have fought both ISIS and other groups that have emerged. The peshmerga has around 190,000 members. They were recognised as a national fighting force for the Kurdish people post WWI. They are not necessarily aligned with the PKK, as they don't agree ideologically, and have political divisions with two other parties: the Kurdistan Democratic Party (KDP) and Patriotic Union of Kurdistan (PUK). The peshmerga is arguably considered more powerful than the national Iraqi government military and has been able to defend northern Iraq in many situations.






kurdish summit

important parties:

Iraq contains one of the largest Kurdish resistance groups (KRG), which is an autonomous Kurdish entity in northern Iraq. The Kurds gained more autonomy after the fall of Saddam Hussein; however, this increased tensions between Baghdad and Erbil over oil. Kurdish independence would be a threat to Iraq's independence.

Iran: has a majority of the Kurdish population in the northwest of Iran. It's had clashes with some Kurdish militant groups such as the PJAK. Their support of the Kurdish militant groups is purely strategic, as it depends on whether they are in support of them based on their regional interests. Iran has an issue with the Kurdish groups, as they are afraid that they will inspire rebellions and uprisings in Iran.

Turkey: it has conflicted with the PKK for about 4 decades, and considers it and other Kurdish groups (KRG, YPG, SDF, etc). It has even conducted several cross-border operations into Syria and Iraq as an attempt to weaken the Kurdish military. Turkish politics is very connected to Kurdish politics. The Kurds often challenge the safety of Turkey.





kurdish summit

important parties:

Syria: due to the YPG and SDF, Syria has lost control over northeastern Syria during the time of the civil war, which pushed the Assad regime to conduct negotiations to get back the land. The Kurdish call for autonomy threatens the sovereignty of Syria directly.

Syrian democratic forces (SDF): The SDF played an important role in defeating ISIS. It's a Kurdish-led military coalition in Syria. It's mostly composed of Kurdish fighters, leading Turkey to believe it's an extension of the PKK, which is considered a terrorist organisation in its eyes. It controls a part of northeastern Syria, including border crossings and oil fields. There are tensions between Turkey and the SDF, leading to Turkey invading northeastern Syria on multiple occasions. The SDF itself creates tensions between it and other parties in Syria, such as Hay'at Tahrir Al-Sham, as the SDF's goal is to declare itself as an autonomous region in northeastern Syria. However, the HTS has been dismantled in recent events and has merged with the Syrian government.






k u r d i s h s u m m i t

i m p o r t a n t p a r t i e s :

United States: It's a primary backer to the YPG and the SDF forces in their fight against ISIS by providing arms and air support. However, their support fluctuates, especially after Trump withdrew his troops in 2019, which caused the Kurds to be vulnerable against Turkish forces. To the US, the Kurds are more of a practical ally, not someone they fully support, but they can be used in specific tactics.

PJAK (Kurdistan Free Life Party) was founded by Osman Ocalan, whose brother is Abdullah Ocalan, the founder of the PKK. The stated goal of the PJAK is to bring together the Kurdish and Iranian opposition groups and change the Islamic regime in Iran to create a democratic government for both parties. In 2004, the armed wing of the PJAK (YRK) created an uprising against Iran. There have been multiple clashes with the PJAK and the Iranian government, especially in 2008, during the Iran-Iraq War. Allegedly, there is cooperation between the PJAK, the US, and Turkey.





k u r d i s h s u m m i t

g l o s s a r y :

Anfal campaign: The Anfal campaign was a counterinsurgency operation which was carried out by Ba'athist Iraq from February to September 1988 during the Iraqi-Kurdish conflict at the end of the Iran-Iraq War.

MIT: Milli İstihbarat Teşkilatı, which translates to the National Intelligence Organisation. It is the primary intelligence agency of the Turkish government. The organisation plays a crucial role in gathering information and ensuring the security and prosperity of Turkey.

Ceasefire: A temporary suspension of fighting, typically officially agreed upon.

De Facto State: A political entity that operates independently but lacks legal recognition.

Occupied Territory: Land under military occupation that is not legally part of the occupier's state.

Separatism: Advocacy or action in support of separating from a larger political entity.

Diaspora: A population that lives outside its original homeland.

Coalition: A temporary combined action alliance, especially among political/military entities.



kurdish summit

glossary:

Proxy war: proxy war, a military conflict in which one or more third parties directly or indirectly support one or more state or nonstate combatants to influence the conflict's outcome and thereby to advance their strategic interests or to undermine those of their opponents.

Autonomy: the right or condition of self-government.

A stateless nation: a group of people with a shared national identity who do not possess their own sovereign state

Sovereignty: supreme power or authority.

Guerilla warfare: a form of irregular warfare characterised by small, mobile groups employing unconventional tactics to harass, delay, and disrupt a larger, more conventional enemy

Militia: a military force that is raised from the civil population to supplement a regular army in an emergency.

Peshmerga: the internal security forces of the Kurdistan Region.

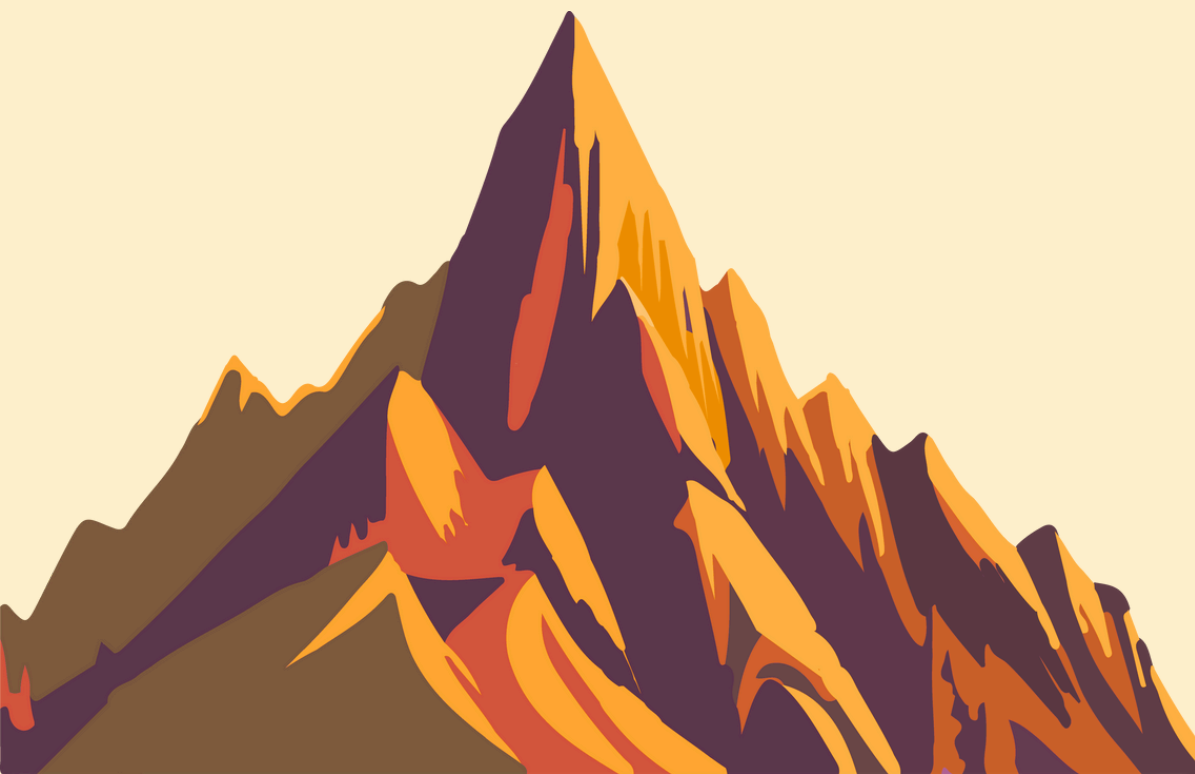




kurdish summit

glossary:


Non-state actors: influential individuals or organisations that are not part of a recognised state's government or military structure





kurdish summit

guiding questions:

- **How would the Kurds gain sovereignty without threatening neighbouring states' sovereignty?**
 - **Is it possible for Kurds to gain autonomy within host states?**
 - **How would a Kurdish state create a power balance if there were to be a Kurdish state?**
 - **What's the ethical implication of giving the Kurds statehood?**
 - **How should global powers get involved in resolving the conflict?**
 - **How should oil revenues and territorial disputes be resolved in northern Iraq?**
 - **Are Turkey's military operations in Syria and Iraq legitimate acts of self-defence or violations of sovereignty?**
 - **How can the interests of states combating terrorism be balanced with Kurdish demands for protection and autonomy?**
 - **Should Kurdish militias like the YPG/SDF be recognised as legitimate state actors?**
- 



kurdish summit

sources:

<https://www.cfr.org/timeline/kurds-long-struggle-statelessness>

<https://www.cfr.org/global-conflict-tracker/conflict/conflict-between-turkey-and-armed-kurdish-groups>

<https://www.bbc.com/news/world-middle-east-28738975>

<https://mappingmilitants.org/mmp-group/kurdistan-free-life-party>

<https://www.crisisgroup.org/middle-east-north-africa/east-mediterranean-mena/syria-iraq-turkiye-united-states/glimmer-peace-syrias-north-east#:~:text=The%20SDF%20and%20its%20Autonomous,fresh%20military%20confrontation%20between%20them.>

<https://www.bbc.com/news/articles/ce313jn453zo>

<https://hmh.org/education/al-anfal-1988/>

<https://jacobin.com/2021/01/massacre-dersim-turkey-kurds-erdogan>

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=IZB9HqoHaaU>

<https://www.aljazeera.com/features/2025/5/14/what-does-the-pkks-disarming-mean-for-its-regional-allies>

<https://www.aljazeera.com/features/2025/5/14/what-does-the-pkks-disarming-mean-for-its-regional-allies>

<https://edition.cnn.com/2025/07/11/middleeast/turkey-kurdish-conflict-pkk-ceremony-intl>

<https://www.crisisgroup.org/content/turkiyes-pkk-conflict-visual-explainer>

<https://www.iiss.org/publications/strategic-comments/2023/the-rising-tension-between-iraqi-kurdistan-two-major-parties/>

<https://www.washingtoninstitute.org/policy-analysis/facilitating-new-sdf-agreement-key-stabilizing-syria#:~:text=by%20Wladimir%20van%20Wilgenburg,country's%20oil%20and%20gas%20resources.>

<https://www.washingtoninstitute.org/policy-analysis/facilitating-new-sdf-agreement-key-stabilizing-syria#:~:text=by%20Wladimir%20van%20Wilgenburg,country's%20oil%20and%20gas%20resources.>

<https://ypgrojava.org/english>

