

# Islamic Movement of Kurdistan

## AT A GLANCE

Overview  
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Maps

## HOW TO CITE

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## SUMMARY

**Formed:** 1987

**Disbanded:** Likely inactive

**First Attack:** 1988: In response to the Hussein regime's use of chemical weapons on the civilian population of Halabjah in 1988, the IMK declared jihad on the Iraqi government. The group was believed to have participated in attacks targeting government troops from 1988-1992, but there was no documentation of specific IMK attacks. (Casualties unknown)<sup>1</sup>

**Last Attack:** 1998: The IMK assassinated Hassan Sofi, a former IMK member who split from the group and subsequently founded a rival Kurdish Islamist organization, Kurdish Hamas.<sup>2</sup>

## OVERVIEW

The Islamic Movement of Kurdistan (IMK) is a Kurdish Islamist organization that was founded in 1987 by Sheik Uthman Abdul Aziz with significant Iranian help. Although the group engaged in militant activities in the 1990s against other Kurdish groups and the Iraqi government, the IMK also participated in Iraqi Kurdistan's political process beginning in 1992 and functioned solely as a political party after it disarmed in 2003. The majority of the Kurdish Islamist groups in existence today, most notably Ansar al-Islam, are splinters of the IMK. The IMK has not joined any political alliances, put any candidates up for office, or participated in politics in any observable way since 2013. While the IMK has not participated in politics, some splinters of the IMK, such as the Islamic Group of Kurdistan, are actively involved in the KRG and ran candidates in the 2018 Iraqi elections. As of April 2019, the group has not returned to militant operations. Thus, the IMK is likely inactive.

## NARRATIVE SUMMARY

The Islamic Movement of Kurdistan (IMK), also sometimes called the Islamic Movement in Iraqi Kurdistan (IMIK), was a Kurdish Islamist political organization founded in 1987 by Sheik Uthman Abdul Aziz. Prior to establishing the IMK, Aziz was a prominent member of the Egyptian Muslim Brotherhood from 1960-1980. He left Egypt in late 1980 and returned to his native Iraqi Kurdistan.<sup>3</sup> In 1984, Aziz fled persecution from the Hussein regime and sought sanctuary in Iran, which at the time was embroiled in the Iran-Iraq War. Around the same time, Iran began to fund a variety of Iraqi Kurdish groups in hopes of inciting domestic unrest in Iraq and thereby forcing Hussein into fighting a two-front war. In pursuit of this end, Iran sent Aziz back to Iraqi Kurdistan in 1987 to head a new organization, the Islamic Movement of Kurdistan (IMK). Iran had already begun funding this new organization and had sent Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps (IRGC) instructors to train new Kurdish Islamist recruits in anticipation of Aziz's arrival.<sup>4</sup> The group was headquartered in Halabjah in the Sulaymaniyah Governorate, which was the site of the Hussein government's infamous use of chemical weapons on a largely civilian Kurdish population in 1988. In response to the Hussein government's attacks, the IMK declared jihad against the Iraqi government with the support of the Iranian government.<sup>5</sup>

The IMK, like many other Kurdish groups after the end of the Iran-Iraq war in 1988, largely halted its operations until the 1991 Gulf War. In the wake of the 1991 Kurdish Uprising and under the protection of a no-fly zone enforced by the French, American, and British Air Forces, the Iraqi Kurds began to prepare for their first free election and the establishment of the Kurdish Parliament. Many Kurdish political organizations began to reemerge and resume their political, and in some cases military, activities.<sup>6</sup> However, in the 1992 elections, the IMK garnered only 5.1% of the vote, failing to pass the 7% threshold needed to obtain a seat in the parliament.<sup>7</sup>

Following the 1992 elections, the IMK received additional support from Syria and Iran. Both countries sought out Islamist Kurdish groups to support in the hope of countering and destabilizing the Kurdish nationalist parties.<sup>8</sup> The Iranian government began providing financial aid and military trainers to the IMK, while the Syrian government recruited jihadist veterans from the Soviet Union in Afghanistan to train IMK members on how to plan minor attacks, assassinations, and road-bombings. With this support, the IMK began carrying out terrorist attacks. These attacks aimed to destabilize the new Kurdish nationalist government, which was led by the Patriotic Union of Kurdistan (PUK) and the Kurdish Democratic Party (KDP). Although there were multiple accounts that the IMK increased its militant operations during this period, there was little documentation of its specific attacks.<sup>9</sup> In response to the IMK's attacks, the PUK peshmerga forces attacked and captured the IMK stronghold of Halabjah in December 1993. After the IMK's defeat at Halabjah, PUK forces arrested Aziz and forced the majority of IMK members into exile in Iran. Aziz was later released and fled to Iran.<sup>10</sup>

In 1994, violence broke out between the PUK and the KDP, drawing both organizations away from their fight against the IMK.<sup>11</sup> Four years of conflict between the PUK and the KDP followed, and the IMK largely sided with the KDP against the PUK. While the PUK was weakened by its ongoing conflict with the KDP, the Iranian government heavily pressured it to cede control of the Halabja-Howraman region to the IMK, which it did in 1996.<sup>12</sup> The IMK consolidated its power in these regions in the power vacuum left by PUK-KDP fighting. Most reports indicated that the IMK did not impose strict Shariah law in the areas it controlled. However, the group did establish its own consultative Shura (council) and provide law enforcement, health, and religious education services to the civilians under its control.<sup>13</sup>

In 1997, the IMK began cooperating with the PUK. The group agreed to a truce in 1997, and the IMK officially joined the Kurdistan Regional Government (KRG) in 1998. These choices to cooperate with “secularists” (i.e., members of the PUK and KRG) alienated many of the IMK’s more radical Islamist members, who were already upset about the IMK’s failure to implement Sharia law in its territories.<sup>14</sup> Internal disagreements broke out, and two major factions broke off from the organization. The IMK experienced its first splinter in 1997. Several IMK members who had fought in the Afghanistan War splintered from the IMK to form Kurdish Hamas (unrelated to the Palestinian Hamas or to Hamas Iraq). The splinter faction was led by Hassan Sofi. Sofi was assassinated by the IMK in 1998, and another former member of the IMK, Omar Barziani, ascended to lead the group.<sup>15</sup> The IMK splintered again in 1998. Under the leadership of Aso Hawleri, the IMK’s largest military brigade, the Second Soran Unit (SSU), broke away from the IMK. Now an independent group, the SSU wrested control of the town of Biyara from the IMK.<sup>16</sup> Despite these splinters, the IMK’s choice to cooperate with the PUK and join the KRG also had its advantages. The IMK’s entrance into Kurdish politics won it the support of the United States, which began providing financial aid to the IMK.<sup>17</sup>

The death of Sheik Uthman Abdul Aziz in 1999 and the transfer of the group’s leadership to his brother Ali Abdul Aziz led to further changes in the IMK’s organizational structure and membership.<sup>18</sup> A third Aziz brother, Sadiq Abdul Aziz, was the leader of yet another Kurdish Islamist group, al-Nahda, which merged with the IMK and Omar Barziani’s Kurdish Hamas to form a new organization, the Islamic Unity Movement of Kurdistan (IUMK, also known as the Islamic Federation of Kurdistan) in 1999. When the three groups merged, each ceased to exist as an individual organization. However, the union only lasted until mid-2001. Ideological differences among the group’s leaders drove internal disagreements and splits. Kurdish Hamas broke away the IUMK, while two other IMK leaders also led splintering factions – Ali Bapir established the Kurdistan Islamic Group, and Mullah Krekar created the Reformist Group. The remnants of the group left behind by the splinters, led by Ali Abdul Aziz, readopted the IMK name.<sup>19</sup> In December 2001, many of the IMK’s splinter groups – including Kurdish Hamas, the Second Soran Unit, and the Reformist Group – merged with other Arab and Kurdish militant Islamist organizations to form Ansar al-Islam, led by former IMK member Mullah Krekar.<sup>20</sup>

Around the same time as the IUMK disintegrated in 2001, the IMK participated in the local Kurdish elections. The IMK won around 20% of the vote in KDP- and PUK-controlled areas and over 50% of the vote in Halabja, the group’s territorial base.<sup>21</sup> Following the U.S. invasion of Iraq in 2003, the KDP-PUK’s unified Kurdistan Regional Government (KRG) formally disarmed the IMK at the behest of the United States. Although there is no documentation of IMK militant activities since 1998, the group’s disarmament seemed to have led the group to officially rebrand itself as solely a political party.<sup>22</sup> This reorientation of the IMK angered other Islamist groups in the region, particularly Ansar al-Islam, which were vehemently opposed to cooperating with the largely secular KRG.<sup>23</sup>

Although the IMK continued to function as a political party and remained active in the KRG since 2003, its popularity waned. In the 2005 Iraqi national elections, the IMK experienced only moderate success, winning 0.7% of the vote and earning two seats in the Interim National Assembly.<sup>24</sup> The IMK did only marginally better in the 2009 Kurdish parliamentary elections; it secured 1.5% of the vote and was allotted 2 seats in the Kurdish parliament.<sup>25</sup> It subsequently lost one of these two seats in the 2013 Kurdish parliamentary elections when it received only 1.1% of the vote. In addition to its political presence, the group gained a reputation for building Mosques throughout Iraqi Kurdistan. Much of the financing for these mosques likely came from Saudi Arabia and other Gulf states.<sup>26</sup>

The rise of the Islamic State (IS) in 2014 placed additional pressure on the IMK. Many Iraqi Kurds grew distrustful of the IMK because of its Sunni Islamist roots, which were similar, although far less radical, than IS's beliefs.<sup>27</sup> The leader of the IMK, Ali Abdul Aziz, maintained that the group refused to send any of its members to fight alongside IS in the conflicts in Syria or Iraq. However, this refusal to contribute to IS made the IMK no allies among IS's leaders, who threatened to decapitate any Kurdish Islamists it captured.<sup>28</sup>

The last military activity from the IMK was in 2003, and the last political activity from IMK was in 2013. The IMK has not joined any political alliances, put any candidates up for office, or participated in politics in any observable way since 2013. While the IMK has not participated in politics, some splinters of the IMK, such as the Islamic Group of Kurdistan, are actively involved in the KRG and ran candidates in the 2018 Iraqi elections. As of April 2019, the group has not returned to militant operations. Thus, the IMK is likely inactive.

## ORGANIZATIONAL STRUCTURE

### A. LEADERSHIP

**Sheikh Uthman Abdul Aziz** (1987-1999): Uthman Abdul Aziz (sometimes spelled 'Othman' or 'Osman') was a prominent Iraqi Kurdish Sunni clergyman who founded the Islamic Movement of Kurdistan in 1987 with significant help from the Iranian government. Prior to founding the IMK, Uthman Abdul Aziz was a member of the Egyptian Muslim Brotherhood and the Union of Muslim Scholars of Kurdistan.<sup>29</sup>

**Ali Abdul Aziz** (1999-unknown): Following Uthman Abdul Aziz's death in 1999, Ali Abdul Aziz succeeded his brother as the head of the IMK.<sup>30</sup> Ali Abdul Aziz led a military brigade within the IMK prior to becoming the group's leader.<sup>31</sup>

**Mullah Krekar** (Unknown-2001): Mullah Krekar was appointed as the head of the IMK's military wing in 1992 and as the head of its Office of Planning and Implementation in 1995. In 2001, Krekar broke away from the IMK because he felt that its policies had become too cooperative with the largely secular KRG. He took with him a large group of followers and founded the Reformation Group. Later in 2001, the Reformation Group merged with several other Arab and Kurdish Islamist groups to form Ansar al-Islam; Krekar was chosen as the leader of this new unified group.<sup>32</sup>

**Abd al-Rahman Abd al-Rahim** (Unknown-Present): Abd al-Rahim was a member of the IMK's consultative council and often acted as a spokesperson for the group.<sup>33</sup>

**Ali Bapir** (Unknown-2001): Bapir was one of the leaders of the IMK's militant Islamist fundamentalist wing until he split from the group in 2001, taking with him a majority of the former al-Nahda members to form the Kurdistan Islamic Group.<sup>34</sup>

**Hassan Sofi** (Unknown-1997): Sofi was a leading member of the IMK until 1997 when he founded Kurdish Hamas, a splinter group of the IMK that was largely composed of Afghan War veterans who had joined the IMK in the early 1990s. The IMK assassinated Sofi in 1998.<sup>35</sup>

**Omar Barziani** (Unknown-1997): A former leader in the IMK, Barziani left the group in 1997 with Hassan Sofi and joined Sofi's new organization, Kurdish Hamas. Following Sofi's assassination in 1998, Barziani became the leader of Kurdish Hamas.<sup>36</sup>

## **B. NAME CHANGES**

- 1987: The Islamic Movement of Kurdistan (IMK) (also known as the Islamic Movement in Iraqi Kurdistan (IMIK)): The Islamic Movement of Kurdistan was the group's formal name when established in 1987. The group retained this name even as portions of its membership broke off to form other more radical Islamist groups.<sup>37</sup>
- 1998: Islamic Unity Movement of Kurdistan (IUMK) (also known as the Islamic Federation of Kurdistan): In 1998 the IMK merged with Kurdish Hamas and al-Nahda to form the Islamic Federation of Kurdistan. However, the union did not last long; the group dissolved into several independent organizations in 2001.<sup>38</sup>
- 2001: The Islamic Movement of Kurdistan (IMK): After the fragmentation of the Islamic Federation of Kurdistan, the IMK readopted its original name.<sup>39</sup>

## **C. SIZE ESTIMATES**

- 1992: 500 armed fighters (The Jamestown Foundation)<sup>40</sup>
- 1998: 350-400 fighters in the Second Soran Unit, the IMK's largest military brigade. (The Jamestown Foundation)<sup>41</sup>
- 2003: "several hundred fighters" (BBC News)<sup>42</sup>

## **D. RESOURCES**

The majority of the IMK's funding came from foreign governments, although the PUK also contributed funds to the group after the IMK joined the KRG in 1998. Iran in particular played an important role in the IMK's history.<sup>43</sup> It was responsible for funding and training the initial members of the group in 1987 and provided financial and military aid to the group throughout its existence.<sup>44</sup> Following the 1992 elections, the Syrian government also aided the IMK, sending Arab jihadists with experience in the Soviet War in Afghanistan to train IMK fighters.<sup>45</sup> Additionally, the United States funded the IMK following the group's entrance into the Kurdish political process in 1998. Finally, following the disarmament of the IMK in 2003, Saudi Arabia and many of the Gulf States provided funds to the group. This funding was nominally given to the IMK for the purpose of building Sunni mosques in Iraqi Kurdistan, but it was likely a thinly veiled attempt to counter Iranian influence in the region.<sup>46</sup>

## **E. GEOGRAPHICAL LOCATIONS**

**Disclaimer:** This is a partial list of where the militant organization has bases and where it operates. This does not include information on where the group conducts major attacks or has external influences.

The IMK was headquartered in Halabjah in the Sulaymaniyah Governorate. In the late 1990s, it administrated most of the Halabja-Howraman region in northern Iraq and provided services such as policing, trash collection, and religious education.<sup>47</sup> The IMK was officially considered a Kurdish regional party after it joined the KRG in 1998; however, the majority of its support remained in the region around Halabjah.<sup>48</sup>

## **STRATEGY**

### **A. IDEAOLOGY AND GOALS**

Historically, the IMK's members came from diverse backgrounds and held a wealth of different ideological opinions. Although the group's members shared the same general Sunni Islamist ideology, the IMK housed several factions with different sets of goals and beliefs. These factions influenced IMK ideology, strategy, and tactics. For example, a piece of the IMK membership in the late 1980s and early 1990s was composed of veterans of the Afghanistan War, who tended to be more radical in their jihadist beliefs than the average Kurdish Islamist.<sup>49</sup> This faction drove the IMK to adopt a more radical jihadist ideology. It supported the group's efforts to wage jihad against the Iraqi government from 1988 to 1992, and it engineered IMK rhetoric that emphasized the Kurds' place within the larger Islamic community rather than their identity as a Kurdish nation. This more radical jihadist rhetoric and ideology was also influenced by two outside sources. First, it was partially a result of the influence exerted over the IMK by Iran, which had an interest in destabilizing the Iraqi government and preventing the rise of Kurdish nationalism.<sup>50</sup> Second, IMK rhetoric and ideology was heavily influenced by the writings of Egyptian Islamist Sayid Qutb's, which were first translated into Kurdish in the late 1980s.<sup>51</sup>

Though the more radical Islamist elements of the IMK were able to influence some of the group's policies, these factions could not control all of the IMK's actions. In these areas, the radical factions within the IMK were often frustrated with the goals of the organization's leadership. For instance, the IMK did not impose Shariah Law on the territories it controlled despite its Islamist ideology. While the group advocated for a conservative agenda in the KRG, it did not run on a platform of imposing Shariah Law. Instead, the group claimed to support the freedom of opinion, as long as those opinions were not incompatible with Islamic principles.<sup>52</sup>

Disagreements among the IMK's members over group ideology were one of the primary reasons why the group splintered in the late 1990s and early 2000s. Many of the more radical jihadist elements of the organization left to establish their own groups, many of which merged in 2001 to form Ansar al-Islam.<sup>53</sup> In 2003, the IMK adopted a policy of non-violence, which was condemned by Ansar al-Islam and other more radical Kurdish Islamist groups.<sup>54</sup>

### **B. POLITICAL ACTIVITES**

Though the IMK was originally created as a militant organization, it has a long history of participating in political activities. Throughout the 1990s, the IMK was the third most popular and powerful Iraqi Kurdish political party following the PUK and KDP.<sup>55</sup> It participated in the first Kurdish parliamentary election in 1992 but won only 5.1% of the vote, thus failing to pass the 7% threshold needed to obtain a seat. From 1992-1998, the IMK largely shunned the political process, instead carrying out attacks against the PUK-KDP regional government. However, in 1998, the group re-entered Kurdish politics after agreeing to a 1997 truce with the PUK.<sup>56</sup> In the 2001 election, the IMK received around 20% of the vote in KDP- and PUK-controlled areas of Iraqi Kurdistan and over 50% of the vote in Halabja, the group's territorial base.<sup>57</sup> Although PUK the IMK largely ceased its militant activities after its 1997 truce with the PUK, it was not until 2003 that the group formally disarmed and committed itself entirely to political pursuits. After its successes in the 2001 election, IMK's popularity largely waned. In the 2005 national elections, the IMK won 0.7% of the vote and earned two seats in the Interim National Assembly.<sup>58</sup> In the 2009 Kurdish parliamentary elections, the IMK won 1.5% and gained two seats in the Kurdish

parliament.<sup>59</sup> The IMK subsequently lost one of those seats in the 2013 Kurdish parliamentary elections when it received only 1.1% of the vote.<sup>60</sup> The IMK has not joined any political alliances, put any candidates up for office, or participated in politics in any observable way since 2013. While the IMK has not participated in politics, some splinters of the IMK, such as the Islamic Group of Kurdistan, are actively involved in the KRG and ran candidates in the 2018 Iraqi elections.

### C. TARGETS AND TACTICS

Very little is known about the IMK's tactics. From 1988 to 1992, the group waged jihad against the Iraqi government, but there are no verifiable reports of attacks on Iraqi soldiers carried out by the organization.<sup>61</sup> However, there is evidence that the Syrian government funded Afghanistan War veterans to train the IMK militant wings in a variety of tactics in 1992-1993. These included the coordination of small military confrontations, assassinations, and road-bombings. The Syrian government hoped that the IMK would use these tactics to against Kurdish nationalist groups like the PUK and the KDP, which the Syrian government feared would try to stir up Kurdish nationalist sentiments within the Syrian Kurdish population.<sup>62</sup> Indeed, from 1993-1994, the IMK engaged in a series of confrontations with the PUK in northern Iraq but was eventually driven out of the region and into exile in Iran.<sup>63</sup> After the PUK ceded the Halabja-Howraman region back to the IMK in 1996, the IMK largely reduced its militant activities. However, there is some evidence that some of the IMK's elements may have fought alongside the KDP in the Kurdish Civil War and that the group was responsible for assassinating the leader of Kurdish Hamas, Hassan Sofi, in 1997. The IMK was officially disarmed by the KRG in 2003 and has not carried out any attacks since that time.<sup>64</sup>

### MAJOR ATTACKS

**Disclaimer:** These are some selected major attacks in the militant organization's history. It is not a comprehensive listing but captures some of the most famous attacks or turning points during the campaign.

Although the IMK was known to have participated in militant activities throughout the late 1980s and 1990s, there was very little documentation about the specific incidences of violence perpetrated by the group.

**1988:** In response to the Hussein regime's use of chemical weapons on the civilian population of Halabjah in 1988, the IMK declared jihad on the Iraqi government. The group was believed to have carried out attacks against government troops from 1988-1992, but specific instances of such attacks have not been documented (unknown killed, unknown wounded).<sup>65</sup>

**December 1993:** Violent clashes between the PUK and IMK erupted in December 1993 in the Kirkuk and Sulaimaniya province and resulted in the withdrawal of the IMK from the region (unknown killed, unknown wounded).<sup>66</sup>

**1998:** The IMK assassinated Hassan Sofi, a former IMK member who split from the group and subsequently founded Kurdish Hamas (at least 1 killed, unknown wounded).<sup>67</sup>

### INTERACTIONS

## **A. DESIGNATED/LISTED**

This group has not been designated as a terrorist organization by any major national government or international body.

## **B. COMMUNITY RELATIONS**

The IMK provided a variety of social services, such as health care and religious education, to the areas under its jurisdiction.<sup>68</sup> Despite its conservative Islamist ideology, the IMK did not impose Shariah law on any of the communities that it controlled.<sup>69</sup>

The group's popularity among community members fluctuated since it first entered politics in the 1990s, as evidenced by its varied electoral performances. The IMK drew most of its support from the area around Halabjah, which was its center of operations.<sup>70</sup>

The IMK also published a twice-weekly Kurdish newspaper, *Buzutnaqay Islami*, during the early 2000s.<sup>71</sup>

## **C. RELATIONSHIPS WITH OTHER GROUPS**

Throughout the 1990s, the IMK's relationships with the two largest political groups in Iraqi Kurdistan, the PUK and the KDP, were often strained. After failing to win any seats in the Kurdish parliament in the 1992 elections, Iran and Syria funded the IMK to attack the KDP-PUK coalition government in the hopes of subverting its Kurdish nationalist goals.<sup>72</sup> The PUK and IMK violently clashed in the Kirkuk and Sulaimaniya provinces in 1993, eventually driving the IMK to retreat from the region.<sup>73</sup> Then, in 1994, the Kurdish Civil War erupted between the PUK and the KDP and distracted the PUK from its conflict with the IMK. Both sides hired Kurdish Islamists to fight in the war, but the IMK aligned with the KDP. In 1997, the IMK agreed to cooperate with the PUK, and it joined the PUK dominated government the following year. Between 1998-2013, the PUK, the KDP, and the IMK participated together in the Kurdish Regional Government (KRG). Although the PUK, the KDP, and the IMK held diverse political and ideological views, there was no violence between the groups during this time.<sup>74</sup>

The IMK is the parent group of most of the Iraqi Kurdish Islamist organizations in existence today, most notably Kurdish Hamas (1991), the Second Soran Unit (1998), the Kurdistan Islamic Group (2001), and the Reformist Group (2001).<sup>75</sup> Each of these groups was created as a splinter of the central IMK organization. In 1999, Kurdish Hamas rejoined the IMK along with another Kurdish Islamist group called al-Nahda to form the Islamic Unity Movement of Kurdistan (IUMK). However, the IUMK disintegrated in 2001 due to the ideological differences of its component groups.<sup>76</sup> After the dissolution of the IUMK, Kurdish Hamas, the Second Soran Unit, and the Reformist Group merged with several other Kurdish and Arab Islamist organizations to form Ansar al-Islam. Although there were no documented incidents of violence between Ansar al-Islam and the IMK, Ansar al-Islam often denounced the IMK for its cooperation with the largely secular KRG and for its strategy of non-violence.<sup>77</sup>

The IMK also had a contentious relationship with the Islamic State (IS). Although it shared IS's Islamist beliefs – though the IMK was far less radical in these beliefs than IS – the IMK refused to send any of its members to Syria or Iraq to fight alongside IS. This refusal generated little goodwill from IS's leaders, who threatened to decapitate any Kurdish Islamists that they captured.<sup>78</sup>



## D. STATE SPONSORS AND EXTERNAL INFLUENCES

The Iranian government heavily influenced the IMK since its formation in 1987. Iran played a pivotal role in the group's creation, providing Uthman Abdul Aziz with the operational support, funding, and training needed to establish the IMK. Iran continued funding the organization, and, in return, the IMK did not push a Kurdish nationalist agenda that could have sparked unrest among Iran's Kurdish minority.<sup>79</sup>

The United States and Saudi Arabian governments also provided aid to the IMK. Saudi Arabia financed Sunni mosques built by the IMK, while the United States provided general financial aid to the group after it joined the KRG in 1998.<sup>80</sup>

## MAPS

- Iraq

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<sup>2</sup> Romano, David. "An Outline of Kurdish Islamist Groups in Iraq." The Jamestown Foundation, September 2007. Web. 27 July 2015.; Kakei, Saed. "The Islamic Movement of Kurdistan: From conflict to cooperation." EKurd Daily, 25 March 2013. Web. 28 July 2015.

<sup>3</sup> Kakei, Saed. "The Islamic Movement of Kurdistan: From conflict to cooperation." EKurd Daily, 25 March 2013. Web. 28 July 2015.; Romano, David. "An Outline of Kurdish Islamist Groups in Iraq." The Jamestown Foundation, September 2007. Web. 27 July 2015.; "Profile: Kurdish Islamist movement." BBC News, 13 Jan. 2003. Web. 27 July 2015.; "Prominent Iraqi Islamic Groups." Islamopedia, Date unknown. Web. July 28 2015.

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<sup>5</sup> Van Wilgenburg, Vladimir. "Syria war brings al-Qaeda threat to Iraqi Kurdistan." Al-Monitor, 14 December 2013. Web. 27 July 2015.; "Profile: Kurdish Islamist movement." BBC News, 13 Jan. 2003. Web. 27 July 2015.; Van Wilgenburg, Vladimir. "Islamic State Threatens Kurdish Clerics." Medium, 8 Feb. 2015. Web. 28 July 2015.

<sup>6</sup> Kakei, Saed. "The Islamic Movement of Kurdistan: From conflict to cooperation." EKurd Daily, 25 March 2013. Web. 28 July 2015.

<sup>7</sup> Kakei, Saed. "The Islamic Movement of Kurdistan: From conflict to cooperation." EKurd Daily, 25 March 2013. Web. 28 July 2015.; Romano, David. "An Outline of Kurdish Islamist Groups in Iraq." The Jamestown Foundation, September 2007. Web. 27 July 2015.

<sup>8</sup> Kakei, Saed. "The Islamic Movement of Kurdistan: From conflict to cooperation." EKurd Daily, 25 March 2013. Web. 28 July 2015.; "Prominent Iraqi Islamic Groups." Islamopedia, Date unknown. Web. July 28 2015.

<sup>9</sup> Kakei, Saed. "The Islamic Movement of Kurdistan: From conflict to cooperation." EKurd Daily, 25 March 2013. Web. 28 July 2015.

<sup>10</sup> Romano, David. "An Outline of Kurdish Islamist Groups in Iraq." The Jamestown Foundation, September 2007. Web. 27 July 2015.

<sup>11</sup> Meleagrou-Hitchens, Alexander, and Ranj Alaaldin. "The Kurds of ISIS: Why Some Join the Terrorist Group." Foreign Affairs, August 8, 2016. <https://www.foreignaffairs.com/articles/syria/2016-08-08/kurds-isis>

<sup>12</sup> Naylor, Hugh. "Iraq's Islamist Kurds under fire from both sides of the war." 22 Sept. 2014. Web. 28 July 2015.; Romano, David. "An Outline of Kurdish Islamist Groups in Iraq." The Jamestown Foundation, September 2007. Web. 27 July 2015.; "Iraq: Human Rights Abuses In Iraqi Kurdistan Since 1991." New York: Amnesty International USA, 1995: 98-130

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