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FACT SHEET: IRAQI KURDISTAN

- With a population of nearly 5 million, the three governorates of Duhok, Erbil and Suleimani cover approximately 40,000 square kilometres - four times the area of Lebanon and larger than that of The Netherlands.
- The Region is geographically diverse, from hot plains to cooler mountainous areas blessed with natural springs where snow often falls in the winter. There is interest in building a ski resort in the mountains near Suleimani.
- Since March 2003 not a single coalition soldier has died nor a single foreigner been kidnapped in the areas administered by the KRG.
- The capital and seat of the Kurdistan Regional Government is Erbil, a city known locally as Hawler. The Citadel in Erbil is said to be the longest continually inhabited city in the world.
- The Kurdistan Regional Government (KRG) exercises executive power according to the Kurdistan Region's laws as enacted by the democratically elected Kurdistan National Assembly. The current government, led by Prime Minister Nechirvan Barzani, assumed office on 7 May 2006.
- Iraq's Constitution recognises the Kurdistan Regional Government, the Kurdistan National Assembly and the 'Peshmerga' guard as a legitimate army.
- The current regional government consists of several political parties. The coalition reflects the diversity of the Region's people, who are Chaldeans, Assyrians, Turkmen, Yazidis and Kurds living together in harmony and tolerance.
- Since the Anfal genocide campaign by Saddam Hussein's Regime in the Eighties, more than 65% of the razed villages have been rebuilt by the Regional Administration.
- The Kurdish language is distinct from all other Middle Eastern languages but is close to Farsi. There are two main dialects Sorani and Kurmanji.
- There are 5 international standard universities including an English language University in Erbil which opened in September 2006. An American University is scheduled to open in Suleimani in 2008.
- A new, liberal foreign investment law was ratified in June 2006 providing incentives for foreign investors such as the possibility of owning land, up to 10 year tax holidays and easy repatriation of profits.
- The Kurds are renowned for their skills in the hard sciences, in engineering and medicine – there are many Kurdish doctors and senior consultants practicing in the US and UK.
- Getting to the Kurdistan Region has never been easier; there are two new international airports with direct flights to and from Europe and the Middle East. In December 2006 Austrian Airlines became the first European national carrier to fly regularly to Erbil.

Additional resources:

www.krg.org

www.kurdistaninvestment.org

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