

Sites of Violence

Gender and Conflict Zones

EDITED BY

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CONTENTS

LIST OF ILLUSTRATIONS / vii

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS / ix

PART I. FEMINIST APPROACHES TO GENDER AND CONFLICT

1. Introduction: Gender and Conflict in a Global Context

Wenona Giles and Jennifer Hyndman / 3

2. The Continuum of Violence:

A Gender Perspective on War and Peace

Cynthia Cockburn / 24

3. The Sounds of Silence:

Feminist Research across Time in Guatemala

Cathy Blacklock and Alison Crosby / 45

PART II. VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN IN WAR AND POSTWAR TIMES

4. Like Oil and Water, with a Match:

Militarized Commerce, Armed Conflict, and Human
Security in Sudan

Audrey Macklin / 75

5. No "Safe Haven":

Violence against Women in Iraqi Kurdistan

Shahrazad Mojab / 108

6. From Pillars of Yugoslavism to Targets of Violence:

Interethnic Marriages in the Former Yugoslavia and Thereafter

Mirjana Morokvasic-Müller / 134

7. Geographies of Violence: Women and Conflict in Ghana
Valerie Preston and Madeleine Wong / 152

8. Gender, the Nationalist Imagination, War, and Peace
Nira Yuval-Davis / 170

PART III. FEMINIST ANALYSES OF INTERNATIONAL
ORGANIZATIONS AND ASYLUM

9. Refugee Camps as Conflict Zones: The Politics of Gender
Jennifer Hyndman / 193

10. The "Purity" of Displacement and the Reterritorialization of Longing:
Muslim IDPs in Northwestern Sri Lanka
Malathi de Alwis / 213

11. Escaping Conflict: Afghan Women in Transit
Asha Hans / 232

12. War, Flight, and Exile: Gendered Violence among Refugee Women
from Post-Yugoslav States
Maja Korac / 249

13. The Gendered Impact of Multilateralism in the Post-Yugoslav States:
Intervention, Reconstruction, and Globalization
Edith Klein / 273

PART IV. FEMINIST FUTURES: NEGOTIATING GLOBALIZATION,
SECURITY, AND HUMAN DISPLACEMENT

14. New Directions for Feminist Research and Politics
Wenona Giles and Jennifer Hyndman / 301

REFERENCES / 317

LIST OF CONTRIBUTORS / 347

INDEX / 353

ILLUSTRATIONS

MAPS

- Map 3.1. Guatemala / 46
- Map 4.1. Sudan / 76
- Map 4.2. Bomb sites in south central Sudan / 86
- Map 5.1. Kurdish areas of Iraq, 1991–2000 / 109
- Map 6.1. The Federal Republic of Yugoslavia and surrounding countries / 135
- Map 7.1. Regions of Ghana / 155
- Map 9.1. The horn of Africa / 197
- Map 9.2. Refugee camps in Kenya / 199
- Map 10.1. Sri Lanka / 214
- Map 11.1. Afghanistan / 233
- Map 12.1. The Federal Republic of Yugoslavia and surrounding countries / 250
- Map 13.1. NATO bomb sites in the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia, March to June 1999 / 276

No “Safe Haven”

Violence against Women in Iraqi Kurdistan

Shahrzad Mojab

Violence against women occurs throughout the world. It takes numerous forms depending on the context in which patriarchal gender relations interact with social formations such as culture, religion, class, race, ethnicity, and nationality. Annual reports on the state of women published by the United Nations provide a grim picture of the ubiquity of violence. Our knowledge about the exercise of this form of patriarchal power is growing, and in some countries state and nonstate initiatives against violence have already begun.

Violence against women sometimes takes the form of killing. In the Middle East, for instance, “honor killing” is prevalent. Amnesty International (1999b) reports that “[i]n Pakistan, hundreds of women, of all ages, in all parts of the country and for a variety of reasons connected with perceptions of honor are killed every year. The number of such killings appears to be steadily increasing as the perception of what constitutes honor—and what damages it—steadily widens” (5).¹ The Taliban regime in Afghanistan unleashed the most brutal forms of violence against all the women of the country. The unceasing conflicts of the post-Cold War era have promoted violence against women in the Persian Gulf region, the former Yugoslavia, Kurdistan, and several African states.

In this chapter, I will examine the practice of honor killing in the “safe haven” that was created by the allies of the 1991 Gulf War in Iraqi Kurdistan. During that war, the United States encouraged the Kurds of Iraq to rise up against Saddam Hussein’s regime, but when they did so, Washington abandoned them. The Iraqi Army was then free to unleash its air and ground forces against the Kurds and forced some two million people into an exodus to the mountains, resulting in the death of tens of thousands from exposure to cold and hunger (see Map 5.1).



Map 5.1. Kurdish areas of Iraq, 1991–2000. Adapted from Nadine Schuurman cartography.

The tragic Kurdish exodus, televised throughout the world, pressured the United States and its allies to intervene. Under the aegis of the United Nations, they created a no-fly zone in the northern parts of Iraqi Kurdistan, which prevented Iraqi army operations against the Kurds. In a northwestern enclave there, they set up a “safe haven” to encourage the return of the refugees to their homes. Under the protection of the United States, Britain, and France, the Kurds of Iraq created an autonomous government called the Regional Government of Kurdistan. However, a situation of intermittent war continued to ruin the lives of the people there. Under these conditions, vio-

lence against women increased in scope and frequency. One common practice was "honor killing."

In this chapter, I will document the way that this "safe haven" turned into a slaughterhouse for women. Numerous forces—local, regional, and international—were involved in these crimes. Resisting "honor killing" is a challenge to feminists and other actors interested in the democratization of gender relations. I will briefly examine these challenges to feminist theory and practice.

THE KURDS: A NONSTATE, DIVIDED NATION

With a population variously estimated between twenty and thirty million, the Kurds are often identified as the world's largest nonstate nation. Their homeland, Kurdistan, was forcibly divided between the Ottoman Empire and Iran from 1639 to 1918. The larger, western, half of Kurdistan was redivided, in the wake of the defeat of the Ottomans in World War I, among the newly created states of Iraq (under British occupation and mandate, 1918–32) and Syria (under French occupation and mandate, 1917–46), and the much reduced Ottoman state (Republic of Turkey since 1923). The modernizing nation-states of Turkey, Iran, Iraq, and Syria pursued coercive centralization policies aimed at integrating the Kurds into the dominant Turkish, Persian, and Arab languages and cultures. This project of state and nation building entailed genocide, ethnocide, and linguicide, especially in Turkey, Iran (in the 1930s), Iraq (since the 1980s), and Syria (since the 1960s) (Levene 1998; van Bruinessen 1995; Fernandes 1999).

Kurdish responses to the practice of forcible assimilation have been based on nationalist resistance, including numerous revolts aimed at achieving self-determination and other struggles for maintaining and creating national language and culture (McDowall 1996). While the right of the Kurds to self-determination has been recognized in international law (Falk 1994; Bring 1992), the United Nations and regional and world powers have refused to endorse their attempts to achieve self-rule. The Kurdish people have been, for centuries, diverse in terms of social and economic organization. Rural, tribal, and urban ways of life have coexisted symbiotically in Kurdistan. Until the 1960s, the majority were nontribal peasants tied to the land under conditions of feudalism. A small portion of the population was nomadic-tribal, engaged in animal husbandry, and moved between summer and winter pastures. Urban life flourished under conditions of feudal relations of production. The Turkish traveler Evliya Çelebi, who lived in the city of Bitlis for a few months between 1655 and 1656, provided a detailed account of urban life in seventeenth-century Kurdistan. The city, with a population of about

twenty-five thousand, was the seat of the ruler of Bitlis principality and was rich in natural and human resources; it had a flourishing trade with the world outside Kurdistan and was a prominent center of learning.²

At the turn of the twentieth century, at least half of the population in Kurdistan lived in urban centers. About a dozen cities have populations ranging from half to one million.³ Outside Kurdistan, the number of Kurds living in Istanbul is estimated at about one million; more than half a million immigrants and refugees live in various cities of western Europe, mostly in Germany. Tribal forms of organization have either declined or disappeared, although in Iraq tribalism was reinforced by developments in the wake of the 1991 Gulf War.⁴ Nomadism is virtually nonexistent, and the rural population is sedentary, although transhumance may be found in some places.

The Western media and academia generally present the Kurds as a tribal or nomadic people. I argue that this tribalization of a socially diverse nation is at best simplistic and at worst politically motivated. For some—especially Arab, Persian, and Turkish nationalists—the tribalization of the Kurds involves a political mission that denies them the status of a nation entitled to the right of self-determination. For others, it may be a problem of inadequate information or even romanticization. For feminists studying gender relations in Kurdish society, the purchase of the tribal myth will constrain them in adequately understanding the complexity of the patriarchal organization of Kurdish society and the conflictual relations between nationalism, feminism, and the women's liberation movement.

The diversity of Kurdish social organization and its changing structures pose serious challenges to feminist scholarship. Patriarchy has appeared in diverse forms in tribal, rural, and urban social formations. While gender relations are unequal, with males in a position of power, in both rural and urban contexts, the exercise of patriarchal power is embedded in relations among and between social class, religion, nationalism, modernity, and the state. For instance, Kurdish women have been members of parliament in Iraqi Kurdistan, Turkey, and Europe since the 1990s, while many women continue to be violently punished if they associate with or even talk to men. While rural women in Kurdistan have never veiled, Muslim clergymen have been able to impose the *hijab* (head and face covering) in some areas where Iran's Islamic regime wields influence. There is a century-long culture of opposition to women's oppression, yet some political organizations, nationalist as well as Islamist, promote feudal and religious patriarchal relations as "national" or Islamic culture. This chapter examines one form of the exercise of gender power: the killing of women as a means of disciplining them into subordination, controlling their sexuality, and maintaining the purity, propriety, and honor of the family and the nation. This form of gendered violence is called "honor killing."

HONOR KILLING IN TIMES OF PEACE

The forms and scope of violence against women vary according to the circumstances in which they occur. War and peace are two contexts that call into play different sources of violence. Wars, for instance, turn the women of the "enemy" into a target, leading to mass rape and other forms of abuse. Honor killing also operates differently in times of peace and war. In the following pages I examine the culture, politics, laws, and traditions of honor killing in times of peace in Kurdistan and in the states that rule over the Kurds.

In spite of the radical transformation of Kurdish society from largely rural social formations to a predominantly urban and transnational community, the practice of honor killing connects the old with the new and the homeland with the diaspora. While this form of violence is nurtured by socioeconomic constituents such as class, its continuity cannot be explained by economic factors alone. In Kurdistan, the culture of honor killing has outlived the demise of feudal-tribal relations. Problematizing the continuity rather than the rupture in the history of honor killing is not simply an "academic" issue. Indeed, it would be difficult to uproot this form of violence without understanding its ubiquity and persistence. Today's vindications of honor killing by its perpetrators clearly follow the pattern established by tradition in the past centuries, first exposed by Mela Mehmud Bayezidi, a learned Kurdish mullah, in 1858–59 (Bayezidi 1963). He wrote that the Kurds were strongly against killing and did not kill men who were taken prisoner during violent conflicts such as war and robbery: "But of course they do kill men who commit bad deeds (*şûla xirab*). They even kill their own wives, daughters, mothers, and sisters. And to [punish] such bad deeds, women also kill; for instance, mothers strangle their daughters in the night or poison and kill them, and mothers-in-law do it to their daughters-in-law, and sisters to sisters. No chief (*agha*) and no village elder (*rîspî*) asks why you have killed this [woman]" (191–90).⁵ Bayezidi used the words *bad deeds* to refer to premarital or extramarital sexual intercourse by both women and men. He noted that Kurdish "women and girls do not hide away from anyone and are free, too, like the people of Europe. However, [they are free] because it is believed that they do not engage in bad deeds; otherwise, if one of them commits a bad act, there is no alternative to killing her" (190).⁶ He notes that there is much respect for Kurdish women. Even during a war, no one kills women. However, "when they [i.e., women] commit a bad deed, no one will intercede, and they are killed, since if this is not done this way, Kurdish women will not abstain from people [i.e., men] and will then be involved in many bad deeds, but they are scared of (*ditirsîn*) being killed" (175–74; see, also, p. 113). Women were killed for adultery, eloping (181–80), and not being a virgin at time of marriage (80–79). Bayezidi emphasized that killing

instilled fear in women and that because of this fear they self-disciplined their modesty (174, 113). He noted that in nonsexual "hideous acts" (*qebahet*), families claimed blood money and also interceded to save a killer or a thief but that in cases of adultery the family of the adulterous woman would kill both of the adulterers immediately.⁷ Even if the family of the woman did not witness the act of adultery but found out about it, "they will immediately kill the woman by stabbing and burying her. None of the neighbors and relatives and no other person will ask the killer why you [he or she] did this (the killing), and there will be no condolence and no mourning. And then the woman's family will always be on guard to find the opportunity to kill the man who was involved in the bad deed" (113-12).

In describing the conditions under which women were disciplined by killing, Bayezidi mentioned three situations that would lead to unquestionable killing—premarital sex (loss of virginity), extramarital sex (adultery) and eloping. The common thread that connects these forms of violence is the almost total control of the sexuality and body of the woman by the feudal patriarchal system. A woman, married or unmarried, must be chaste, loyal, pure, obedient, and subordinate. In the feudally and tribally organized rural environment described by Bayezidi, women were not veiled, secluded, or segregated. However, a woman was the carrier or embodiment of the honor of her husband and, through him, that of the family and the whole community. In the absence of the husband, other male members of the family, namely the father, brothers, and uncles, acted as the guardians of honor. Bayezidi emphasized the participation of mothers in killing their daughters. The codes of honor were clearly inscribed in culture, tradition, custom, religion, and the economic system.

In the labor-intensive agrarian and transhumant economies of rural Kurdistan, women constituted a major economic resource. Not only were they needed to reproduce the male lineage, but their labor was vital in domestic work as well as agrarian production. As Bayezidi aptly noted, nomadic women were the best of all, since they were good, obedient wives and at the same time were slave-type laborers and guardians of the household (99-98). However, the patriarchal order made a clear distinction between women and all other forms of property. A woman was the *namûs* or "honor" of the whole family but especially of its male members. The loss of property due to theft, natural disaster, and other factors was tolerated, as was the loss of a woman due to natural death or accident. However, there was no tolerance for the loss of honor.

Bayezidi wrote about honor killing as a component of "Kurdish customs and manners." I will examine below the reproduction of this sociocultural phenomenon by the nation-states that rule over the Kurds, by Kurdish nationalists, and by individuals who commit this form of violence.

The Killing Fields of the Nation-State

Honor killings in the traditional society of Kurdistan were committed by individuals, families, tribes, and communities without the intervention of the state. Killing women was an *urf* (feudal and tribal tradition), *resm* (custom), and *adet* (habit), all of which were sanctioned by religion. Until the mid-nineteenth century, much of Kurdistan was under the rule of Kurdish principalities, which were patriarchal feudal ministates. Under this political regime, a man was free to kill his wife, sister, or mother in the name of defending his "honor." By the time Bayezidi was writing, the system of principalities had been overthrown through the military offensives of the Ottoman and Iranian states.

The extension of Ottoman and Iranian state power to Kurdistan did not change patriarchal gender relations. For one thing, in spite of the proclamation of European-style constitutional regimes in both countries (Ottoman Turkey in 1876, suspended in 1878, restored in 1908; Iran in 1906), the political system remained undemocratic and patriarchal. In Turkey, the nationalists (Young Turks), who had shared power with the Sultan since the 1908 bourgeois democratic revolution, introduced in 1917 a Family Law that brought the religious courts under the jurisdiction of the secular Ministry of Justice. However, these reforms did not challenge the patriarchal order and could not deter widespread violence against women. Moreover, state power was extended primarily to urban centers, and feudal-tribal customary law (*urf*) and Islamic canonical law (*shari'at*) continued to be practiced in the largely rural society of the time.

The defeat of the Ottoman Empire in World War I (1914–18) led to the redivision of the Western part of Kurdistan between the newly created states of Iraq, Syria, and Turkey. In Turkey, nationalist forces, led by Kemal Atatürk, seized state power and founded a secular republic in 1923. Iraq and Syria were formed as modern nation-states under the direct rule of Britain and France. In Iran, a secular, centralizing, and dictatorial monarchy was established by Reza Shah Pahlavi in 1925. These constitutional regimes turned "subjects" (*ra'āyā*) into citizens, but only on paper. The nationalist regimes of Turkey and Iran declared secularism, modernization, and Westernization as the cornerstones of their project of nation building. Women were to play a prominent role in this process. They were unveiled, often forcibly, and encouraged to enter the nondomestic spheres of work, education, and politics.

Unlike the early nation-states of the West, such as Britain, France, and the United States, the nationalist regimes of Turkey and Iran advocated "women's emancipation" as a priority. Turkish and Persian nationalisms had acquired state power, suppressed the nascent women's movements, and launched their own "state feminisms." Much like the West, however, the exer-

cise of state power remained patriarchal.⁸ Legal reforms borrowed European traditions and combined them with *şerî'et* (the canonical law of Islam), which treated men and women unequally. Violence against women, especially honor killing, was tolerated. When the Islamic Republic of Iran was established in 1979, the legal system was de-Westernized and fully Islamicized with vengeance. For instance, married women and men who engaged in extramarital intercourse were stoned to death; the punishment for lesbian women and gay men was execution.⁹

Republican Turkey, founded on the principles of Kemal Atatürk's nationalism, has taken an uncompromising stand in favor of the separation of state and religion and the modernization of the legal structures. However, like many of the European models emulated by Turkey, the juridico-political system remains patriarchal. Although the killing of women for reasons of "honor" is not sanctioned by law, the culture of "honor" continues to frame the legal structure of the secular state. According to one study, "Turkish criminal law makes female honour the state's business. Many sex crimes are defined by Turkey's criminal code in terms of their impact on women's virginity and honour. In fact, sexual assaults against women are classified by law as 'Felonies Against Public Decency and Family Order.' In contrast, other forms of battery are considered 'Felonies Against Individual' " (Human Rights Watch 1995: 422). Under this system, honor killing continues to be practiced, especially in the Kurdish provinces. Several cases of killing were reported in the late 1990s (Turgut 1998). The focus of this chapter is, however, on the Kurds of Iraq, who achieved some degree of self-rule in the "safe haven" created, under UN auspices, by the two allies of the 1991 Gulf War, the United States and Britain.

The Kurdish Nationalist Movement and Honor Killing in Iraqi Kurdistan

Kurdish nationalists, like many Western observers of the Kurds, claim that Kurdish women enjoy more freedom than their Turkish or Arab and Persian sisters. This distinctiveness is visible, they claim, in the way they combine loyalty to the husband with the freedom to associate with other men, in the absence of veiling, in mixed dances, and even in a tradition of ruling a tribe or territory. This claim of relative freedom by Kurdish women, however, has been questioned (Mojab 1987, 2001).

Nationalists are interested in women as vehicles of nation building. From the nationalist perspective, Kurdish women are the reproducers of the nation, the source of "pure" language, the guardians of "authentic" culture, and even freedom fighters. Although Kurdish nationalists do not constitute a homogenous political tendency, their policy on women displays striking consistency. While leftists within the movement generally oppose killing

women on charges of honor "crimes," others either ignore the policy or sanction it as national and religious tradition. I will briefly examine the situation in Iraqi Kurdistan, where a system of self-rule was in place between 1991 and 2003.

I have not been able to collect official statistical data on honor-related violence committed against women in any of the states that rule over the Kurds. There is broad agreement, however, that honor killing in Iraqi Kurdistan, before it was transformed into a war zone in 1961, was mostly conducted in the rural areas, although it was also an urban phenomenon. This form of violence increased sharply in the aftermath of the 1991 Gulf War, when Western powers formed a "safe haven" in order to "protect" the Kurds from Saddam Hussein's army. The following section examines the formation of a war zone, as well as the extension of Turkey's zone of genocide to Iraqi Kurdistan.¹⁰

HONOR KILLING IN THE WAR ZONE: IRAQI KURDISTAN AFTER 1961

Iraqi Kurdistan has been a war zone since 1961. The republican government that had assumed power in the course of a coup d'état in 1958 initially promised the formation of a regime of equal partnership of the two main nationalities, Arabs and Kurds. However, by 1961, Baghdad was cracking down on the Kurds and the political organizations of the opposition. The conflict led to armed resistance in Kurdistan, which continued intermittently throughout the thirty years preceding the U.S.-led Gulf War of 1991. In September 1961, armed conflicts began between the Iraqi army and the Kurdish nationalists who were organized in the only Kurdish political organization of the time, the Kurdish Democratic Party (KDP). During this period, much of the countryside was in the hands of Kurdish guerrillas, especially during the night, while the government ruled over the major urban centers.

A period of relative peace ensued between 1970 and 1974, during which the two sides agreed to work toward a gradual transition to autonomy. However, the Iraqi government unilaterally declared war on the Kurdish side after the termination of the four-year period. The United States, Iran, and Israel encouraged the Kurdish leadership to reject any compromise with the Iraqi regime, which they considered to be in the Soviet orbit. The three countries helped the Kurdish leadership throughout the war from March 1974 to March 1975, when Iraq and Iran resolved their differences in a meeting of Saddam Hussein and the Shah of Iran in Algiers. At this point, the United States and Iran abandoned the Kurdish leader Mustafa Barzani, who announced the end of the struggle. More than two hundred thousand Kurds

took refuge in Iran, and the Iraqi army conquered the Kurdish countryside. Within a year, some of the leftist nationalists reorganized and resumed guerilla war under the leadership of a new coalition group called the Patriotic Union of Kurdistan (PUK). This was followed by the reappearance of the Kurdish Democratic Party under the same leadership, which called itself the "Provisionary Leadership." One of the targets of its military activities was PUK. The war zone was thus further militarized in two fronts, the first between the Iraqi state and Kurdish nationalists (now organized into the KDP and the PUK) and the second between the two political organizations: the KDP and PUK.

A third front was opened in 1980 when Iraq attacked Iran and launched the longest war between the two countries. The two Kurdish political parties wanted to benefit from the war between the two states by helping Iran against Iraq. Under the aegis of Iran, they formed a front in 1987 with the participation of minor Kurdish groups. The Iraqi government responded by exercising an unwritten, internationally denied, punishable "right": this was what Leo Kuper (1981) calls the sovereign territorial state's "right to genocide." Iraq punished the Kurds by unleashing the *Anfal* genocide of 1988, which took about 180,000 lives, including a massacre in the town of Halabja by chemical bombs, the elimination of some 8,000 male Kurds of the Barzani tribe, and the destruction of many villages (Middle East Watch 1993). Western powers supported Iraq's war against Iran and refused to take measures restraining Iraq's chemical and genocidal war against the noncombatant population of Kurdistan (McDowall 1996: 361–63).

Iraq invaded Kuwait in August 1990 to "liberate" this oil-rich country. Following this invasion, the United States formed a coalition with twenty-eight states, conducted a forty-two-day war in January and February 1991, and forced Iraq to withdraw from the country. During the war, the United States encouraged the Kurds and Shi'ites of southern Iraq to revolt against Baghdad, and when they did, the Iraqi army launched a brutal offensive against them. As a result, some two million Kurds escaped into the mountains, seeking refuge in Turkey and Iran. However, Turkey refused to allow the refugees into its territory, fearing they would destabilize its own Kurdish population. Under the pressure of world public opinion informed by the televised tragedy, and to save Turkey from the perceived threat of the refugees, the United States, Britain, and France decided to intervene. This was facilitated by the UN Security Council Resolution 688 of April 5, 1991, which condemned the "repression of the Iraqi civilian population in many parts of Iraq, including most recently in Kurdish populated areas." This was the first time the United Nations had mentioned the name *Kurds*, and it was the first departure from the principle of noninterference in the internal affairs of the member states. The allied powers imposed a no-fly zone in the north and the

south and created a "safe haven" in the northwestern region bordering Turkey (Adelman 1992).

Reorganization of the War Zone: War and Peace in the "Safe Haven"

The exodus of the Kurds to Iran and to the borders of Turkey came to an end within a few weeks when most of the refugees returned to their homes. Within a year, the nationalist Kurdish parties conducted parliamentary elections to form an autonomous region in the no-fly zone. In the absence of any Iraqi government presence, they founded the Regional Government of Kurdistan, which formally remained a part of Iraq. This was a rather new form of governance called by some researchers a "de facto state" (Cooke 1995).

Two nationalist political parties, the PUK and the KDP, virtually divided the executive and legislative powers of the Regional Government, forming what was popularly called a regime of "fifty-fifty." They kept intact their own guerrilla forces, which had fought the Iraqi army for decades. It soon became clear that all power resided in the two parties rather than the autonomous government. Kurdistan also suffered from a "double embargo," that of the United Nations over Iraq and of Iraq over the Kurdish region. Another selective embargo was imposed by the neighboring states of Turkey, Iran, and Syria, which had perceived a threat to their own territorial integrity from a functioning autonomous Kurdish state. The economy of the region, devastated by decades of war, did not recover, and poverty, malnutrition, and hunger continued to destroy the lives of the majority of the people.

A situation of peace and poverty prevailed until May 1994, when an internal war broke out between the two parties. This was the beginning of a new round of armed conflict, which culminated in the KDP's invitation to the Iraqi army to help it against the PUK in 1996. The Iraqi army crossed the borders of the no-fly zone with heavy artillery and tanks, pushing the PUK out of the region. As a result, the ineffectual Regional Government of Kurdistan came to an end. Failing to resolve their differences, both sides formed their own governments in 1999. The KDP was in control of the northwestern part of Iraqi Kurdistan centered at the city of Hewlêr (Irbil), and the PUK controlled the southeastern part with its capital city of Sulêmanî (Sulaymaniya).

While internal war between the Kurdish forces plagued the "safe haven," Turkey, Iraq, and Iran continued to destabilize the Regional Government in various ways, including military action, an economic blockade, and assassinations. Throughout the latter part of the 1990s, the Turkish army sent tens of thousands of troops into Iraqi Kurdistan to suppress the guerrillas of the Kurdistan Workers Party (PKK), which had sought independence from Turkey's Kurdistan and used Iraqi Kurdistan as their bases. Ankara and the

United States put pressure on the KDP and the PUK to help the Turkish army against the PKK. The KDP did not hesitate to engage in this offensive, which gave it a new war front in the safe haven. The Turkish army frequently invaded Iraqi Kurdistan.

Honor Killing in the "Safe Haven"

In spite of all the economic and political hardships in the safe haven, Iraqi Kurds were pleased to be free of Saddam's rule. For Kurdish political parties, postwar developments allowed a radical transformation of the guerrilla organizations into ruling political parties that exercised state power. While the United States warned the Kurds in the safe haven against any political moves that would threaten the territorial integrity of Iraq, they enjoyed extensive freedom in creating a different legal and political structure. The nationalism of the nonstate Kurds was thus put to the test of practice. Now in power, could they do better than the Arab, Turkish, and Persian states?

In May 1992 in the safe haven, Kurdish political parties conducted elections for the first parliament of Iraqi Kurdistan without the interference of the central government. Only five of the 105 elected members of the parliament were women. Of the five members, four were on the PUK ballot list and one on the KDP's (Hoff, Leezenberg, and Muller 1992). Women and men were forced to line up separately to cast their votes. This gender segregation contravened normal practice among the majority of Kurds, whose women and men socialize freely in the rural areas. It also contradicted nationalist claims regarding the freedom of Kurdish women to associate with men, the ubiquity of mixed dancing, and the absence of veiling. With only one woman member, the gender composition of the cabinet was equally patriarchal.

While Kurdish legislation could not compromise the territorial integrity of the Iraqi state, the Kurdish parliament was free to abolish or reform any laws that did not touch on the integrity of the Iraqi state. One law that turned into a site of struggle between the RGK and Kurdish women was the misogynist personal status law of Iraq. The Iraqi state under Ba'ath Party rule was secular, nationalist, and patriarchal. Women were encouraged to join the nation-building projects of the state but were not allowed to engage in independent organizing. Soon after the Islamic state had come to power, the Iraqi regime, like other Middle Eastern states, accommodated more Islamic laws, especially those dealing with the regulation of gender relations. The personal status laws, for instance, allowed men to engage in polygyny and to kill their wives, sisters, and female cousins for violating the honor of the family.

There was a sharp increase in the number of Kurdish women who were

killed by the male members of their families and relatives soon after the formation of the safe haven. Some of the women abused by the Iraqi army during the genocidal campaigns of the late 1980s returned to Kurdistan; there were reports of mistreatment and even killing of these women. Honor killing and self-immolation were, however, most prevalent. The dead bodies of women were found in the streets and on the roads. The frequency of these murders was unprecedented.

Soon after the opening of the Kurdish parliament, women demanded the repeal of Iraq's civil codes in a petition with some fifteen thousand signatures. They demanded the abolition of polygyny, the recognition of women's right to divorce, and equality of inheritance. However, parliament refused to pay attention to these demands (Begikhani 1996).

The RGK and, later, its two successor governments in the northwest and southeast of Iraqi Kurdistan have not provided any statistical data on the murder of women. The evidence available has been collected by women's support groups. Although they have compiled the data independently and from diverse sources, there is no disparity between them in terms of the scope and frequency of the crimes committed against women.

A study conducted by the Independent Organization of Women (Rêxîrawî Serbexoy Jinan) reports that, according to incomplete data, 538 women lost their lives due to honor killing and self-immolation between 1991 and 1998 (see Table 5.1). This figure does not cover all parts of Iraqi Kurdistan and is based on field research and press reports. Brief information about the names of the killers and their victims, the reason for killing, location, and some photographs are provided.

According to a study published by *Jiyanewe* ("Revival"), a women's biweekly paper in Iraqi Kurdistan, Kurdish government offices are not even aware of the scope of killings. The police in Sulêmanî put the number of assassinated women at 32 for the period from the beginning of 1998 to March 1999. The figure provided by the courts was 3, while the Human Rights Association (Mektebî Mafî Mirov) counted 140 assassinations and 36 deaths due to burning (Jiyanewe 1999:5). Most of these figures are from the eastern parts of Kurdistan. Another study by *Jiyanewe* provides data for 1999 in the eastern region of Iraqi Kurdistan. There were 155 cases of burning and self-immolation and 50 cases of assassination (Jiyanewe 2000: 29–38, 49–57). In 2001, the Teaching (Fêrkarî] Hospital of Sulêmanî received the burnt bodies of 105 women who had committed suicide for such reasons as family problems (80 cases), forced marriages (13 cases), and conflict with their husband's family (7 cases) (Mihammad Amin 2002: 6).

The situation in the western region was apparently worse. According to one report, the Republic (Komar) Hospital in Hewlêr received in 1992 the bodies of 160 murdered women, half of whom had been shot and the rest

TABLE 5.1. Assassination and Suicide in Southeastern Iraqi Kurdistan, 1991–2000

	<i>Assassination</i>	<i>Suicide/Self-Immolation</i>
1991	6	2
1992	2	2
1993	14	5
1994	22	12
1995	41	16
1996	48	38
1997	166	65
1998	49	50
1999–2000	50	155
Total	398	345

The organization of the data in this study (Raouf and Mohamadi 1999) and the two pamphlets by *Jiyaneue* (1999, 2000) leaves much to be desired. Also, printing errors are abundant: for instance, the total number of cases of murdered women is given as 518 in the introduction (Raouf and Mohamadi 1999: 1), while it should be 538 when the various categories of assassination and suicide are added up. See also "Honour Killing" (2000).

strangled or stabbed (Qeredaxî 1996: 3). The number of women who lost their lives due to self-immolation in Hewlêr was 280 from September 1, 1991, to October 10, 1993 ("Jonbesh-e baraberi-talab-e zanan" 1998: 11). According to one account, in Iraqi Kurdistan, one woman was killed or committed suicide every twenty-four hours ("Hewalekanî têror û xokujî" 1998: 4). Fathers, husbands, brothers, sons, father-in-laws, brother-in-laws, and uncles, as well as mothers and sisters, all were implicated in these murders. Many suicides were due to marriages imposed on women by the family, including the practice of daughter or sister exchange in marriage (*jin-be-jine*). Under conditions of abject poverty, prostitution was also widespread. Prostitutes were also a target of honor cleansing.

Another form of violence was *etik kirdin*, the "defacing" of a women accused of violating the codes of propriety, honor, or modesty. This included the cutting of the nose, ears, and lips of the victim. One of the victims, Kajal Khidir, was able to take refuge in Canada in 2000. Her case is reported in the Kurdish press. She told the *Toronto Star* that she was "a mother of two sons, was four months pregnant when her former husband's relatives falsely accused her of having an improper relationship with a neighbour. She was beaten and bound by six of her husband's male relatives who chopped off her nose and left her lying on the street. Only her pregnancy prevented them from killing her. Her attackers were jailed, but released after

a day without charges" (Infantry 2000: B2).¹¹ This case was not unusual, and reports about other cases appeared in the Kurdish press in Iraq and abroad.¹²

Honor Killing as a National Tradition

Before the two major parties shared power in the Regional Government of Kurdistan, they conducted a guerrilla war against the Iraqi state. Although they had their own women's organizations, both parties consciously denied women any role in their political and military ranks. Their women's organizations functioned primarily as cosmetics on extremely patriarchal party structures. Progress in women's emancipation was relegated to the future, after achieving self-rule. The nation came first, and women, workers, peasants, and children came last.

Kurdish nationalist parties discarded the more positive elements in rural gender relations—relatively free socializing of men and women and the absence of veiling—and did not hesitate to treat the most oppressive aspects of patriarchy as genuine national culture. Thus the KDP argued that tribal-feudal and Islamic forms of women's oppression were integral parts of the national culture of the Kurds. Honor killing was also given the status of national culture. To give one example of this line of thinking, I quote from a 1993 interview with four leaders from the Union of the Women of Kurdistan (*Yeketêti Afretani Kurdistan*), which belongs to KDP. One of the interviewees denied the extensive killing of women and claimed that only a couple of women might have been killed in Sulêmani (Çingiyani 1993: 122).¹³ Asked about their position on eloping (*redû kewtin*) as a means of avoiding arranged marriage, daughter or sister exchange (*jin be jine*), and the selling of daughters, one interviewee opposed the practice because she considered it against the tradition of the Kurdish people. Another leader of the women's organization opposed eloping and said: "I cannot say, directly, that it [eloping] is a good thing. We should understand clearly the society in which we live. What culture do we have? If we talk about women's rights within a very extensive framework, the society (*komel*) itself will stand against us. We should walk with society step by step. The Islamic culture and Kurdish culture have become social law (*yasay komelayeti*); if we cross this border, we will not succeed" (Çingiyani 1993: 124).

This is a typical statement of the conservative nationalist position. The interviewee conflates the patriarchal politics of her women's organization with the androcentrism of the whole nation. She treats Islamic and feudal gender relations as social and national norms that defy change. Asked about why women prostitutes were killed and male participants in prostitution were spared punishment, one of the interviewees argued that both should be punished not by death but by a flogging of a hundred lashes.

The Iraqi civil codes adopted by the Kurdish parliament allow a man to kill a female member of his family (wife, sister, daughter, mother) on charges of violating *namûs* (honor). Working within this legal framework, the Regional Government of Kurdistan refused to interfere in cases of honor killing. Men were thus allowed to judge and kill any female who they believed had violated their honor. Even if the killer of a woman was taken to the court, the murdered woman would be charged with adultery, and the murderer would be freed according to Iraqi civil codes. This violated even Islamic rules, which require the verdict of four "just witnesses" to prove a case of adultery. Medical examinations of the murdered women have shown that a large number of the victims were between thirteen and twenty years old and had not engaged in sexual intercourse (Begikhani 1998).

The absence of adequate data on honor killing in Iraqi Kurdistan and many Middle Eastern countries is an obstacle to research and action. While data for times of peace are also not available, the incomplete evidence for the 1990s is seen by most observers as extraordinary. The situation has been called, in Kurdish, *reşkuji jinan*, "massive murder of women." This mass violence is distinguished from the cases in former Yugoslavia by the fact that it is committed not by another ethnic group or state but rather by the male members of the women's own nation.

Several factors contributed to the unleashing of violence against women in the post-Gulf War period in the safe haven. The very fabric of social and gender relations was torn apart by the uprooting of the entire population of the Kurdish cities in April 1991, the resettlement of many in Iran, and finally their return. This major upheaval occurred in the context of the destruction of several thousand villages by the Iraqi regime from 1975 to the Gulf War. These events had already changed the demographic composition of Kurdish society and had swelled the size of urban areas. The abject poverty in the aftermath of the Gulf War was also an important factor. Women, often considered to be the property of the family, were further commodified in a system of gender relations that was based on the codes of propriety, chastity, and modesty, all inscribed in the phenomenon of *namûs*.

Another factor that played a retrogressive role in the increase of gendered violence was the rise of Islamic "fundamentalism," which was promoted among the Kurdish clergy by Iran. In Iraqi Kurdistan, the Kurdish nationalist parties, which were always secular, sought the support of Iran in their conflict with the Iraqi government. In their negotiations with Tehran, the two major parties (the KDP and PUK) helped in the formation and operation of pro-Iranian Islamic organizations. Although both parties had always discounted religion as an element of Kurdish national identity, the KDP introduced Islam as a component of national life, while the secular PUK made compromises with religious forces.¹⁴ The KDP began its official pronouncements with "In the name of Allah, the Compassionate, the Merciful . . ."

Wherever the Islamic groups became dominant, they imposed the veil on women in parts of Kurdistan where women had generally not experienced segregation or the Islamic veil.

RESISTANCE TO HONOR KILLING

While the conservative nationalists treat feudal-Islamic patriarchy as the national norm of gender relations, they refuse to accept the tradition of resistance against patriarchal oppression as another component of the nation's political culture. There is no inconsistency here. The nationalist defense of repressive gender relations can thrive only on denial of the rapidly changing Kurdish society, denial of the emergence of new social forces, and denial of a history of resistance against feudal-Islamic patriarchy. However, even the rather rigid tribal and feudal gender relations allowed resistance, albeit minimal, against oppressive marriage relations, which turned women into property to be exchanged in marriage. I will briefly look at elopement, a form of resistance against this type of marriage, which is the norm in rural Kurdish society.

The Case of Eloping

The autonomous Kurdish Republic of 1946, formed in Iranian Kurdistan, banned the practice of eloping and made it a punishable crime. According to one participant in the military administration of the republic (Mihammad-Amin Manguri), the ban on abduction/elopement was in conflict with the traditions of the Bilbas tribal confederacy occupying the territory to the west of the capital city Mahabad and across the border in Iraqi Kurdistan. According to this well-informed source, the people in the region considered the ban an "oppressive and unpleasant" ruling because it did not allow "freedom of loving, flirtation, falling in love, mixed dancing, and abduction. . . . [I]t would turn the youth into hermits (*wişkesofî*) and would hide from them the world of love" (Manguri 1999: 137).

The ruling was resented in the tribal region because, according to Manguri, elopement was considered an honor. If a woman had not eloped, she would not have been respected. The same was true for men: "[I]f a man had not abducted a woman, he would have been told, 'You are not a man, had you been a man you would have abducted a woman'" (138). Manguri claimed that the Kurds were ahead of the Europeans in the freedom of "loving and sexual desire" (138). He also mentions that the practice had an economic function. The adventure of elopement is always risky, sometimes ending up in the murder of the couple, but all sides are familiar with how to resolve the conflict. The man and the woman seek sanctuary (with a tribal

chief or landlord, a religious authority, or any respected and neutral person) in a safe place until a settlement is negotiated; the father of the girl is usually given a "bride-price" or "milk-price" (*şîrbayî*), and others, too, may gain materially (Manguri 1999: 140; Edmonds 1957: 226).¹⁵

Edmonds, a British political officer assigned to Kurdistan during the British Mandate over Iraq, linked elopement/abduction to the "incurably romantic" women of the Bilbas tribal confederacy. Among the Bilbas, "many spirited girls would never dream of getting married" without eloping (Edmonds 1957: 225–26). However, elopement "may violate the prior right to the girl's hand of her paternal first cousin or blast the father's hopes of a good bride-price" (226). While the eloping couples risked their lives, all sides involved would benefit from a settlement. The father of the woman would get a bride-price while the mediating person, usually the *agha* ("landlord or tribal chief") or a religious figure (e.g., a *sheikh*), would collect fines (*cerîme*) and/or a "marriage fee" (*sûrane*).¹⁶ Elopement allows a woman to choose her lover, albeit at the risk of losing her life. The "romanticism" of the Bilbas women may thus be buried in the brutality of the patriarchal order.¹⁷ However, even this liberalizing of the tribal-feudal regime of gender relations is not tolerated by the nationalist KDP (see above).

Honor Killing

A considerable number of poets, writers, journalists, and women's organizations have questioned the oppressive gender relations of Kurdistan throughout the twentieth century. A powerful indictment of honor killing and other forms of women's oppression is recorded in the works of Abdullah Goran, the greatest writer of modern Kurdish poetry. The following poem (Goran 1980: 209–11) is undated, although it was certainly written before 1962, the year of his death. The poem tells the story of how a young girl fell in love but the lover, a boy from a rich family, slept with her and refused to marry her. Staining the honor of the family, she was killed by her father. The poem dramatizes the horrors of a tragedy in which fathers, brothers, and mothers kill their own souls, their most beloved, their daughters, and their sisters.

A Tombstone (Berde-nûsêk)

Inscribed on the Gravestone of an Adolescent Girl

In the soil of my grave, O walker-in-the-cemetery,
Bury a sigh;
On my marble gravestone,
Shed wet tears.

In your bright world, I, too, was a soul,
In a beautiful body.

Like a butterfly, I was coming and going,
Among flowers!

The warm lap of my mother was the site of my coyness,
I was soul for my father;
The fame of my black eyes was my secret,
It had become a song.

But, alas, the shrilling songs of boys,
Soon intoxicated me
I bowed to clean love, and guilt
Diverted me.

I came across a treacherous youth, on my way,
By oath and promise,
He coiled like a snake, slept in my bed,
Shred my honor.

After the snake spat its venom,
It slipped back into the nest . . . ¹⁸

The pale beseeching faces of my mother, my father, and myself
Were of no avail,
He, like his father, spat
Turned a deaf ear on us!

He was a boy, and, moreover, was influential,
According to popular tradition,
The meanness of his deeds was not questionable.
But, O fate!

I was a girl, the gazelle of the prison-house of life.
As punishment for my guilt,
I was beheaded by my own father . . . !
My scattered hair

Was soaked in blood and covered my eyes,
Thus I did not see
How in the heart of my father, my cut-off head
Became his wound?

Or, did my fond mother dare, without shame, to
Mourn warmly, like a mother,
Her youthful dead [daughter],
And wear a black dress . . . ?

A landmark in the protest against honor killing, this poem was written at a time when violence against women was not seen as a serious problem and resistance against it was not, therefore, on the agenda of democratic and socialist movements. Another milestone is the Kurdish filmmaker Yilmaz Güney's well-known movie *Yol* (Road) (1982), which strongly condemned this form of patriarchal violence.

The 1991 Gulf War, much more than the Iraq-Iran War of 1980–88, seriously disturbed the political, economic, and social order of the entire region without replacing it by a more democratic and just order. Violence became part of the daily experience of everyone in Iraq.

If war unleashed more violence against women in Iraqi Kurdistan, it also produced resistance against it. Individuals and organizations have participated in protests against male violence. Some of the organizations have offered support services. The Women's Union of Kurdistan, established in November 1989, has promoted women's rights and helped vulnerable women to cope with trauma.

The Independent Women's Organization (IWO), formed in May 1993, has been active in exposing honor killing and other forms of violence. In March 1998, it opened in Sulêmanî a Women's Shelter Centre, which saved many lives. In 1999, this group of activists, who are affiliated with the Worker Communist Party of Iraq, launched, in London, an "International Campaign for the Defence of Women's Rights in Iraqi Kurdistan." According to their newsletter, the shelter handled 233 cases in six months in 1999: 18 women were murdered, 57 threatened with killing, 38 committed suicide, 69 suffered from different pressures, 6 were raped, and 3 were dismembered (*Newa* 1999: 8). In February 2000, the representative of IWO in Britain wrote a letter to Kofi Anan, the United Nations' Secretary General, to seek the organization's support in replacing the Iraqi personal status law and the penal law in Kurdistan. It also launched an international petition campaign against these laws. The IWO has used the network of women's groups around the world as well as Internet opportunities to collect petitions and mobilize international women and human rights groups in support of Kurdish women.

The Women's Union of Kurdistan established the Women's Information Centre in April, 1997 in Sulêmanî with a mandate to educate women about their rights through media campaigns and to provide leadership training for women. The center has been active in organizing panel discussions, holding seminars on violence against women, and organizing March 8 International Women's Day rallies. In a campaign against honor killing it collected 50,025 signatures (*Jiyanewe* 2000: 53). It also formed a committee in defense of Kajal Khidir and participated actively in the court case of Sabiha Abdulla Ahmed, who was shot dead by an armed group with the assistance of her husband on October 14, 1997. In a memorandum to the president of the Regional Government of Kurdistan, the center presented the following demands:

1. Eradication of tribal family relations, which treat women as property.
2. Prohibition of violence against women by bringing the murderers to trial. This includes even the intention of killing.

3. Prohibition of Kurdish political parties as sanctuaries for killers. Political parties that shelter killers should be considered as accomplices in the crime.
4. Abolition of the Iraqi state's personal status law.

Equally significant is growing activism in the Kurdish diaspora. For example, a seminar was organized by Kurdish Women Action Against Honour Killings in London on June 18, 2000. Attended by Kurdish specialists, lawyers, activists, and others, it was another public recognition of the widespread phenomenon of honor killing in Iraqi Kurdistan.

Another indication of resistance and growing consciousness among women is the formation of a Kurdish women's press in the 1990s. Most of the journals are published in Iraqi Kurdistan, Europe, and Turkey by women's organizations affiliated with political parties.¹⁹ While it is difficult to depict in these presses a vibrant feminist "public sphere," some of these periodicals break the silence, and a few actively fight against patriarchal violence. These pressures and lobbying led to modest "legal" reform in the eastern region of Iraqi Kurdistan in early 2000.

In the absence of a parliament, the PUK's Jalal Talabani, the leader of the regional government in eastern Iraqi Kurdistan, issued two resolutions in April 2000, which aimed at reforming the personal status laws of Iraq. Approved by the "council of ministers," Resolution 59 treated honor killing as a punishable crime, while Resolution 62 restricted polygyny. Although praised by many, the resolutions have not changed the harsh realities of the killing fields. In August 2002, the Kurdish parliament in the KDP-held region amended Iraqi criminal law in order to criminalize honor killing.

CONCLUSION: HONOR KILLING IN A NO-WAR-NO-PEACE ZONE

In the Kurdish experience briefly outlined above, honor killing is produced and reproduced by a host of social, economic, cultural, political, and religious structures that have a vested interest in the subjugation of women. Historically tied to the feudal-tribal organization of society and currently promoted by resurgent Islamisms, it rapidly increased in the growing urban centers of Iraqi Kurdistan under Kurdish self-rule. Not at the margins of Kurdish society, this form of violence has survived the secular legal systems of Turkey and Iraq. Honor killing is thus not only or primarily a legal issue; it has economic, social, religious, political, and cultural implications. It has also survived the extensive transformations of Kurdish society, especially urbanization, in the latter part of the twentieth century.

Honor killing occurs in times of peace and war. War, however, breeds

more violence against women. The increase in the scope of violence in Iraqi Kurdistan can be explained by, among other factors, (1) the unraveling of the political, social, and economic fabric of Kurdish society under conditions prevailing in the war zone; (2) the failure of Kurdish self-rule to democratize gender relations; (3) the nationalist politics of gender relations; (4) an upsurge in Islamic political activism; (5) a revival of tribal and feudal relations; and (6) the weakness of feminist consciousness, especially women's organizing.

As regards the first factor, Kurdish society broke down under conditions of intermittent war after 1961, suffering from forced urbanization (the destruction of several thousand Kurdish villages), a major genocidal campaign (1988), and the great exodus of the entire population to the mountains in the aftermath of the 1991 Gulf War. The "safe haven" created under conditions of embargo by the United Nations, Iraq, and the neighboring states did not lead to recovery and in many ways continued to cause disruption. Gender relations, already patriarchal, were also affected, leading to the further aggravation of conflicts that breed more male violence against women.

The Kurdish nationalist leadership represented by the two major political parties (the KDP and PUK) failed to create a viable, democratic system of governance. Under conditions of anarchy, tribalism, already reinforced by the Iraqi state in the 1980s, turned into a powerful force.²⁰ After the formation of the "safe haven," the two political parties tried to incorporate the tribal leaders and their armed men into their organization. When the Regional Government of Kurdistan was established in 1992, the two parties did not delegate power to this government and reinforced instead their own armed *peshmargas*. Already patriarchal in outlook, this relationship with the tribes resulted in a major compromise regarding the status of women. Tribal and feudal relations thrived on violence against women, and the two parties, even the urban nationalist leadership of the PUK, complied. The first Kurdish parliament refused to discard the personal status and penal laws of Iraq and by doing so denied the women of Kurdistan the right to life; they could be killed even when suspected of talking to a stranger.²¹

Although the two nationalist parties were secular before the coming to power of Islamic theocracy in Iran, they took on Islam-friendly postures, allowing Tehran a free hand in buying influence, setting up Islamic groups and parties, building mosques, and arming their Islamic groups. Under these conditions, the Kurdish parliament avoided legislation aiming at a secular regime of self-rule based on the separation of state and religion. At the same time, some Kurdish mullahs, sponsored by Iran, moved to Islamize Kurdish society by imposing the *hijab* head covering on women who had never experienced it, promoting gender segregation, intimidating feminists and women activists, and advocating violence against women.²²

Although the PUK issued two resolutions in April 2000 to reform the Iraqi penal codes (see above regarding Resolutions 59 and 62 concerning the

punishment of honor killers and the restraining of polygyny), the absence of effective governance has left only a paper trail of reform. In interviews about the impact of the resolutions three months after they were issued (conducted and published by the PUK daily paper *Kurdistanî Nö*), women from the Germiyan region revealed that nothing had changed in the wake of the resolutions. According to one interviewee, her husband took a second wife as soon as he heard about Resolution 62, which restricted but did not ban polygyny. He did so to prove to his first wife that she remained powerless in the wake of the resolution. When she went to the court, she was told that they had not yet received the resolution. In this case, one of the problems regarding the application of the resolution on polygyny was the unfamiliarity of the first wife with law and the lack of support from her family should she decide to take legal action against her husband. Soon after Resolution 59 (regarding honor killing) was issued, a woman was killed, but her murderer was not identified. According to one interviewee, while male killers did not hide themselves before the resolution, now they no longer showed off, and it was difficult to identify them. One woman, a government clerk in the agriculture department, said, "The implementation of the resolutions required much struggle since our women don't know how to seek justice in the courts" (Sa'id 2000: 10).

In conclusion, the war zone of Iraqi Kurdistan has unleashed the forces of patriarchal violence and has enhanced the forging of alliances between nationalism, religion, and tribal-feudal male power. At the same time, this alliance has invited resistance from women and men who are interested in democratizing gender relations in Kurdistan. Although brutal national oppression continues to rally support for the nationalist cause, women have already begun resisting "their own" oppressors. Feminist consciousness is emerging in Kurdistan as a force that challenges rather than accommodates nationalism. It remains to be seen if Kurdish feminists will allow the nationalist movement to remain the watchdog of patriarchy.

POSTSCRIPT

The first draft of this chapter was prepared in 2000. The book goes to press after the 2003 U.S.-led war against Iraq, which overthrew the Ba'athist regime and allowed the KDP and PUK to extend their power over all Kurdish regions of the country. This chapter was updated to cover the period up to the 2003 war.

NOTES

1. For an account of violence against women in Bangladesh, see Habiba Zaman (1999b).

2. The sections of Evliya Çelebi's "travel epic," known as *Seyahatname*, that deal with Bitlis are published in an English translation with excellent supporting material in Dankoff (1990).

3. For instance, Diyarbakir (Turkey), Hewlêr (Iraq), Kirmanshan (Iran), and Sulêmanî (Iraq) have populations of near or more than a million.

4. See, e.g., McDowall (1996, 385–87) on "neo-tribalism" in the "safe haven."

5. Pages are in descending order because of the way the Arabic script text has been paginated as a supplement to Cyrillic texts.

6. Bayezidi (1963) repeatedly refers to the freedom of Kurdish women to socialize with men including strangers and the absence of veiling (see 106–5, 116–15, 147).

7. The word *family* is used here for Bayezidi's *waris*. The latter means "inheritor" or "successor," which implies that anyone in the woman's immediate family or even extended family is in a position to kill her.

8. There is a growing literature on the ties that bound nationalism, racism, and patriarchy in the construction of Western nation-states. See Nelson (1998).

9. According to Article 83 of the Islamic Penal Code, adultery is punishable by stoning in the following cases: "(1) Adultery by a married man who is wedded to a permanent wife with whom he has had intercourse and may have intercourse when he so desires; (2) Adultery of a married woman with an adult man provided the woman is permanently married and has had intercourse with her husband and is able to do so again." Article 82 lists other cases of adultery that, "regardless of the age or marital status of the culprit," are punished by "death." According to Article 131, "If the act of lesbianism has been repeated three times and punishment has been carried out each time, the death penalty shall apply if the act is committed a fourth time" (from "The Islamic Penal Code of the Islamic Republic of Iran: Excerpts Relating to Women," Appendix II in Afkhami and Friedl (1994: 180–87).

10. See, e.g., McDowall (1996: 385–87) on "neo-tribalism" in the "safe haven."

11. See also "Honour Killing" (2000).

12. Kazhal Jamal Majeed, a twenty-eight-year-old woman from the town of Diyana, was attacked by her in-laws, and her nose was cut off ("Kejal Cemal" 2000). See also the Kurdish Media report "Another Woman Disfigured in Kurdistan" (2000).

13. The four interviewed women were leaders of the organization and were on a trip to Europe to rally support for their work.

14. The relationship between the PUK and the Islamic groups has at times been strained. Well armed and financed by Iran, they have been on the offensive, a situation that has led to armed conflicts between the two sides.

15. Mihamad-Amin Manguri, the author of the book to which I refer, was himself from the Mangur tribe of the Bilbas confederacy and inquired about the impact of the ruling on the people of the region while he was in hiding there soon after the fall of the republic.

16. *Cerîme* means "fines for misbehaviour or, less objectionable, a fee for settling a dispute." *Sûrane* is a "marriage fee taken from the parties or their parents, varying from a few shillings to ten pounds or more according to their wealth" (Edmonds 1957: 224).

17. For a more detailed survey of this case, see Mojab (2001). For a brief survey of the complexity of "wife kidnapping and elopement" in Turkey's Kurdistan, see Yalçın-Heckmann (1991).

18. Two lines, ambiguous in the text, were not translated.

19. The Kurdish Democratic Party–Iraq published, clandestinely, in 1953 the first issue of *Dengî Afret* (Voice of Women) as the organ of the Union of the Women of Kurdistan (Yekêti Afretanî Kurdistan); only six issues appeared between 1953 and 1990 (see *Dengî Afret*, no. 13 [August 15, 1997]: 34). However, many Kurdish women's magazines emerged in the 1990s, although most of the publications continued to be initiatives undertaken by the women's organizations affiliated with political parties. The following is an alphabetical list of some of the periodical publications I have been able to identify. In Turkey, two magazines appeared in 1996. *Jujîn* appeared as a "bimonthly Kurdish women's journal" (year 1, no. 1, December, Turkish/Kurmanji Kurdish, Istanbul, 40 pages). *Roza*, too, was launched as a "bimonthly Kurdish women's journal" (year 1, no. 4, September–October, Turkish/Kurmanji Kurdish, Istanbul, 40 pages). Another magazine appearing in Turkey was *Jin û Jiyan* ("Woman and Life"), described as a "monthly magazine of Kurdish women" (no. 13, year 3, March–April 2001, Turkish and Kurmanji Kurdish, Istanbul, 50 pages). There was more activism in the flourishing media environment of Iraqi Kurdistan in the wake of the 1991 Gulf War. *Ayinde* ("Future") was published in 1998 by the Unity of Islamic Sisters of Kurdistan (Yekgirtûy Xoşkani İslamî Kurdistan) as a "monthly general cultural newspaper" (year 2, no. 19, Kurdish/Arabic, March 1999, 8 pages). *Dengî Afret* (see above) continued publishing in the 1990s as a "general cultural magazine" (no. 18, Kurdish, Hewlêr, 1999, 42 pages). *Dengêk* (Back cover reads *Dangek*) ("A Voice") is a women's quarterly "cultural magazine" (vol. 2, no. 4, July 1997, Sorani Kurdish, Sulêmanî). *Dengî Jinan* ("Voice of Women"), a "monthly cultural publication" of the Women's Union of Kurdistan–Zhinan (Yekêti Jinanî Kurdistan (vol. 4, special March 8 issue, 1999, 4 pages, Kurdish, Sulêmanî). *Jiyanewe* ("Revival") was launched in 1997 by the Information Center of the Union of the Women of Kurdistan (Senterî Rageyandinî Yekêti Jinanî Kurdistan) as a biweekly "cultural newspaper" in Sulêmanî (vol. 1, no. 4, August 5, 1997, Kurdish, Sulêmanî, 8 pages). *Mafî Afret* ("Rights of Women") was published in 1998 by the International Committee for European Security and Cooperation (Lijney Nêwdewletî Asayiş û Harîkarî Ewrûpî) as a "monthly general cultural magazine" (no. 1, May, Kurdish-Arabic, Hewlêr, 32 pages). *Tewar* ("Female Goshawk") appeared in 1993 as a "quarterly cultural magazine" published by the Union of the Women of Kurdistan (Yekêti Jinanî Kurdistan) in 1993 (no. 8, September 1994, Kurdish, Sulêmanî, 94 pages). *Yeksanî* (*Yaksany*) ("Equality") was launched by the Independent Women's Organization (Rêkxirawî Serbexoy Afretan) in the mid-1990s (no. 39, January 1, 2000, Sorani, in Sulêmanî, 4 pages). *Şawuşka* (the name of an ancient goddess) is a "quarterly intellectual magazine special to women" (no. 1, June–July 2002, Sorani Kurdish, Irbil, 74 pages).

In Europe, a number of women's journals have appeared: *Jin: Kurdish Kvinnobulletin* ("Woman: Kurdish Women's Bulletin") appeared in 1994–95 (no. 1, 1994, Swedish, Stockholm, 30 pages; 3 issues only). *Jina Serbilind* ("Proud Woman") was published in the early 1990s by the Union of Patriotic Women of Kurdistan (Yekîtiya Jinên Welatparêzên Kurdistan) as a monthly magazine (no. 4, May 1993, Turkish, Leverkusen, Germany, 30 pages). *Jiyan* ("Life") was published as the "Magazine of Union of Women of Kurdistan" (KOMJIN: Yekîtiya Jinên Kurdistan—Kurdische Frauenzeitschrift) in the early 1990s (no. 1, March 1991, German, Turkish, Kurdish (Kurmanji), Köln, 12 pages). *Nawa* (*Newa*) ("Melody"), is published by the Interna-

tional Campaign to Defend Women's Rights in Iraqi Kurdistan (no. 1, May 1999, 4 pages, Kurdish). *Yekbûn* ("Unity") appeared as the "magazine of the Union of Kurdish Women" (Yekêti Afretani Kurd) in the Netherlands (no. 2, Kurdish year 2600 [1989?], Zoetermeer, Sorani and Kurmanji Kurdish, 40 pages; no. 2, 1990). *Awêze* ("Chandelier") was published by Kurdistan Refugee Women's Organization in London (no. 3, November 2001, Sorani Kurdish, 8 pages).

20. For information on this "neotribalism," see McDowall (1996: 354-57, 385-87).

21. In my visit to one of women's shelters in Sulêmani (Iraqi Kurdistan, September 29, 2000), I was told by a young woman that although the PUK was against patriarchal violence, it was not in a position to prosecute a member of a certain tribe for honor killing because the tribe provided the organization with three hundred riflemen.

22. For information on the policy and practice of Islamists about Kurdish women, see Begikhani (1997).