

**Speech of Hemin Hawrami,
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INTRODUCTION:

Your Excellencies, fellow delegates, ladies and gentlemen,

Thank you for the invitation to attend the Meeting of the Council of the Socialist International and the opportunity to discuss a crucial topic; security, both as it pertains to the Kurdistan Region and the international community at large. Let me start by informing you all that the situation in the region, meaning the Kurdistan Region, Iraq itself and Syria is dire.

I am honored to come before you to enhance your knowledge about the current situation. His Excellency, President Masoud Barzani sends his best regards and greetings to SI members and all the participants. At this very moment His Excellency, President Barzani is in one of the military front near Mosul.

PART 1:

Today, we meet at a time of great challenge and consequence to international peace and security. In four days, it will be thirteen months since the most heinous terrorist organization took control of large portions of land, especially Mosul and that continues to be held under their command.

Ladies and gentlemen as you might have heard, this vicious organization is known as the Islamic State in Iraq and Levant (ISIL), ISIS, or the Islamic State.

Just to shortly recap for those of you that have not been informed, in a matter of days after the fall of Mosul, hundreds of thousands of families fled to the Iraqi Kurdistan Region, creating a humanitarian crisis and a burden on the Region because of limited resources.

We are providing refuge to approximately 2 million refugees and IDPs including Christians, Ezidis, Kurds and Arabs, which are now 28% of the Kurdistan Region's population. Imagine an increase of 28% in a population in a manner of few months, how would one handle such a development?

This is a challenging humanitarian issues, which requires an immediate response and support. Today, the crisis continues and more must be done!

In addition to dealing with this crisis, the Kurdistan Region is faced with another crisis or a challenge: fighting ISIL, the deadliest known terrorist group on the ground.

ISIL has caused instability in the region. Hence, in Iraq, Syria and the broader Middle East and poses a great threat to regional peace and security. Furthermore, ISIL continues to recruit

thousands of foreign fighters to Iraq and Syria and poses a great threat to international peace and security. For this reason, we are meeting today and we must act now and act accordingly.

To act, we must analyze and understand why such a violent, destructive group found its place when it did.

Ladies and gentlemen, as we discussed before, the rise of ISIL is due to the failed attempt of enforcing a unified Iraq upon the region, a failure in Maliki's governance, the high rate of unemployment, lack of hope for reform, lack of trust and cooperation between the different groups in Iraq, hence the sectarian conflicts were flamed by sectarian policies and autocratic policies endorsed by the former Iraqi government, disenfranchisement of the Sunnis in Iraq, ignoring the constitution, and the overall failing governance in Baghdad created a more permissive environment for radicalization.

Furthermore, the lack of a national army in Iraq and replacing it with sectarian armed forces, has led in to this security vacuum. Iraqi army also had known as the 'voting army' for Maliki – especially formed in order to manipulate the election results in favor of Maliki. The fall of Mosul, most recently fall of Ramadi and the increasing numbers of the popular mobilizations forces, PMF is an indicative of a failed national army in Iraq.

This was another factor. Another key element, which has contributed to the rise of ISIL, is the socio-political environment in Iraq, which has been a permissive environment for the rise of and the strength of ISIL. Again, this was an environment created because of the disenfranchisement of the Sunnis, which was mainly caused by series of Iraqi governments failed policies.

Even the current Iraqi Government led by Abadi, has not fulfilled its promises, still blocks sending Kurdistan's constitutional share of Iraqi budget, it has not implemented the political agreement for the Sunnis and the Kurds on which this government was formed .For the above stated reasons, it is our perspective that ISIL is the product of failed government system in Iraq and Syria.

Before the fall of Mosul to ISIL, Kurdistan leadership alerted the Iraqi Federal Government in Baghdad in December 2013 about an imminent threat from ISIL against the city and offered support by sending our Peshmerga forces to defend the area but unfortunately, our warnings were overlooked and ignored.

Six months later, on 9 June 2014, Mosul fell to the hands of these barbaric militants. ISIL took control of the city. In a matter of hours, ISIL evolved from a ruthless terrorist organization to an unprecedented terrorist state.

PART 2:

What comes next will be the most challenging but crucial step- **defeating ISIL.**

The first step in defeating ISIL requires a comprehensive military strategy while the second step requires an international, collective strategy, which aims at defeating ISIL not containing ISIL. But to be successful in these steps, we must begin to admit and recognize the issues, problems, and root causes as they are, not as we want. Without this recognition, any solution will be

cosmetic and not practical. For any force to be effective, adjustments must be made to the situation on the ground.

We, as the Kurdistan Region, have built a comprehensive strategy to counter the threat of ISIL as much as possible. A strategy that includes higher security measures, military operations, public trust, providing civil services, political inclusion for the Islamic parties in the Region, and most important- a plan to dismantle the ideology that is being practiced by the barbaric terrorists. Because as everyone is aware, this war is like no other, we must adhere to a plan that is best suited.

Examples of this comprehensive strategy:

1. Public Trust: the recent bombing in Ainkawa and attempts for other terrorist actions. The family's support and willingness to help.
2. Public Cooperation: a mother disowning her son publically for being affiliated with this group.

Kurdistan Region Security Council under the leadership of Mr. Masrour Barzani managed to successfully gain and rely on this strong bond with the people of the Kurdistan Region and professional dedicated security officers to protect the Region. Now, to defeat and ultimately destroy ISIL, the current situation can be classified into two phases: first phase is a military strategy and the second phase is a collective strategy.

First of all, any fighting force must have a cause to fight for-- as Peshmerga are fighting to protect the Kurdistan Region, its citizens and the freedom of the people.

Ladies and gentlemen, the first phase can be further classified – as the Peshmerga has done it. When ISIL started attacking Kurdish controlled territory, the Peshmerga implemented an immediate mechanism, which consisted of three phases.

First, to stop ISIL's march towards the Kurdistan Region.

Second, to roll ISIL back and liberate the seized areas.

Third, to defeat ISIL on the borders of the Kurdistan Region and in Iraq as a whole.

With this mechanism, the Peshmerga achieved great victory in the first and second phase.

For the third phases, of course, the Peshmerga cannot do this alone.

This step requires collective efforts and advanced military weapons. Furthermore, there is a great need for military support from the international community as well as advanced weapons to implement the third phase of the mechanism, which is to destroy ISIL. As of today, the Peshmerga do not have the type of weapons and weapon systems required to act upon the third phase.

However, there is something that the Peshmerga forces do obtain and that is a cause to fight for- the will to fight. Since the attack, Peshmerga have re-organized and taken back much of our territory from ISIL; the territory rightfully belonging to the Kurdistan Region. Our Peshmerga have retrieved 20,000 square kilometers. And we will stay on the offensive against ISIL until they

are defeated completely. And if given more support on the ground by the international community, which is a capable body, the Peshmerga forces would achieve greater victory especially considering their bravery and the will to fight injustice, and cruelty.

Ladies and gentlemen, we have lost many Peshmerga, and to be exact, we have lost 1,218 Peshmerga in this fight against ISIL and 7,000 other are wounded.

As we have seen in the past, a lack of will to fight makes it impossible to be successful militarily as it was unfortunately apparent from the Iraqi army in Mosul and Ramadi.

ISIL cannot and will not be defeated without a collective response. Specifically, it is high time to have an international, comprehensive, collective strategy, which fully support the Peshmerga forces. The Peshmerga are the only forces battling ISIL on the battlefield and they are the only force that has been successful in defeating ISIL.

As such, the international community has begun to realize the important role of the Peshmerga and is beginning to consider supplying them with necessary weapons.

Furthermore, to assist in this crisis, international coalition partners in defeating ISIL have authorized military personnel to carry out air support and work with partner nations to conduct targeted airstrikes in Iraq and Syria as part of the comprehensive strategy to degrade and defeat the ISIL.

Ladies and gentlemen, let us remember the fall of Ramadi in Iraq and of Palmyra/Tedmur in Syria which gave ISIL a huge boost both logistically and in terms of morale. This sent a clear message to the people in the areas under its control that “we are capable of reorganizing ourselves and launching attacks.” They are not all that easy to defeat. However, with a strong collective strategy, we can and will defeat ISIL.

CONCLUSION:

Battlefield operations and military air strikes will continue against ISIL in Iraq and Syria until this group is diminished and destroyed because ISIL is not only a regional threat but it is an international threat as well, and the situation needs an international response.

However, this is a shared enemy and a shared responsibility. It is the duty of every freedom loving country to join the anti-ISIL coalition and assist in destroying this terrorist group because ISIL poses a threat to international peace and security, and it needs a unified, international response. Therefore, this particular problem requires a strong, unified, international response.

Borders of the Middle East are changing; increasing numbers of weak, failing and failed states are contributing to the environment in which radicalism can find recruits. Borders of the current Middle East do not reflect the realities of the people and their will. Kurdistan does not want to be part of a failed state like Iraq. We, as Kurds, want to have a peaceful process through democratic means, referendum under the supervision of UN, EU, SI and other international organizations to give the opportunity to the Kurdistan people to decide their own fate

In the wise words of Mr. Masrour Barzani, “it is time for the world to realize that the failed

system such as the failed system in Iraq, needs to be reviewed. Repeating the same mistakes and believing a unified Iraq is achievable is not practical”.

Ladies and gentlemen, the Kurds have supported a united, federal, constitutional, pluralistic strong Iraq, however, it has not worked. Kurdistan is controlled by the Kurds, ISIL and Shiite forces control the Sunni areas and the Popular Mobilization Units control the Shiite areas.

Prime Minister Haider al-Abadi has been making big promises to fix things, but words must be followed by actions. But the Iraqi government must accept this reality and look for other solutions. We are not pushing for forced separation. We are talking about an amicable divorce.”

Furthermore, the Kurdistan Region has a legitimate operating government system; the Kurdistan Regional Government (KRG) and our intentions are to focus on important developments of this region as well as implementing ‘the will’ of its people. As you may be aware, the KRG is a recognized administration, which governs four governorates. We wish to have friendly relations based on mutual respect with all of our neighbors.

The Iraqi Kurdistan Region has been autonomous since 1992, which was when the regional government was formed; however, the Kurdish people are the largest ethnic in the world without a state of their own. The time has come for the Kurds of the Iraqi Kurdistan Region to decide their own fate. The international community must realize that the Kurds are an active player in gaining regional and international peace by defeating ISIS and not a threat to international conflicts.

In addition, the international community as well as our neighbors must recognize the important role that the Kurdistan Region is playing in degrading ISIL, and providing shelter for 2 million internally displaced persons and refugees.

Lastly, and most importantly, by denying the facts on the ground and sticking to one Iraq policy, the instability in the region will continue and more threats will arise for the international security.

Thank you very much for your attention.