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KURDISH ETHNOS – CHALLENGE IN NEAR EAST

Among those ethnoses of Near East which do not have their own state the Kurds are the most populous and the oldest nation. Historically they mainly resided in the territory of Kurdistan.

Following the overthrow of Saddam Hussein's dictatorial regime in Iraq the Kurdish movement has been established as an independent factor both on regional and international levels contributing to the establishment of Kurdistan autonomous region in Northern Iraq. Ankara considered it to be an alarm signal. Imitating their Iraqi fellowmen, the Kurds led even more active political and separatists battle against Ankara, which resulted in tremendous amount of casualties for both sides. Russia's recent increased attention towards the "Kurdish problem" (that has, in fact, gone *ignored since 1990s*) is noteworthy; despite this fact, it is less likely that the establishment of Kurdish state will be supported by Russia at this point; this is conditioned by Russia's relations with *Syria* and Iran as Russia will not tolerate violation of territorial integrity of these countries.

Thus, in new geopolitical conditions Kurdistan is being formed into not only an ethnic but also an *interstate* (either real or verbal) confrontation epicenter in Near East.