

Kurdistan Regional Government's Response to Human Rights Watch

From: Dindar Zebari <[REDACTED]@[REDACTED].[REDACTED]>

Date: 25 February 2018 at 11:00:52 GMT-5

To: Belkis Wille <[REDACTED]@hrw.org>

Cc: smdzayee <[REDACTED]@[REDACTED].[REDACTED]>, "Falah M. Bakir" <[REDACTED]@[REDACTED].[REDACTED]>, Fuad Hussein <[REDACTED]@[REDACTED].[REDACTED]>

Subject: Clarification on the Upcoming HRW Report for Comment

Dear Belkis,

Thank you for your email.

According to the Kurdistan Parliament Protest Act No. 17 of 2010, citizens are entitled to protesting as long as it remains in the framework of law. Law No. 17 identifies the procedures that should be followed by the protestors such as the time, place and purpose of the protest.

Article 3 of the Law is about permission for protests. The terms of this Article 3 were violated during the mentioned protests on December 18-23, 2017. While freedom of assembly, speech, and protests are encouraged, it is required by law that large protests are organized with permission from the government. This is done to ensure the safety of all civilians, protesters and counter-protestors.

It is in the mandate of the KRG security forces to protect the stability and safety of all civilians during any violent acts. The security forces are present to prevent the spread of violence and/or illegal acts committed by any unruly protestors.

Many protestors committed violent acts during those demonstrations. Public properties were destroyed, government buildings were attacked and burnt down, and many public places were looted during the protesting.

Sulaymaniyah security forces were extremely lenient and accommodating during the protests. A number of people were temporarily arrested to prevent the spread of violence while also helping to protect others, once the situation became stable they were immediately released without investigations or charges.

The Asayish was very considerate of the arrestees' situation, and although they had overlooked many laws being broken, their goal was restoring the peace, preventing violent outbreaks, and ensuring the safety of everyone present during the protesting process. Considering the above violent acts, the arrestees' would have been tried and sentenced to at least 1-2 years of imprisonment.

Kind regards,

Dr. Dindar Zebari

Kurdistan Regional Government Coordinator for International Advocacy
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