



**PRESS RELEASE**

## **Regent's University London hosts "Kurdish Studies in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century Conference"**

**14 March 2014– London, UK** – Professor Martin van Bruinessen, Chair for the Comparative Study of Contemporary Muslim Societies at Utrecht University, Netherlands and the author of *Agha, Shaikh and State: The Social and Political Structures of Kurdistan*, was the keynote speaker at the Kurdish Studies in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century conference organized to mark the first volume of Kurdish Studies journal held at Regent's University London on 13<sup>th</sup> March 2014.

The event was attended by a select group of academics and members of media focused on developments in Kurdish Studies as an academic field. Professor Aldwyn Cooper, the Vice Chancellor of Regent's University London emphasized the contested statistics on Kurdish populations in the Middle East in his welcoming speech.

Ms Bayan Sami Abdul Rahman, the High Representative of Kurdistan Regional Government to the United Kingdom, in her opening speech appealed for a more structured scholarly work on Kurdish Studies and highlighted the need for high skilled people in developing Kurdistan. She has commended Regent's University London for the effort and resources provided to organize the event fostering Kurdish Studies.

Ibrahim Sirkeci, a Professor of Regent's University London and the Director of Regent's Centre for Transnational Studies hosting the event, presented data on the growth of overall scholarly output in Kurdish Studies in the last 50 years. He stated that sharp increase in the interest in Kurdish Studies was possibly stimulated by the brutal conflicts the Kurdish populations faced in the region. The need for a scholarly outlet like the Kurdish Studies journal was felt and it was the right time to launch the periodical.

The progress in establishing academic ties among academics working in the field was discussed by Dr Welat Zeydanlioglu, who is the Managing Editor of Kurdish Studies journal and convener of the Kurdish Studies Network (KSN). Dr Zeydanlioglu rightly pointed to the fact that the transnational nature of the network allows a young student from a remote town in Kurdistan or elsewhere to contact distinguished scholars such as Professor Bruinessen through the network. KSN is where interested academics often get instant feedback and responses to their queries in a constructive fashion. He also underlined the benefits of the loose nature of the network which facilitates frank debates among the members.

Martin van Bruinessen has shared his own journey of Kurdish Studies which dates back to the early 1970s. Professor Bruinessen mentioned the coincidence of the event date with some dates in March referring to historic events in the Kurdish history. 12 March 1971 military intervention in Turkey was partly targeting the Kurds he argued. 16<sup>th</sup> March is the anniversary of Halabja massacre. There is now need and substantial number of academics to sustain a good scholarly journal in the field said Bruinessen, reflecting upon his own work and record of doctoral students completed in Kurdish Studies. The positive role of KSN to secure the future of the journal was also mentioned.

### About Kurdish Studies Network and Kurdish Studies journal

Founded in 2009, Kurdish Studies Network (KSN) is a global research network of over 800 researchers and scholars working in Kurdish Studies. KSN aims to revitalize and reorient the research, scholarship and debates in the field of Kurdish studies and provide valuable resources by sharing knowledge and encouraging interaction and collaboration through its vast online network. Kurdish Studies journal was launched in 2013 by a group of KSN members. The journal is led by a team of associate editors including

Welat Zeydanlioglu, Ibrahim Sirkeci, Joost Jongerden, Janet Klein and Martin van Bruinessen as the chief editor. Find more about KSN and Kurdish Studies journal at : [www.kurdishstudies.net](http://www.kurdishstudies.net) or email [welat.zeydanlioglu@gmail.com](mailto:welat.zeydanlioglu@gmail.com).

### About RCTS

The Regent's Centre for Transnational Studies (RCTS) is a research centre established in 2011 at Regent's University London, the leading private higher education provider in Britain offering quality higher education programmes at undergraduate and postgraduate levels. The Centre focuses on various research streams and scholarly activities in a range of topics including transnational management and marketing, transnational finance, cross-cultural studies, human mobility, and transnational education. Expert researchers in all these areas based in the RCTS offer professional training and produce academic research as well as consultancy research and organize academic and industry events for knowledge exchange. The RCTS is organizing the second of Turkish Migration Conferences in May 2014. Conference details can be seen at [www.regents.ac.uk/TMC](http://www.regents.ac.uk/TMC). Find out more about RCTS at: [www.regents.ac.uk/RCTS](http://www.regents.ac.uk/RCTS) or email [rcts@regents.ac.uk](mailto:rcts@regents.ac.uk).

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