

21 February 2005

Dr. Saman Shali  
Prisident  
Kurdish National Congress

Dear Dr. Saman,

Thank you very much for your kind letter of January 1 2005. I would like you to know that we value the good work of the Kurdish National Congress.

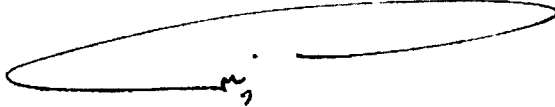
The theme of your conference this year is not only important, but also timely. As you know, we have an active referendum movement whose own ballot, held in parallel to the January 30 elections, showed an overwhelming majority of people in Kurdistan to be in favour of independence.

There is much that we can learn from the discussions and the papers that will be presented at your conference, which I would have very much liked to attend. But it is difficult for me to leave the region at this critical time. The process of the unification of the two administrations in Kurdistan has started and this requires diligence and serious work, which prevents me from travelling abroad for the moment.

I would be happy, however, to ask Dr Shafiq Qazzaz, the Minister for Humanitarian Aid and Co-operation, to attend on my behalf. We have huge challenges ahead of us and I expect that the discussions at your conference will be of great value in helping us understand some important issues from a global perspective.

I look forward to keeping in touch regarding this and other subjects and wish you and the Kurdish National Congress every success.

Yours sincerely,



Nechirvan Barzani