هونەری ئیسماعیل خەیات لەگۆڤارێکی ئەمریکدا

(Legalaffairs)واتە کاروباری یاسایی ناوی ئەو گۆڤارە ئەمریکیە کە لەسەر کاری هونەرمەند ئیسماعیل خەیاتی نوسیوە یەکێك لە (دمامکەکانی هونەرمەند) بلاوکردۆتەوە (ژمارەی نوڤمبری) باس لەگرنگی مێژووی گەلی کورد ئەکاتو تێکۆشانو بەسەرهاتەکانی لەمێژووداو چۆن کەلتورەکەی بەردەوام پێشێلکراوەو فشارێکی زۆری خراوەتەسەر.

باس لەشەڕەکانی ناو کوردستانو دواتر لەڕاپەڕینو گەلی کورد کە (٢٠) ملیۆنە، بەلام وڵاتی نییە، ئیسماعیل خەیات کردوونی بە هونەرەکەیو ئاوێنەی خەمی میللەتەکەیەتی.

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EXHIBIT: KURDISH MASKS

WITH ROUGHLY 20 MILLION people, the Kurds are the world's largest ethnic group without its own country. About four million live in Iraq, where they make up one-fifth of the population. When the Iraqi royal government was overthrown in 1958, the Kurds were guaranteed representation by the country's new constitution and ensured the rights to teach, publish, and broadcast in Kurdish. Very soon after, however, the government began to rescind these rights and attempted to "Arabize" the Kurdish regions by relocating Arab citizens to the previously recognized Kurdish territories. Many Kurds resisted the Iraqi government's efforts. Others, including prominent Kurdish artists who feared that they would become further marginalized as time went on, left Iraq in large numbers. They were not wrong.

By 1975, Saddam Hussein was overseeing the closure of every department that taught Kurdish language and culture in Iraqi universities. The Kurds made the momentous decision to aid Iran during the nearly decade-long war between Iran and Iraq in the 1980s. When the Iranian government withdrew its support of the Kurds in exchange for a favorable border agreement with Iraq, an estimated 200,000 Kurds were brutally eliminated. During the Persian Gulf war of 1991, the Iraqi Kurds rebelled again at the urging of the group's most prominent political party. Nearly one million Kurds fled when Saddam's forces retook control of northern Iraq's Kurdish territories. Over the course of the next decade, Kurdish art and culture were forced entirely underground.

Ismail Khayat, a 61-year-old Kurdish artist from the northern territory called Iraqi Kurdistan, has long depicted the Iraqi oppression of the Kurds. For the Kurdish theater, he makes costumes and masks, which are intended to hide characters' pain. The masks are made from wood, fiber, and other materials, and the new one (left) of pencil on paper reveals what Khayat calls the shadows of his people's suffering, while concealing its full extent.

Since 2003, the reincorporation of Kurds into the Iraqi mainstream has been notable. For the first time in roughly 30 years, radio programs on which Kurdish is spoken and Kurdish music is played are broadcast across Iraq. But culture and society may be at odds with politics and law. The Iraqi Constitution drafted last summer gave the Kurds nearly everything they wanted, especially autonomy like that of a sovereign state. The loose federation defined by the draft was designed to recognize the distinct interests of Kurds, Sunnis, and Shiites and to avoid the sort of centralization that Saddam abused. Still, if the draft constitution turns out to be a prelude to Kurdish independence, the ultimate victim could be Iraq.

—THE EDITORS