

**CITY COUNCIL REFERRAL OF
MEMBER MOTION****Kurdish Flag Raising**

Date: March 3, 2020
To: Executive Committee
From: City Council
Wards: Ward: All

CITY COUNCIL DECISION

City Council on February 26, 2020, referred Motion MM16.7 to the Executive Committee.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Councillor Jim Karygiannis, seconded by Councillor Gary Crawford, recommends that:

1. In recognition of the Halabja chemical attack, City Council amend the City of Toronto Flag Raising Policy to allow the Kurdish Flag to be raised every year in March, close to the commemoration day, at any courtesy flag pole in the City of Toronto to remember the 5,000 killed, the 10,000 injured during this horrific attack and the 182,000 plus killed during the Anfal campaign and to bring awareness so that these crimes against humanity never happen again.

SUMMARY

On the evening of March 16, 1988, a horrific poisonous gas attack took place on the people of Halabja - for five hours a chemical attack was launched against the Kurdish people by Saddam Hussein. During the attack, more than 5,000 people lost their lives and more than 7,000 were injured and many more suffered lasting effects from birth defects, cancers and post-traumatic stress disorder. This attack was officially defined, in 2010, by the Supreme Iraqi Criminal Tribunal as a genocidal massacre against Kurdish people in Iraq and was the largest chemical weapons attack directed against a civilian-populated area in history. During Saddam Hussein's Anfal campaign (which included the gas attack against the City of Halabja), where mostly Kurdish people were targeted, it is estimated that 182,000 people were killed but the number could be much higher.

In Canada, Kurdish immigration is largely the result of the constant wars and suppression of Kurds and Shiites by the Iraqi government and many have come to Toronto to live a more peaceful life. The Kurdish community is increasing in number and has become a vibrant part of Toronto's multicultural makeup. Toronto is one of the most diverse and multicultural rich cities in the world and it is because of this inclusivity that people around the world immigrate here. Toronto has become a model where all cultures, faiths and beliefs are respected and accepted.

We strive to support, celebrate and acknowledge our diverse communities, which is why this Motion is important to show that Toronto City Council, together with the Kurdish Community, acknowledge these horrific events. By raising the Kurdish flag, we are remembering those who were killed, wounded or maimed during the Anfal campaign and stand together to ensure that these types of crimes against humanity never happen again.