

## Topic Page: [Talabani, Jalal \(1933 - \)](#)

Summary Article: **Talabani, Jalal**

From *The Hutchinson Unabridged Encyclopedia with Atlas and Weather Guide*

Iraqi Kurdish centre-left politician, president of Iraq 2005–14. Founder and leader of the Patriotic Union of Kurdistan (PUK), one of the two main Kurdish groups that dominate Iraq's northern Kurdish region, he led an armed campaign against Saddam Hussein in the 1970s and 1980s. After the 1991 Gulf War and Kurdish uprising against the Iraqi government, the PUK shared power with the other main Kurdish party, the Kurdish Democratic Party (KDP), 1992–94, in a joint administration in Iraqi Kurdistan. They fell out 1994–98, leading to inter-Kurdish fighting. The two groups put aside their differences in 2002, prior to the US-led invasion of Iraq and the overthrow of Saddam. In 2003–05 Talabani was part of the transitional Iraqi governing council and in February 2005 was elected president by Iraq's new democratically elected parliament. In April 2006 he was the first president elected under Iraq's new constitution. He was re-elected in 2010 and was succeeded as president in July 2014 by his PUK colleague, Fuad Masum.

Talabani was born in the village of Kelkan, in Iraqi Kurdistan. He started his political career as a teenager, joining the KDP and, at Baghdad University where he studied law, founding the Kurdistan Students Union. After graduating in 1959, he was drafted into the Iraqi army as a tank commander. In 1961, he joined a Kurdish revolt against the government of Abdul Karim al-Qassem, who was later ousted in a coup, but in the mid-1960s broke away from the KDP because of differences with its leader Mustafa Barzani. He founded the socialist PUK in 1975 and soon began an armed campaign against the repressive government of Saddam Hussein, developing a large force of Peshmerga (armed pro-independence fighters). After Saddam used chemical weapons against the Kurds in 1988, he escaped to take refuge in Iran.

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## Chicago

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## Harvard

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## MLA

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