

# **Kurds' fight for a nation long, futile**

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From their mountain strongholds, Kurdish tribesmen have been fighting intruders for more than 2,000 years.

Their warrior qualities were recorded by Xenophon, whose army of Greeks fought its way through Kurdistan in 400 B.C. Yet their fight for a country of their own came close to realization only once, and briefly, after World War I.

An ethnically distinct people with their own language and culture, the Kurds have fought the Persians, the Mongols, the Turks, the Crusaders, the Arabs and the British. Against the Crusaders, one of the most famous Kurds, Saladin, left his mark on history.

Like the Persians, the Kurds are an Indo-European people rather than Arabic. They are related to the Persians, but the Kurds are distinct, with aquiline features. They are often tall, fair-skinned and blue-eyed.

The misfortune of the Kurds was that as their stronger neighbors carved out territories with political boundaries, Kurdistan, the land of the Kurds, was cut up too. Large pieces with sizable populations