

## Negotiations: Easing of Tensions

March 15, 2011

The organizing council of the protest have started having some negotiations with the Prime Minister of the Kurdish Regional Government, Barham Salih. He does not have as much power as the party leaders, Barzani and Talabani but just perhaps these negotiations have led to some easing of the tension here. Yesterday he declared the protests to be legal, thus making it much more difficult for Talabani to send in his Peshmergas to break up the protest violently. Today he announced that government funding to party owned media, TV, radio, newspapers and magazines was going to be cut or discontinued. Whether cut or discontinued is not clear. In any case this is a small step in the right direction because the media party owned media has been calling for violence. We do not expect any violence tomorrow on the 22nd anniversary of the gassing of Halabja. This will be commemorated tomorrow at Sulemaniya city centre and we have been asked to speak, which we will. This will put us a little more firmly in support of the protest movement.

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