

## Foreword

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Divided among several nation-states and situated at the heart of a complex geopolitical landscape, Kurds constitute the world's largest stateless ethnic group. In recent decades, and especially in the aftermath of the "Arab Spring," they have steadily grown in importance as a political power to be reckoned with in the Middle East. As a result, a wide range of Kurdish issues—political, cultural, and historical alike—now draw intense scholarly interest.

The Moshe Dayan Center for Middle Eastern and African Studies at Tel Aviv University has, therefore, launched the Kurdish Studies Program, which aims to foster in-depth understanding of Kurdish-related issues through scholarly research and debate. The program operates under the supervision of Professor Ofra Bengio, Senior Research Fellow at the Moshe Dayan Center and the author of *The Kurds of Iraq: Building a State within a State?* (Lynne Rienner Publishers, 2012). Open to all researchers and students who wish to take part in this academic endeavor, the Kurdish Studies Program includes, among other activities, lectures, Kurdish language classes, and film screenings. A key aspect is the Forum on Kurdish Society, History and Culture, which brings academicians and students together to discuss central issues in the discourse on modern Kurdish history, society, and culture, for the purpose of stimulating further research. This volume is in the main the product of the academic gatherings that were held in the framework of the Kurdish Forum between 2010 and 2012. The essays collected here are the contributions of well-known experts in the field from around the globe.

*Kurdish Awakening: Nation Building in a Fragmented Homeland* copes with key questions related to Kurdish nationalism and identity formation

in Syria, Iraq, Iran, and Turkey. It includes voices from Kurdish academia, which approach the subject from different angles, and is based on a variety of sources in various languages. As such, I am convinced that it will contribute significantly to the scholarly literature in Kurdish studies.

This collection would not have come to fruition without the concerted efforts of a number of key individuals. I would like to thank my colleagues of the Moshe Dayan Center and the other authors who contributed to this volume. Thanks go especially to Ofra Bengio, who organized the Kurdish Forum and skillfully edited this highly needed and timely volume. I would like to express my appreciation to Dr. Belina Neuberger, who copyedited the entire volume with great accuracy and professionalism. Thanks also go to Duygu Atlas, Dotan Halevy, Assaf Biron, and Hay Eytan Cohen Yanarocak for their invaluable assistance in bringing this project to completion. Special thanks go to Ceng Sagnic for indexing the book and other assistance.