

Social Listening:

People's Front: Lahur Talabani

June 2025



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“The People’s Front is a serious political project, a diverse people’s movement that came into existence for major and crucial tasks, including reforming public salaries and providing security and stability for the people of the Kurdistan Region.”

Lahur Talabani



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“The outcome of the election will influence the trajectory of the KRG’s relations with its neighbors as well as the United States.”

“The launch of the People’s Front marks a turning point in Kurdish politics—and Lahur leads it.”

Erbil Political Watch





EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This report provides a comprehensive analysis of public sentiment and discourse surrounding the People's Front and its leader, Lahur Talabani ahead of the upcoming parliamentary elections. The People's Front, is well-positioned to capture a significant share of the vote in the upcoming elections. Widespread disillusionment with the PUK and KDP has created an opening for a credible alternative grounded in reform, security, and nationalism.

Social listening data reveals growing public dissatisfaction and demand for change, particularly among younger and independent voters. However, to turn this momentum into electoral success, the People's Front must establish a distinct political identity anchored in Lahur Talabani's leadership and built on trust, competence, and civic responsibility. By implementing a strategic communications campaign that features consistent, emotionally resonant messaging and authentic community engagement the party can connect with a frustrated electorate and reshape the political landscape of Kurdistan. In doing so, it has the potential to restore public faith in the broader promise of self-governance.

*“Our support is in the streets,
not in ballot boxes”*

Lahur Talabani



KEY FINDINGS

- The People's Front derives its identity, credibility, and visibility largely from Lahur Talabani's leadership and legacy
 - ▷ Over 60% of discussions referencing the party mention Lahur directly
 - ▷ The party is perceived as an extension of its founder rather than a fully institutionalized movement
- Positive sentiment toward Lahur has increased over the past six months, driven by his reformist image, break from PUK leadership, and security credentials
- Topic modeling revealed five dominant themes: (1) PUK leadership dispute, (2) founding the People's Front, (3) Lahur's intelligence and CTC legacy, (4) electoral strategy, and (5) skepticism over elitism
- Widespread dissatisfaction among Kurds with the ruling parties has created a political void
 - ▷ Voters are turning to the People's Front as an alternative, especially in Sulaymaniyah and Halabja
- A large portion of the electorate still holds neutral or undecided views about Lahur Talabani and the People's Front.
 - ▷ This represents an opportunity for conversion through targeted outreach and message clarity
- The Party's Success in the upcoming elections hinges on Strategic Communication and Identity-Building

SENTIMENT ANALYSIS

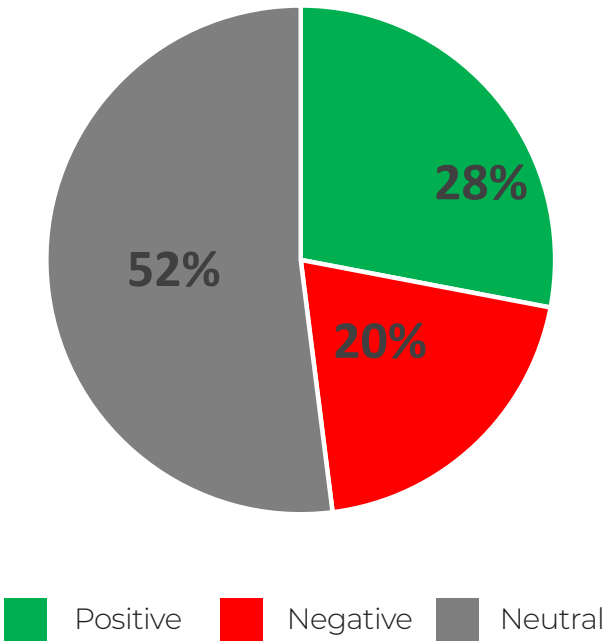
LAHUR TALIBANI

ENODO conducted sentiment analysis to measure public perceptions of Lahur Talabani. Using proprietary Social Listening tools, data was compiled from social media platforms, online forums, RSS feeds, and local and national news sources across Kurdistan. The analysis identified key narratives, emotional drivers, and public attitudes to establish a baseline of sentiment that delivers a clear picture of how different segments of the Kurdish population interpret Lahur’s leadership and political positioning.

Positive sentiment (28%): Centered on Lahur’s security background, role in founding the People’s Front, and break from traditional party politics. Supporters cited his credibility and reformist agenda as a path to restoring public trust.

Neutral sentiment (52%): Reflects a cautious, wait-and-see attitude mainly from undecided voters and independent media without clear support or opposition, which leaves room for strategic influence.

Negative sentiment (20%): Tied to the internal power struggles within the PUK, skepticism about elite continuity under a new brand, and the effectiveness of his new party.



Lahur’s background in the security establishment might help him sway voters.”

“He’s no different than PUK and PDK, i’ll flush any word coming out of his mouth in a toilet.”

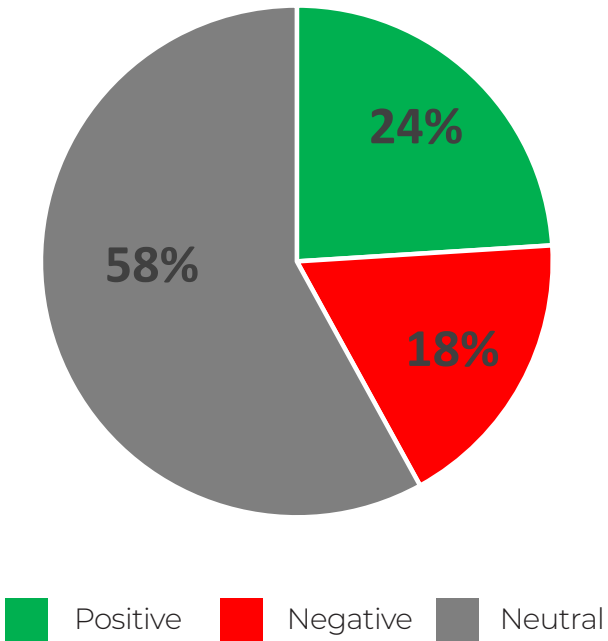
PEOPLE’S FRONT

Analysts applied sentiment analysis to the dataset to assess public perceptions of the People’s Front across social media platforms, news outlets, and community discussions. The analysis identified positive, neutral, and negative sentiment polarities, providing a clear picture of how different segments of the Kurdish population interpret the party’s emergence, platform, and political relevance. While sentiment is largely shaped by the identity of its founder, the People’s Front is beginning to generate its own discourse, particularly among voters seeking an alternative to the established parties.

Positive sentiment (24%): Highlights its reformist platform, perceived independence from entrenched parties, and appeal to voters seeking credible alternatives to the PUK and KDP.

Neutral sentiment (58%): Reflects a wait-and-see attitude, acknowledging the party’s emergence but withholding judgment on its effectiveness or long-term credibility.

Negative sentiment (18%): Centers on skepticism that it represents genuine change, with some critics viewing it as a rebranded extension of existing political elites rather than a truly transformative movement.



“Words cannot describe how brain dead you must actually be to vote for the PUK and KDP to enrich themselves and sell Kurdistan every day.”

“The new party pledges decentralization within the region and combating corruption.”

SENTIMENT BY REGION

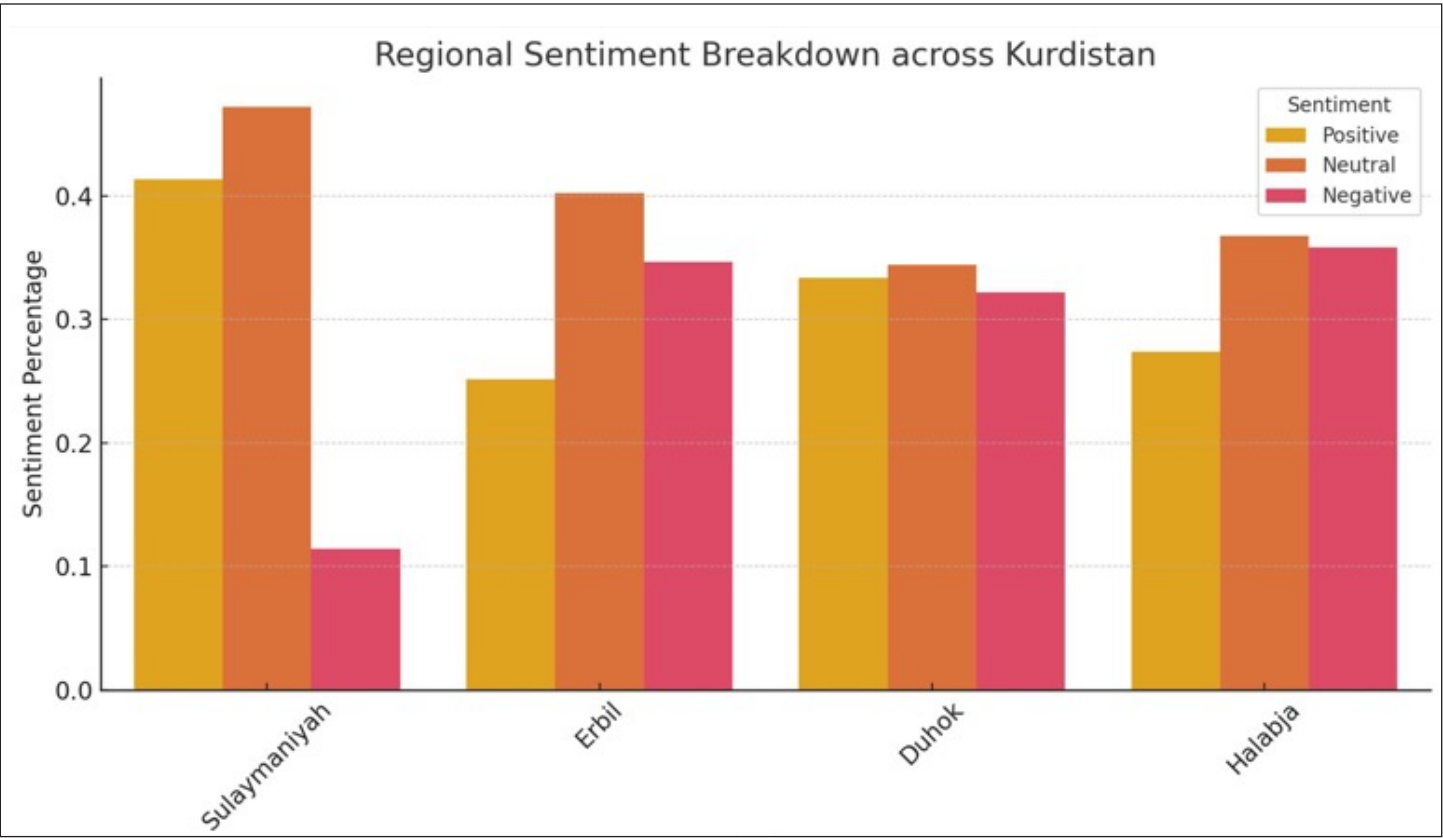
Using advanced AI-driven natural language processing (NLP) techniques, analysts measured sentiment across key governorates in the Kurdistan Regions of Sulaymaniyah, Erbil, Duhok, and Halabja. ENODO’s proprietary Social Listening platform analyzed hundreds of thousands of localized data points from social media, forums, and news content, detecting linguistic markers, emotional tone, and regional dialects to assess public attitudes toward Lahur Talabani and the People’s Front. The analysis revealed clear geographic distinctions in sentiment:

Sulaymaniyah: Showed strong positive sentiment, reflecting Lahur’s political base and resonance with reform-oriented messaging.

Halabja: Leaned moderately positive, driven by disillusionment with traditional parties and openness to new leadership.

Erbil: Reflected a neutral to skeptical stance, shaped by KDP dominance and media framing.

Duhok: Exhibited more negative sentiment, aligned with entrenched KDP loyalties and resistance to opposition figures.



“People in the Kurdistan Region have lost trust in the opposition because previously the Change Movement, which was an influential opposition force, very cheaply put its opposition status at the service of the authorities and became part of the existing problems.”

“The Kurdish people in Suleimaniyah have a rich history of resistance and struggle for autonomy. Suleimaniyah has been a hub for Kurdish nationalist movements and has witnessed significant political developments.”

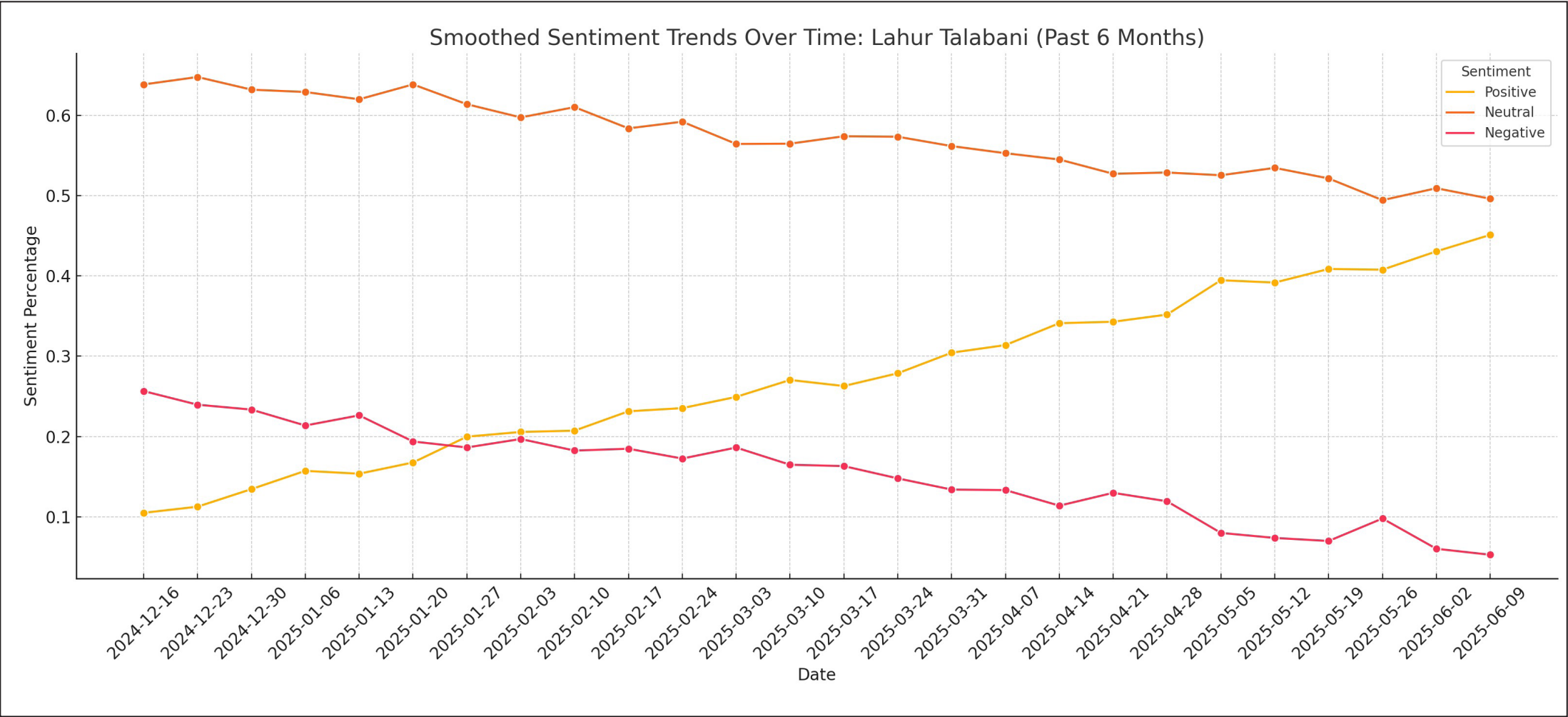
SENTIMENT OVER TIME

The chart visualizes how public sentiment toward Lahur Talabani has evolved over the past six months, capturing weekly changes in positive, neutral, and negative perceptions. These fluctuations reflect reactions to key events such as the formal launch of the People’s Front, ongoing PUK leadership disputes, and regional developments in Iraq and Kurdistan.

Positive sentiment: increased significantly reflecting optimism and growing public support.

Neutral sentiment: decreased steadily indicating that previously undecided individuals are forming clearer opinions.

Negative sentiment: dropped sharply suggesting a marked decline in public criticism or skepticism.



“The next Kurdistan elections most of the PUK’s military wing will support Lahur, who in January established his own party, the People’s Front.”

Amberin Zaman



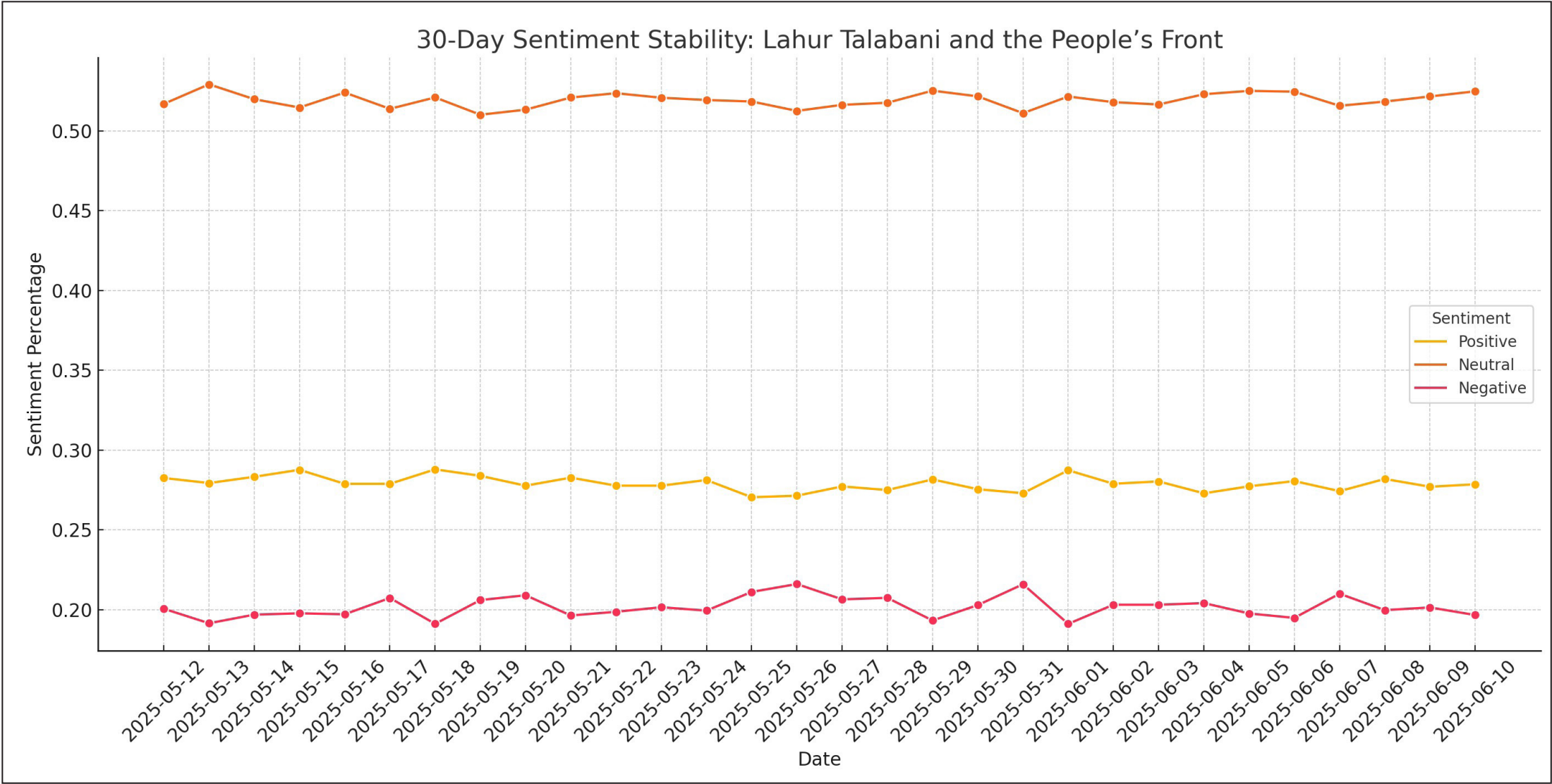
“His repeated engagements suggest an effort to broaden his political alliances and reduce his dependence on Masrour Barzani.”

Kurdistan Watch

SENTIMENT OVER TIME

Sentiment analysis conducted over a 30-day period revealed minimal deviations in public perception toward Lahur Talabani and the People’s Front. Positive, neutral, and negative sentiment levels remained largely static across different platforms, with no significant upward or downward trends. Despite increased online activity and political developments, the emotional tone of public discourse remained unchanged indicating a lack of resonance or clarity in current communication strategies.

- This constancy suggests that recent messaging and outreach efforts have had limited impact on public opinion.
- The absence of changes in sentiment particularly among neutral and undecided segments underscores the need for a more targeted, emotionally compelling, and community-focused strategic communications plan to influence public perception and drive momentum ahead of the upcoming elections.



“Honestly, I’ve stopped caring. It’s always the same faces, the same promises, and nothing changes. Whether it’s the KDP, PUK, or some new party—it all feels like a cycle with no end.”

TOPIC MODELING

Analysts applied topic modeling and machine learning to identify and categorize the most frequently discussed themes across social media, online forums, and news outlets in Kurdistan. Using natural language processing, the AI analyzed thousands of posts and articles, grouping them into clusters of recurring topics based on linguistic patterns and term frequency. This data-driven approach uncovered the core issues driving public sentiment and provided actionable insights into the concerns shaping attitudes toward Lahur Talabani and the People’s Front.

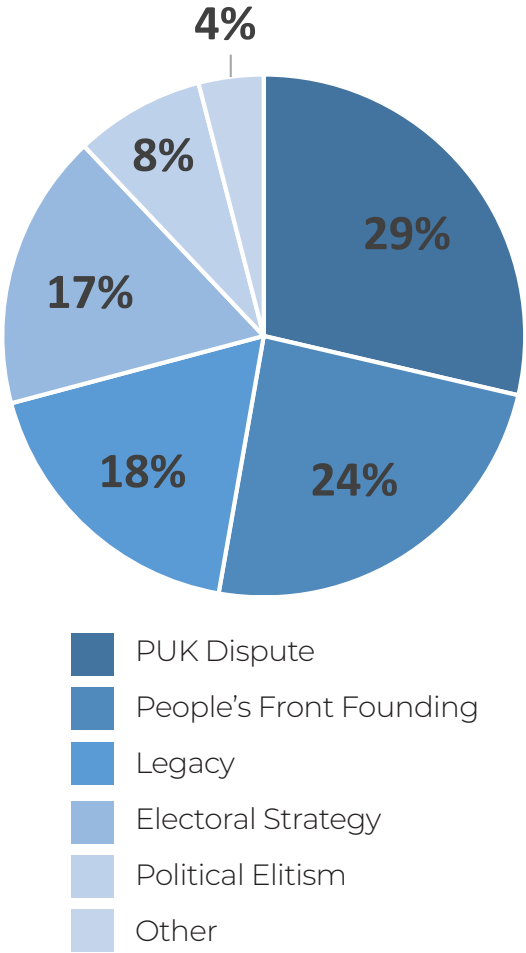
PUK Dispute: 29% of discussions center on the rift with the PUK and Lahur’s fallout with Bafel Talabani.

People’s Front Founding: 24% of discussions referenced the launch of the new political movement, focused on its platform, reformist message, and potential to disrupt KDP–PUK dominance.

Legacy: 18% referenced Lahur’s leadership of the Counter-Terrorism Group and Zanyari, often cited by supporters as proof of his experience and national service.

Electoral Strategy: 17% of discussions examined Lahur’s viability, regional support, especially in Sulaymaniyah, ability to build coalitions and win over undecided voters.

Political Elitism: 8% focused on concerns about elite control, media manipulation, and doubts that the People’s Front offers real change.



“Disillusioned Kurds see Lahur’s People’s Front as a viable, principled alternative.”
Draw Media

“Talabani’s CTG legacy resonates with Kurds craving competence and security.”
KRG Policy Forum



REDDITT SURVEY

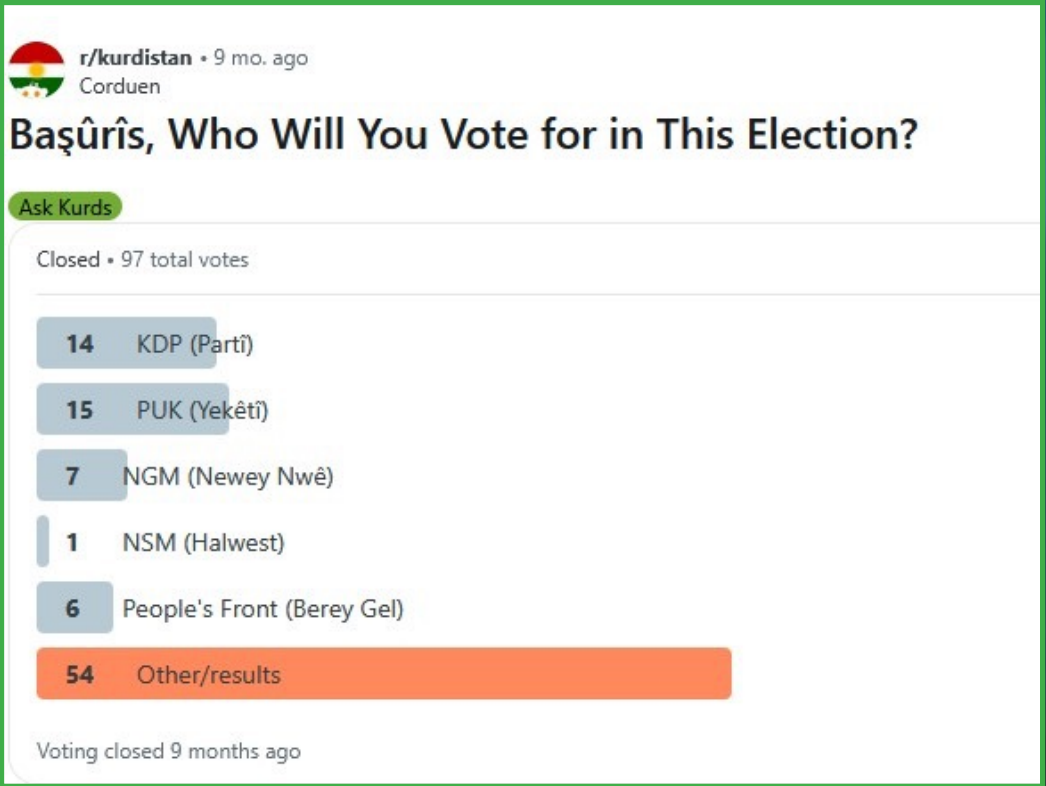
To supplement the report’s analysis, analysts reviewed a publicly accessible survey conducted on a Redditt Kurdish political forum. The survey, garnered participation from over 800 users offered valuable grassroots insights into voter attitudes ahead of the upcoming parliamentary elections.

Patriotic Union of Kurdistan (PUK): Respondents expressed confidence in the PUK’s ability to enact meaningful reforms, with many citing internal divisions, lack of transparency, and recent leadership struggles as key concerns.

Kurdistan Democratic Party (KDP): Participants believed the KDP adequately represents Kurdish interests at both the regional and national levels, citing perceived corruption and centralized control as major issues.

People’s Front: Received support from 36% of respondents, especially among younger voters and those in Sulaymaniyah and Halabja. Participants praised the party’s reformist platform, its perceived independence from entrenched power structures, and its alignment with public frustrations over governance failures.

“I cannot believe that KDP and PUK are at all getting any votes here. Please justify your rationale. I genuinely want to know what more you need to believe that these people are enemies of Kurdistan.”



The Barzanis and Talabanis are not part of your nation and they’re certainly not your people, because your nation is the Kurdish nation and your people are the Kurdish people. Your nation is not the nation of Barzani/Talabani/Iraqi Kurdish Region.

COALITION BUILDING

The success of the People’s Front depends not only on its reformist appeal, but also on its ability to build strategic alliances with other minority and opposition parties. In a political landscape dominated by the PUK and KDP, no single party can disrupt the status quo alone. Since early May, the People’s Front has joined five other Kurdish opposition parties including NGM, KIU, KJG, Halwest (National Stance), and Komal in talks to form a joint electoral front. A unified coalition could challenge the entrenched dominance of the ruling parties and boost the People’s Front’s credibility as a unifying force for reform and democratic renewal. Without unity, the opposition risks splitting the vote and forfeiting a rare opportunity to reshape Kurdish politics. To lead effectively, the People’s Front must act with pragmatism, inclusion, and strategic focus, building a broad, credible movement capable of confronting the established order.



Party	Coalition Fit	Shared Platform Focus	Rationale
People’s Front	★★★★★	Reform, accountability, national security	Central innovator; combines popular reformist messaging with organizational agility
Kurdistan Islamic Union (KIU)	★★★★	Anti-corruption, decentralization	Committed to effective opposition and institutional reform(rudaw.net , en.wikipedia.org)
Kurdistan Justice Group (Komal)	★★★★	Regional balance, democratic renewal	Optimistic about alliance, emphasizing rebuilding foundations
New Generation Movement (NGM)	★★★★	Civic activism, youth engagement	Proven electoral strength; aligns on anti-elite sentiment
National Stance Movement (Halwest)	★★★	Anti-corruption, nationalist reform	Joined talks but premature coalition exits suggest caution
Islamic Group of Kurdistan (Komal-Islamic)	★★★	Traditional values, moderate reform	Shared alignment but more conservative base

“We are ready to form a large alliance with forces outside the KDP and PUK ... if the opposition does not reorganize itself ... it will significantly reduce its votes.”

Shadman Hassan

“There is no [clear] nationalistic agenda ... some parties were holding talks with us while simultaneously negotiating with Baghdad.”

DATA COLLECTION

This report applied ENODO Global's proprietary population-centric methodology to analyze how identity, culture, and political narratives shape public perceptions of Lahur Talabani and the People's Front across Kurdistan. The analytical framework integrates qualitative and quantitative techniques to measure sentiment, identify dominant themes, and track evolving public discourse.

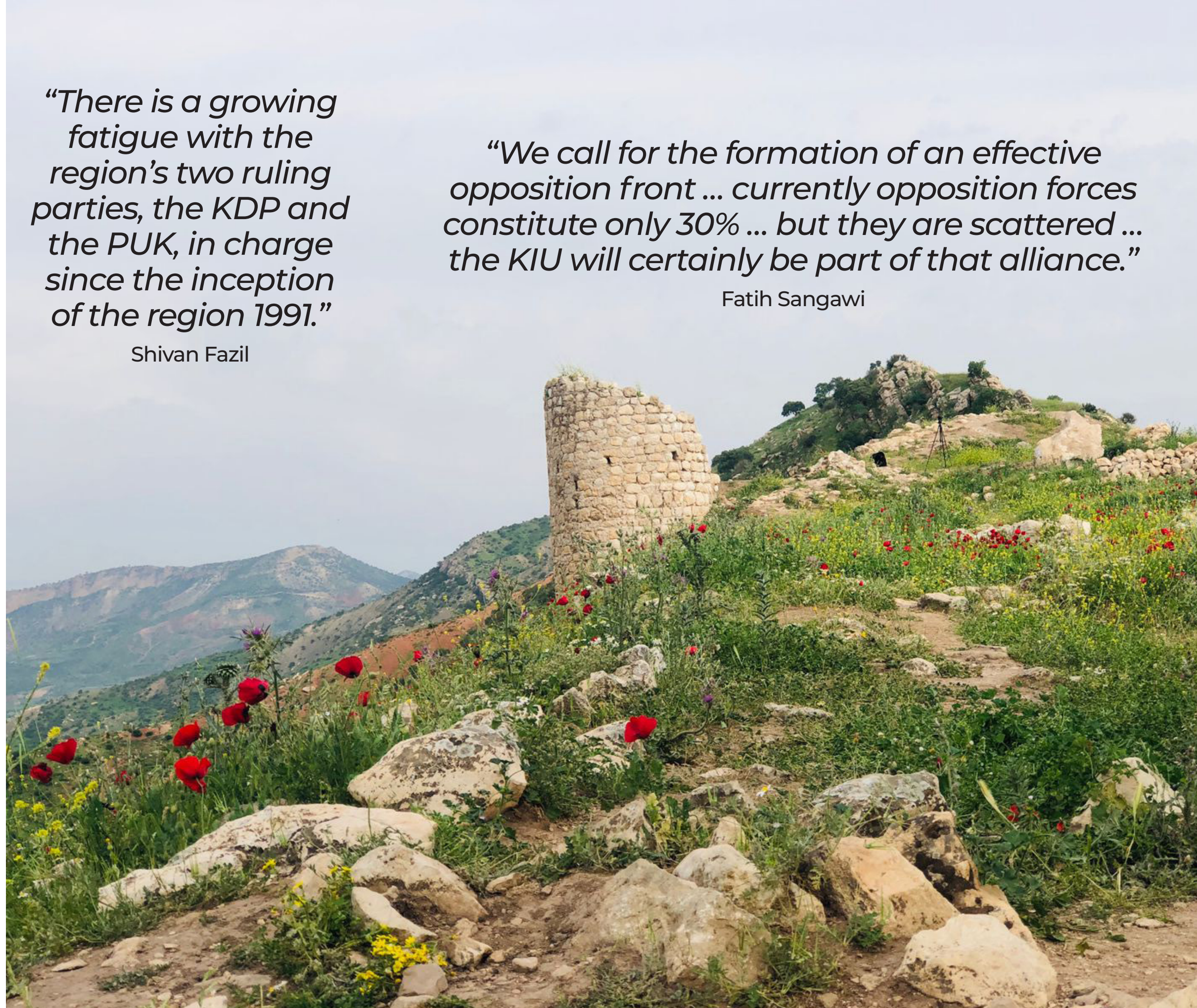
Data was collected over a six-month period from more than 22 publicly available sources, including social media platforms (Facebook, Twitter, YouTube, Reddit), online forums, blogs, RSS feeds, and local and national news outlets. Analysts processed over 540,000 data points, encompassing content in Arabic, Kurdish (Sorani, Kurmanji, Behdini), and English. This multi-dimensional approach produced a real-time, data-driven snapshot of how Lahur Talabani and the People's Front are perceived across diverse social, political, and cultural environments.

“There is a growing fatigue with the region’s two ruling parties, the KDP and the PUK, in charge since the inception of the region 1991.”

Shivan Fazil

“We call for the formation of an effective opposition front ... currently opposition forces constitute only 30% ... but they are scattered ... the KIU will certainly be part of that alliance.”

Fatih Sangawi





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