

Kareem Abdulrahman

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SUMMARY

- My English translation of prominent Iraqi Kurdish novelist Bachtyar Ali's *I Stared at the Night of the City*, the first Kurdish novel to be translated into English, was published in Sept 2016
- My second translation, *The Last Pomegranate Tree*, was published in Jan 2023 by Archipelago Books; it was a finalist on the National Book Critics Circle (NBCC) award; it was published in the UK by Afsana Press in Sep 2025
- I was on a month-long residency as an international scholar at The Humanities Center of Stanford University in April 2025 alongside Kurdish novelist Bachtyar Ali. In addition to working on a translation project, I delivered talks, workshops and took part in a two-day conference on Kurdish literature.
- I was awarded a place on the Emerging Translator Mentorship Programme, British Centre for Literary Translation (BCLT) in 2014
- Seventeen years of experience as Kurdish-English translator, focusing on news translation
- Over 25 years of experience as English-Kurdish translator and editor, including translating short fiction, reports on arts and literature, news analysis, as well as co-translating two non-fiction books
- Master's degree in Journalism from the University of Westminster, London; Bachelor's degree in English language and literature, University of Sulaimaniyah, Iraq
- Seventeen years of experience as a journalist and editor, including eight years at the BBC.

EXPERIENCE

Residency at Stanford University

- I was on a month-long residency as an international scholar at The Humanities Center of Stanford University in April 2025 alongside Kurdish novelist Bachtyar Ali. In addition to working on a translation project, I delivered talks, workshops and took part in a two-day conference on Kurdish literature.

Freelance literary Kurdish translator

- My translation of prominent Iraqi Kurdish writer Bachtyar Ali's novel *The Last Pomegranate Tree* was published in Jan 2023 by Archipelago books (New York); it was a finalist on the NBCC award, translation category; UK edition by Afsana Press (Sep 2025)
- I translated Bachtyar Ali's novel *Ghazalrus and the Gardens of Imagination* into English. This is the first book-length Kurdish fiction to appear in English. The book was published in Sept 2016 under the title of *I Stared at the Night of the City*; second edition, Sept 2017. (Periscope; imprint of Garnet Publishing)
- I have also worked as a consultant including on a literary project for Pen Translate (English Pen) in Jul 2017
- Translator of a documentary entitled "Saddam's Road to Hell", which was broadcast by Channel4 in the UK and PBS in the US; 2006

Insight Iraq

London

Head of Editorial (April 2014-present)

Head of the newsroom in a company specializing in analysis of Kurdish and Iraqi politics.

BBC Monitoring

Reading, England (2006-2014)

Kurdish affairs specialist and analyst

- Translation of reports from Iraqi Kurdish media outlets into English; writing news reports and analyses

Freelance English-Kurdish translator

I have been translating literary and non-literary texts from English into Kurdish since 1998, including short stories published in literary journals, articles on arts and literature, articles relating to sociology and philosophy, and news reports and features. I have published translations in prominent Kurdish journals Aynda and Sardam, as well as the literary supplements of Hawlati and Kurdistan Nuwe newspapers. I have co-translated these books: *'Honour': Crimes, Paradigms, and Violence Against Women*; *Citizen Advocacy with Older People*.

In addition, in the course of working as a translator at a local TV station (summer 1998-summer 2000), I translated and subtitled a number of films, documentaries and culture shows, including the film *Legends of the Fall*.

Unpublished: Ignorance, novel; Milan Kundera (to be published in 2025)

EDUCATION

- University of Westminster; Media, Arts and Design School; Master's of Arts in Journalism, Sept 2005; London
- Sulaimaniyah University, College of Language; Bachelor of Arts in English Language and Literature, Jul 1998; Sulaimaniyah, Iraq

Languages

Kurdish (mother tongue), English and Arabic.

Publications and audio-video interviews in English unless otherwise stated

- Interview with Paraphrasis podcast (Harvard University); April 2024
- Translation of an article by Bachtyar Ali entitled "What I have learned from writing novels"; Penning Magazine, published by Scottish Pen; Dec 2023
- Interview with The Book Show (Australian ABC radio station) about The Last Pomegranate Tree; Oct 2023
- The First Kurdish Novel to Appear in English; In Other Words (UK); 2017
- "A Kurdish imagination"; review of "Ghazalrus and the Gardens of Imagination" - The Times Literary Supplement; 5 Dec 2008
- "Kurdish novel re-writes rules"; Aug 2008; BBC website
- An analysis of Robinson Crusoe (Kurdish; Kurdistan Nuwe; 1998)

Affiliations

- Member of the Translators' Association (UK); former committee member of Translators Association (TA); member of the National Union of Journalists (UK); member of web-based Emerging Translators' Network (ETN)

Scholarship & awards

- I was one of 11 Iraqis awarded a British Chevening scholarship in 2004 to study Master's in journalism
- I was awarded a place on the prestigious Emerging Translator Mentorship Programme, which was run by the British Centre for Literary Translation (BCLT) in 2014
- My second translation, The Last Pomegranate Tree, was a finalist on the on National Book Critics Circle (NBCC) award, translation category

Activities

- I was on a month-long residency at The Humanities Center of Stanford University in April 2025 alongside Kurdish novelist Bachtyar Ali. In addition to working on a translation project, I held talks, workshops and took part in a two-day conference on Kurdish literature.
- I took part and organized a tour of the UK alongside Bachtyar Ali to promote *The Last Pomegranate Tree* in February 2024. At all the events I interpreted for Ali and spoke about my experience of translating from Kurdish and the challenges facing Kurdish translators. Six events were held at the University of Exeter; University of Oxford (workshop style); University of Royal Holloway; London, Oriental and African Studies (SOAS), University of London; University of Manchester; Saltire Society and Scottish Pen in Edinburgh; University of Strathclyde, Glasgow
- I took part in a tour of Toronto and the US to promote *The Last Pomegranate Tree* in Sept-Oct 2023; I interpreted for author Bachtyar Ali at Toronto International Festival of Authors, as well as at events at the University of Toronto, Bard College, Kurdish Community Center in New York, George Mason University, Boston University and Harvard University. At all the events I also spoke about my experience of translating from Kurdish and the challenges facing Kurdish translators. I also attended solo events to talk about *The Last Pomegranate Tree* and my translation experience at the University of Texas, University of California and Stanford University
- I took part in a virtual panel entitled "Literature Across Frontiers: Translating Minorized Languages in Europe"; American Literary Translators Association (ALTA) conference; 17 Oct 2020
- I took part in a panel on non-native translation at the Translators Association; London; 20 Nov 2019
- I took part in a panel alongside the author Bachtyar Ali to discuss the state of Kurdish literature and translation; Shubbak literary festival; London; 30 Jun 2019
- I was a special guest at the "Beyond Border" Lecture series at the University of Texas; I gave a lecture about Kurdish literature and translation, and took part in two other panels. 19-23 Mar 2018
- I took part in a panel with Bachtyar Ali on Kurdish literature, including my translation of his novel, as special guests at the Dox contemporary art centre, Prague, Czech Republic; 11 Oct 2017
- I took part in a panel on the state of Kurdish translation at the University of Exeter's conference, "Kurdish Futures in and Outside of Iraq, Syria, Turkey, and Iran?"; UK; 26-28 Jun 2017
- Guest lecture at the American University in Iraq, Sulaimani, where I talked about my experience of translating a Kurdish novel and the process of finding a publisher. 5 May 2017
- I virtually took part in a panel on "Politics of Translation" as part of Day of Translation, organized by the Cheuse Center in partnership with Center for the Art of Translation in San Francisco; George Mason University; 5 Apr 2017.
- I took part in a panel discussing co-translation and translation by non-native speakers at LBF- 1; Society of Authors in association with Free Word Centre; London – 13 Mar 2017.
- I took part in an event to promote *I Stared at the Night of the City*, discussing the joys and challenges of translation from Kurdish; Free Word Centre's Wanderlust; London; 13 Mar 2017.
- I took part in the launch of *I Stared at the Night of the City* where I spoke about the translation of the novel, and interpreted for the author, Bachtyar Ali; The Culture Project; London; 12 Mar 2017.
- I attended a part-time fiction writing course at City Lit, London – Sep 15-Mar 2016
- I completed a twelve-week literature course on Coursera.org in the summer of 2013. Distinguished American professor Arnold Weinstein taught the uncertified online course entitled "The Fiction of Relationship". The course explored the nature and meaning of connection in ten major works of narrative fiction, including works by Abbé Prévost, Charlotte Brontë, Franz Kafka, Tarjei Vesaas, Toni Morrison and J. M. Coetzee.