



## KĀKĀ'I

---

**KĀKĀ'I**, a term used both for a tribal federation and for a religious group in Iraqi Kurdistan. The word Kākā'i (also spelled Kāka'i) derives from Kurd. *kak* 'brother' and means 'belonging to the brotherhood'. It is reminiscent of the terms *Şoḥbatiya* 'circle of friends', an ancient name for the group that came to be called Yezidis, and *Yāres(t)ān* 'circle of friends' which denotes the [Ahl-e Ḥaqq](#). The term Kākā'i is widely used in Iraq as a synonym of Ahl-e Ḥaqq, particularly for Ahl-e Ḥaqq groups living in that country. In Iraqi Kurdistan, however, the term is sometimes used to include the communities of the Šabak, Bājalān, and Sārli, as well as those who are called Kākā'i in a narrower sense. It has been pointed out (Leezenberg, *passim*) that all these groups are religious minorities, who have several characteristic features in common. Moreover, dialects, belonging to the Hawrāmi (see [AVROMANI](#)) or [Gurāni](#) group, play a role in the culture of each of these communities, although some of their speakers live in the regions of Mosul and Kirkuk, far away from the Hawrāmi heartlands in western Iran. In a recent publication (Fattah, p. 63), the links between these communities are described in political, rather than religious terms; they are referred to as members of "the Kākā'i tribal federation." The present state of our knowledge does not permit us to do more than speculate as to the precise implications of these data. It seems clear, however, that close links once existed between the groups that now appear to be more or less unrelated.



## BIBLIOGRAPHY

---

I. K. Fattah, *Les dialectes kurdes méridionaux: étude linguistique et dialectologique*, Louvain, 2000.

M. R. Hamzeh'ee, *The Yaresan: a Sociological, Historical and Religio-historical Study of a Kurdish Community*, Berlin, 1990.

M.M. Leezenberg, "Between Assimilation and Deportation: History of the Shabak and the Kakais in Northern Iraq," in *Syncretistic Religious Communities in the Near East*, eds., B.Kellner-Heinkele and K.Kehl-Bodrogi, Leiden, 1997, pp. 155-74.

Idem, "The Shabak and the Kakais: Dynamics of Ethnicity in Iraqi Kurdistan," available [online](#) (accessed August 20, 2009).