

UNITED NATIONS  
Sub-Commission on the Promotion and  
Protection of Human Rights  
Working Group on Indigenous Populations  
Twenty-fourth session\*  
31 July to 4 August 2006  
Agenda item (4a)  
**Agenda item (4c)**

Mr. Mofak Salman  
12, Village Close  
Kilbreck, Stamullen  
Co-Meath, Ireland  
Tel: 00 353 1 841 6676

Email: [msalman@eircom.net](mailto:msalman@eircom.net)

## **The Indigenous peoples and conflict prevention and resolution.**

Thank you Mr Chairperson

Honourable delegates, ladies and gentlemen, my name is Mofak SALMAN, I am honoured today to have been granted this opportunity to partake in the twenty-fourth session, Indigenous peoples and conflict prevention and resolution. My objective is to draw your attention to the current human rights and economic situation of the **Turkmen** <sup>(1)</sup> of Iraq and conflict prevention and resolution.

After the occupation of Iraq, the Turkmen, Arab and Chaldo Assyrians had high expectations of the interim administration established after April 9, 2003. The Turkmen expected to see democracy, fairness, an end to discrimination, the right to self-determination and an end to violence. Unfortunately, the opposite has occurred regarding the human rights situation in Iraq, in particular concerning the Iraqi Turkmen. Presently, the Turkmen have been undergoing campaigns by the Kurds in **Turkmeneli** <sup>(2)</sup> in an often more brutal fashion than carried out on Kurds by Saddam Hussein. The Iraqi Kurds are attempting by various methods to eliminate Turkmen identity especially from Kerkuk City in order to dilute them into Kurdish society.

Kerkuk City, which is located 250km north of Baghdad holds strategic as well as symbolic value for the Iraqi people in general and for the Turkmen especially! The ocean of oil beneath its surface could be used to drive the economy of an independent Kurdistan, the ultimate goal for many Kurds. The Kurds hope to make the city and its vast oil reserves part of an autonomous Kurdistan whereas the Turkmen, Chaldo Assyrians and Arabs are fiercely opposing the inclusion of Kerkuk in an autonomous region. Because of Kerkuk's oil resources and its strategic importance, the fight over the control of the province proved to be one of the focal points of the conflict in northern Iraq.

Kurdish control over Kerkuk could fuel Kurdish nationalism in the region and undermine the rights of Turkmen, Arab and Chaldo Assyrian residents in Kerkuk. Kerkuk itself has become almost synonymous with the abusive Kurdization campaign, which illustrates the persistency of the designs that the Kurds have on Kerkuk. This could lead to instability in the region and, possibly, civil war.

The main objective and intention of the Kurds is to change the demographic structure of the city ahead of the census to be held on the Dec. 31, 2007. To this end, the Kurds have intensified their Kurdization campaign in the city of Kerkuk. The Kurdish officials working at the administration of the Kerkuk Municipality have been confiscating real estate and lands belonging to the town administration with a view to granting them to ethnic Kurds newly arrived in Kerkuk and who are not originally from the town.

Kerkuk's fate has been one of the thorniest issues of Iraq's constitutional process. Under Article 136 of the document ratified by Iraqis on Oct. 15, 2005, a referendum on the status of Kerkuk will be held in the province no later than Dec. 31, 2007. This

will happen only after the Iraqi government takes measures to repatriate former Kurdish residents and resettle Arabs or compensate them.

But throughout Kerkuk and across hundreds of remote farming villages, the Kurdish political parties are doing the job themselves. The PUK has openly declared that the party provides \$5,000 to each repatriated Kurdish family. Tens of thousands" of Kurds have resettled in the city and surrounding villages over the past year, many with the help of the parties. Within the last three years the Kurdish parties relocated as many as 400,000 Kurds to be settled in the Kerkuk region since Hussein's fall. This was clearly organised and orchestrated by both Kurdish parties in order to change the demography of Kerkuk and the Kurdish parties have been encouraging and offering financial support to all Kurdish families from outside Kerkuk to move to Kerkuk. The demographic structure of Kerkuk has been seriously distorted as Kurds, backed by armed Peshmerga forces, have been migrating into the city in large groups claiming to be original residents.

*Several factors should be taken into consideration with regard to the proposed Referendum. The lack of security and stability in the whole of Iraq, coupled with the influence and total control of Kerkuk city by the Kurdish militia would impede a fair and just Referendum. There is also the issue of proven forgeries committed by the Kurdish parties during the last election which impeded the true democratic process for Turkmen, Arab and Chaldo Assyrians in the North of Iraq.*

*Therefore the Turkmen, Chaldo Assyrians and Arabs demand the total rejection of Article 58 and the referendum in Kerkuk on the final status of the city to be held in 2007.*

*The Turkmen of Iraq declare that Kerkuk should have special status as it has been stated in item (C) & (D) of Article 53 of TAL and this special status should be implemented <sup>(3)</sup> If this is not to be implemented then the referendum should not be carried out by the inhabitants of Kerkuk city alone. The entire Iraqi people inside and outside of the country should vote in the referendum since this referendum is an important and vital factor in deciding the future unity and integrity of the whole country.*

Taking the present facts presented into consideration, a comprehensive analysis ought to be conducted to further understand the continuous repression of the Turkmen in Iraq. The analysis must to be formulated to include the following recommendations:

1. The Turkmen, as staunch believers in firm national principles, strongly reject the articles 58 and clauses in the Iraqi constitution that do great prejudice against the Turkmen and their national identity. The Turkmen, Arabs and Chaldo Assyrians are extremely worried over efforts aiming to make Kurds a majority in the northern Iraqi oil town of Kerkuk.

The fate of the disputed Iraqi city of Kerkuk is vital for all of Iraq and a planned referendum on its status should be held across the country, not in Kerkuk only as intended now. The Turkmen declare that Kerkuk is an Iraqi city and all the people of Iraq should decide on its fate. A referendum to be held only in Kerkuk would not be acceptable and valid since it is extremely easy to manipulate election results in the city. The issue of Kerkuk's status is potentially explosive for Iraq, and ethnic conflict over the city could spark violent clashes and even a civil war across Iraq, that could eventually lead to disintegration of the country.

Unless the international community acts soon to resolve mounting tensions in Kerkuk, the result could well be yet another violent communal conflict in Iraq, risking full-scale civil war and possibly outside military intervention.

2. The Iraqi government should invite the UN Security Council to appoint an envoy to start negotiations to designate Kerkuk governorate, as a stand-alone federal region for an interim period and the U.S. should place its weight behind such an UN-brokered political settlement.
3. The Turkmen demand the disarmament of the Kurdish militia and the utilisation of the UN troops in North of Iraq as a peace keeping force instead of the US troops since the Kurdish militia in the north of Iraq are terrorising the population.
4. The Turkmen demand the ratification of the new constitution to include the fact that Iraq consists of Arab, Kurds and Turkmen.
5. Turkmen demand the cessation of the Kurdisation policies, and demand a more active role from central government in Baghdad to halt both Kurdish parties from changing the demography of the North of Iraq.
6. Turkmen demand the repatriation of all the Kurds who were brought to Kerkuk and surrounding areas from other provinces, such as Iran, Turkey, Syria and north of Iraq to be return to their original places.

Mofak SALMAN  
Iraqi Turkmen Committee

---

**Turkmen**<sup>1</sup>

*The Iraqi Turkmen live in an area that they call "Turkmenia" in Latin or "Turkmeneli" which means, "Land of the Turkmen. It was referred to as "Turcomania" by the British geographer William Guthrie in 1785. The Turkmen are a Turkic group that has a unique heritage and culture as well as linguistic, historical and cultural links with the surrounding Turkic groups such as those in Turkey and Azerbaijan. Their spoken language is closer to Azeri but their official written language is like the Turkish spoken in present-day Turkey. Their real population has always being suppressed by the authorities in Iraq for political reasons and estimated at 2%, whereas in reality their numbers are more realistically between 2.5 to 3 million, i.e. 12% of the Iraqi population.*

***Turkmeneli**<sup>2</sup> is a diagonal strip of land stretching from the Syrian and Turkish border areas from around Telafer in the north of Iraq, reaching down to the town of Mendeli on the Iranian border in Central Iraq. The Turkmen of Iraq settled in Turkmeneli in three successive and constant migrations from Central Asia, which increased their numbers and enabled them to establish six states in Iraq.*

Article 53<sup>(3)</sup> of TAL, quote "(A) The Kurdistan Regional Government is recognized as the official government of the territories that were administered by the that government on 19 March 2003 in the governorates of Dohuk, Erbil, Sulaymaniya, Kerkuk, Diyala and Nineveh. The term "Kurdistan Regional Government" shall refer to the Kurdistan National Assembly, the Kurdistan Council of Ministers, and the regional judicial authority in the Kurdistan. (B) The boundaries of the eighteen governorates shall remain without change during the transitional period.

(C) Any group of no more than three governorates outside the Kurdistan region, with the exception of Baghdad and Kerkuk, shall have the right to form regions from amongst themselves. The mechanisms for forming such regions may be proposed by the Iraqi Interim Government, and shall be presented and considered by the elected National Assembly for enactment into law. In addition to being approved by the National Assembly, any legislation proposing the formation of a particular region must be approved in a referendum of the people of the relevant governorates.

(D) This Law shall guarantee the administrative, cultural, and political rights of the Turcomans, Chaldo Assyrians, and all other citizens." Unquote as the referendum on the Kerkuk is approaching, we are plighting from you and your government to allow a special status for Kerkuk City. After the liberation Iraq from, the Kurdish parties have changed the demography of Kerkuk city by bring over 400,000 Kurdish to Kerkuk as a preparation step for the incoming referendum that would be held in 2007.