



## Iraqi Turkmen Human Rights Research Foundation

"Underestimation of the Turkmen population size by GB in the 1920s established a base for successive Iraqi governments and now for the Kurds to marginalize the Turkmen"

### Report

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Subject: **Another step to marginalize the Turkmen**

After the development of a 'Safe Haven' in the north of Iraq by the Coalition Forces, the relatively democratic environment allowed the Turkmen people to establish their political institutions. Several political organizations and parties appeared, namely: the Iraqi Turkmen National Party, the Turkmeneli Party, the Turkmen Independents party, the Turkmen People party etc.

In 1995 most of these organizations had assembled to unite under the name of '**Iraqi Turkmen Front**', which included a large number of official administrative units.

Regrettably when it came to select the representative of the Turkmen people in the Governing Council, the 'officials' in Iraq ignored their real representative: the Turkmen Front. These officials appointed a lady, who, with all due respect to her, was not known to be politically active, to represent the Turkmen people in the Governing Council. While on the other hand, they appointed well-known representatives of the Kurds and of the Shiites in the Governing Council.

Organizations of the Iraqi Turkmen Front are:

- I. Iraqi National Turkmen Party.
- II. Turkmeneli Party.
- III. Iraqi Turks Cultural and Solidarity Association..
- IV. The Turkmen Brotherhood Club.
- V. Turkmen Independent Movement.
- VI. Turkmeneli Co-operation and Cultural Foundation.

The offices of the Iraqi Turkmen Front are:

- a. Erbil Head Office
- b. Kerkuk Office
- c. Baghdad Office
- d. Mosul Office.
- e. London office in Great Britain.
- f. Berlin office in Germany.
- g. Washington office in United States of America.
- h. Ankara office in Turkey.

The institutions of the Iraqi Turkmen Front are:

- a. Foreign Relations and Political Affairs Department.
- b. Information Department.

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'Turkmeneli' newspaper is published weekly in Turkmen and Arabic.

The Turkmen TV channels are broadcasting in Turkmen 14 hours daily in both Erbil and Kerkuk.

The Turkmen Radio broadcast in Turkmen 18 hours daily in both Erbil and Kerkuk.

c. Education and Culture Department.

There are 5 preliminary schools, 11 primary schools and 5 secondary schools under the administration of this department. The number of students is about 3000. The teaching is entirely in Turkmen, using the Latin alphabet.

d. Security Department.

e. Health and Social Welfare Organizations Department.

The Union of Iraqi Turkmen Youth

The Turkmen Front has many other offices and unions.

It is important to note that the majority of the Turkmen organizations in Europe, the United States, Canada, Australia and other countries support the Turkmen Front.

The same officials, who appointed the representatives in the Governing Council, depended on the statistics of the Baath regime to erroneously consider the population size of the Iraqi Turkmen to be around 1%.

Underestimation of the Turkmen population size during the Lausanne negotiations formed the base for the successive Iraqi governments to expose the Turkmen to the brutal assimilation policies which reached their peak under the Baath regime. As a consequence the Turkmen remained unknown to the world for almost a century and even during the last decades when the Iraqi case attracted a great deal of international attention.

The following explanations challenge the Lausanne Treaty and all the other statistics which underestimated the Turkmen population size in Iraq.

In the 1950s, the population of Kerkuk **city** was 120,000 according to H. Batatu and 150,000 to D. McDowall with Turkmen accounting for just above half. In fact, the number of Turkmen in Kerkuk was much higher, representing 1,1 to 1,2% of the total Iraqi population.

The overwhelming majority in the other two densely populated districts of Kerkuk **province** Tuz Hurmatu and Kifri, which were detached from Kerkuk Province in 1976, were Turkmen. The other two districts Hawije and Chemchemical were inhabited mainly by Arabs and Kurds. Moreover, Turkmen also constituted the majority in the villages and in 5 of the 7 sub-districts (in 1957) of the Central District: Altun Köpri, Tavuk, Teze Hurmati, Yayci and Leylan. Accordingly more than half of the population in the administration areas other than the central Kerkuk district was Turkmen. The total Iraqi and Kerkuk province populations were estimated at 6,276,000 and 388,939, respectively, in the 1957 census and even if there were about 200,000 Turkmen in Kerkuk province they would make up 3,2% of the Iraqi population.

In the 1950s, the Turkmen outnumbered the other nationalities in Kerkuk province as a whole according to McDowell, when the population of Kerkuk was 388,939. Since the number of the Arabs and Christians, as minorities, amounted to no more than 20 – 30 thousands, there would have been 180,000 Turkmen making up 2,9% of the total Iraqi population.

David Oates describes the administrative center of Tell Afar as a town of 20.400 inhabitants while the rural population was 25,600, according to the 1947 census. The total number of inhabitants is 46,000. He considers the population of the district as Turkmen. The total Iraqi population was estimated to be 3,468,000 in the same census. Accordingly, the Turkmen of Tell Afar alone would make up 1,3% of the Iraqi population. Many other Turkish sub-districts and a many villages also exist in the other regions of Mosul province, i.e: Rashidiyya, Selamiyya and Mahlabiyya. The Turkmen neighborhood called Prophet Yunus is considered to be one of the most ancient neighborhoods of Mosul city. Its population was 10,000 in the 1980s.

Furthermore, large districts, many sub-districts and hundreds of villages are still inhabited by Turkmen in the Diyala Province. Shebek, Sarili and Bajalan communities comprise a large Turkmen population. Baghdad has a considerable number of Turkmen inhabitants.

It is clear that as in yesterday's Iraq, the Turkmen, today, are not only underrepresented but are also ignored by the American officials.

The Turkmen could not find allies due to the opportunist international policy, even Turkey remained inattentive to their sufferings, while other sections (Kurds and Shiites) of the Iraqi community were supported by regional governments and international powers. They were granted moral, political and **monetary** assistance and even military equipment.

We call on the Governing Council and all the authorities who want to build a democratic Iraq to treat the Turkmen fairly. History has proven they are a peaceful people who always used democratic methods to obtain their rights, even under the former repressive regime. Their contribution will be great in the construction of a democratic Iraq.

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