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knowledge**

Iraqi Turkmen:

- For equal rights in the new Iraqi constitution
- To stop marginalization of Turkmen
- To stop Kurdification of Turkmeneli [1]
- To end Barazani's oppression of the Erbil Turkmen
- For the release of Turkmen prisoners in Kurdish jails.
- For fair census and election

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The Turkmen represent the third most important ethnic group in Iraq after the Arabs and Kurds. Unfortunately, they are marginalized and their true representation has always been underestimated for economical and political reasons since the creation of the Iraqi State in 1921. In reality, the Turkmen represent at least 13% of the Iraqi population. Their number is around 3 millions.

History

The Turkmen played an important role in the ruling of Iraq for about a millennium. Turkmen dominated the political life under the Abbasids (744 - 1258) and Buyids (932-1062) sovereignty. They ruled Iraq from 1055 and established the Iraqi Seljuk state (1118 until 1194), followed by the Atabegs of Mosul (1127 - 1259) and Erbil (1144 – 1209), the Kipchaks of Kerkuk (1230 - ?), the Ilhanids (1258 – 1335), the Jalayirds (1335 – 1410), the Timurids (1393 –1412), the Kara Qoyunlu (1375 – 1468) and the Ak Qoyunlu (1378 - 1508) states. Iraq was ruled also by the Safavids (1508 – 1534) Turkmen. Turkmen played important roles in Iraq during the Ottoman role from 1535 to 1918.

Geography

The Turkmen of Iraq live mainly in a region called Turkmeneli[1]. They are found principally in the following provinces: Kerkuk, Mosul, Duhok, Erbil, Salah al-Din, Diyala, Kut and Baghdad. [Map P. 3]

- **Kerkuk** is considered their capital city.[4] The largest Turkmen population concentration is found in this city whose linguistic, cultural and ethnic identity is distinctly colored by their presence.[5] Tavuk, Taza Khurmatu sub-districts and tens of villages in the Kerkuk province are Turkmen.
- **Erbil** city can be considered as the Turkmen city which has been exposed to the most heavily Kurdification process. The present Turkmen population size in this city is about 25%, while the city was almost completely Turkmen in the beginning of 19th century.[6] Altun Kopri is a large Turkmen sub-district in Erbil province.
- **Mosul** Province. The Turkmen of Mosul are living:
 - In the large central district of Talafar (Population is 227,000)
 - In the sub-districts of Iyadhiyya (11.000) plus 10 villages and Mahallabiyya (8.500) plus 7 villages.
 - In the large villages of Qara Qoyunlu (11.000), Rashidiyya (25.000), Shirikhan, Sallamiyya
 - In the Sinjar, the Turkmen number is estimated to be around 20.000.
 - In the center of Mosul. Their number is expected to be much more than 30.000. The city's largest area 'Prophet Jonah' is a Turkmen neighborhood.
- **Salah al-Din** province, the heavily inhabited Bayat and Duz Khurmatu districts are Turkmen. These two regions were annexed to Salah al-Din Province in 1976. Bestamli, Amirli and Sulayman Pak belong to the large sub-districts of Salah al-Din province.
- **Diyala** province. The biggest and heavily Kurdified and Arabified Turkmen cities are found in Diyala province: Kifri District, which was detached from Kerkuk province in 1976. Kara Tepe, Kizil Rabat, Shahraban, Mandali and Khanaqin. [7, 8, 9] About 50.000 Turkmen were deported from Mandali during the Ba'ath regime. Its status was changed from district to sub-district and annexed to a smaller town Qazzaniyya.
- **Al-Kut** province.
 - Turkmen speakers still constitute a considerable part of the population of Badra.
 - Those who forgot their mother tongue are still proud of their Turkmen origin as in al-Aziziyya. The members of the Arabified Turkmen al-Qaraguli (Qara gülli) tribe are estimated to be 12.000.
- The capital **Baghdad**. According to the Turkmen writers the Turkmen of Baghdad are estimated to be 50,000 families or 300.000 people. In the early 1920s, Al-Maydan neighborhood was inhabited by Turkmen militaries, while al-Haydarhana was inhabited by Turkmen aristocratic families and upper officials [10]. Turkmen are also found in Ragiba Hatun, Aazamiye, Fadl, Hasan Pasha, Bab al-Sheyh and Qara Qol.



Map. Turkmeneli is blue coloured area

Population

The size of the Turkmen population in Iraq was underestimated from the beginning of the establishment of the Iraqi State in 1921.

In addition to the traditional factors which suppress the rights of non ruling ethnic factions in a non democratic country, several other factors have played additional roles to expose the Turkmen to suppression, oppression and underestimation:

1. The Turkmen live on fertile productive farmlands and oil rich regions. According to D. McDowell; for both Arabs and Kurds the value of Kerkuk city had been greatly enhanced by the nationalization of the oil industry. At the beginning of 1974 oil revenue was expected to be ten times higher than in 1972. Kerkuk accounted for 70 per cent of the state's total oil output.[11] This means 2.2% of world oil.[12]. The oil of Kerkuk city is well known for its good quality and shallowness of the wells, the petrol layers lay 840-1260 meter under the surface of the earth.[13] The underground of the city contains a substantial amount of natural gas[14] and sulfur,[15] which is exploited since the seventies. Oil has been utilized regionally for hundreds of years in Naftakhana in Khanaqin, Tuz Khurmatu and Mandali. Erbil city is well-known for its surrounding fertile plains.[16]
2. Great Britain's desire to have power over the oil rich Ottomans Mosul Province. At the time when the cease fire took place between Turkey and Great Britain in the Treaty of Mudros on 30th October 1918, the British troops were at Qayyara, forty miles south of the city of Mosul.[17] The British troops violated the Treaty and occupied Mosul city on 3rd November 1918. To determine the ownership of this province, the 8-year struggle between Turkey and Great Britain started with the Lausanne Treaty later in the League of Nations. The population **size of the Iraqi Turkmen was** one of the main **factors** for Turkey to win the Province. Great Britain was already occupying the region. In two different estimations during the British mandate, the Turkmen population size was severely minimized to 2% of the total Iraqi population to be presented at the Lausanne Treaty and the League of Nations. The long duration of negotiations on the Mosul problem and the Turkish claim of rights on the Mosul province for more than 2 decades contributed to the repeated undermining of the Turkmen Population size.
3. At the turn of 19th century, both the Arabs and the Kurds had developed high national feelings. After the establishment of the Iraqi state the Arabs possessed the power of governing and the Kurds received all types of help and support (financial, moral and even weapons) from Western countries. The Turkmen remained helpless. Their minimized number which had been determined by the British was repeated by the successive Iraqi governments and more recently by the Americans and the Kurds.

The Kurdish immigration toward the Turkmen region was severely increased, by 1959 they had swollen to more than one third of the population of the Turkmen capital city, Kerkuk. [18] Thereafter, the notorious 14th July 1959 Massacre took place, during which Turkmen leaders were killed by the Kurdish militants and communists [19]. As a result, the Turkmen themselves began to place greater importance on the nationality registration during the 1957 census. The Turkmen, who did not object the false results of the earlier censuses, strove for correction of the 1957 census. The objections were based mainly on the following points:

1. Many Turkmen neighborhoods were completely registered as being the same nationalities as the census staffs, who were Kurds.
2. All Turkmen Christians of the Kerkuk Citadel were registered as Arabs.[20]
3. The Turkmen population in Mosul and Diyala provinces was clearly underestimated

The official statistics organization announced the results of the objection in 1959. The number of Turkmen was corrected to 567.000.[21, 22] This number can be considered the lowest approximation of Turkmen population size when the intensive Turkmen settlement areas in Kerkuk, Mosul, Erbil, Diyala, al-Kut, Salahaddin provinces and Baghdad are taken in consideration.

If we consider the corrected Turkmen number at 1959 in the following equation: $P_1 = P_0 (1 + t)^n$, their number in 2000 would be expected to be 1.902.226.[23]

Soon afterwards, the racially prejudiced Arabic regimes seized power in Iraq and announced the percentage to be $\pm 1\%$. In the 1965 census, the proportion of Turkmen was further reduced. The nationality registration was not performed in the 1977 census. In the 1987 census the Ba'athist regime denied the presence of Turkmen in Iraq allowing only Arabs and Kurds to register their nationality, while prohibiting registration as Turkmen. In the 1997 census when the Turkmen were forced to register as a 'New Arabs', their number was announced to be negligible.

The following analyses clarify the deliberate minimization of the Turkmen population size for about a century by Great Britain and by the successive Iraqi governments and now by the Americans and the Kurds:

- The population of the **Ottoman Mosul province** was estimated by the British administration to be 785,468 in 1921, of which 65,895 were Turkmen amounting to 3.3% of the total Iraqi population which was 2.000.000[24].
- The estimated number of Turkmen in Kerkuk city had been minimized to 35.000 by the English mandate in 1921. This was amounting to 1.75% of the total Iraqi population.[25].
- Hand book No.63, page 8, published by the British Foreign Office in 1920 gives 120.000 Turks as inhabiting the disputed province, this makes 6% of the total Iraqi Population. [26]
- The traveler Olivier who visited Mosul in 1809, at a time when questions of conflict between nationalities and oil factor did not exist, estimated the percentage of Turkmen **in the town** at 25%, i.e.as many as the Kurds in the city. [27]
- Despite missing Turkmen voters in Mosul (not less than half a million of the Turkmen population), Diyala and Baghdad the number of Turkmen in the present Iraqi National Council is 15, this makes 5.5% of the total. This fact clearly contradicts the 2% figure theory fabricated by the British and adopted by the successive Iraqi governments.
- 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 was much higher in this city, this making up for 1,1 to 1,2% of the total Iraqi population. The overwhelming majority in the other two densely populated districts of Kerkuk province, Tuz Khurmatu and Kifri, which were detached from Kerkuk Province in 1976, were Turkmen. The other two districts Hawija and Chemchemal were inhabited mainly by Arabs and Kurds, respectively. Moreover, Turkmen also constituted the

majority in the villages and five of the 7 sub-districts (in 1957) of the Central District: Altun Köpri, Daquq, Teze Khurmati, 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 to 6,276,000 and 388,939, respectively, in the census of 1957 and even if there were about 200,000 Turkmen in Kerkuk province they would make up 3,2% of the Iraqi population.

- According to the 1947 census the total Iraqi population was 3,468,000. This means (according to the advocates of the 2% figure) that the Turkmen in Iraq were less than 70,000! The same census established that the Turkmen living in Tala'afer (one of the Turkmen districts of Mosul) were 46,000, where 20,400 inhabitants were counted in town and 25,600 in the rural areas. D. Oates [28] confirms the Turkmen ethnicity of the Tala'afer district.

Accordingly, the Turkmen of Tala'afer alone would have made up 1.3% of the total Iraqi population and 67% of all Turkmen living in Iraq, this would mean that 2/3 of Turkmen of Iraq were living in Tala'afer and only 1/3 of them were living elsewhere in important Turkmen centres and cities in Iraq, such as: Kirkuk, Erbil, Diyala etc. This is ridiculous and absurd.

For the records, many other sub-districts and a lot of villages in Mosul are inhabited by Turkmen, i.e. Rashidiyya, Selamiyya and Mahallabiyya. The Turkmen neighbourhood called Nabi Yunis is considered as the oldest of the city, its population was 10,000 in the 1980s.

- In the 1950s the Turkmen outnumbered other nationalities in Kirkuk province as a whole according to McDowall [29], when the population of Kirkuk province was 388,939 of about 6 million of the total Iraqi population.

Since the population of Arabs and Christians did not exceed 20-30 thousand in Kirkuk province, there should have been at least 180,000 Turkmen in Kirkuk province alone, making up 2.9% of the total Iraqi population, not taking into account other Turkmen living in Erbil, Mosul, Diyala etc.

Equal rights in the new Iraqi constitution

In a country like Iraq which is constituted from different ethnic and religious groups and after a dictatorial rule which continued for about 35 years, the writing of the constitution should be approached very carefully.

The first Iraqi constitution in 1925 stated: "No difference between the Iraqis in front of the Law, even their ethnicity or religion". According to the letter of the Iraqi government to the League of Nations on 30th May 1932, the Turkmen language was used as official language in the courts and became the language of study in the Turkmen regions, principally Kerkuk province and Kifri region.

With the establishment of the Iraqi republic in 1958, the constitution changed undemocratically. The following statement: "the Arabs and the Kurds are participants in this homeland" is put in the introduction of the constitution. As if the 13% Iraqi Turkmen, plus the Chaldo-Assyrian and other minorities were not Iraqi citizens.

The policy of the American occupation is clearly undemocratic. The U.S. Grant the Kurds all types of facilities and the leading positions in the north of Iraq, particularly in the oil-rich Turkmen province of Kerkuk which was handed to the Kurds. The Administrative State Law, which was written by the Americans in 2004 'to democratize Iraq', included many undemocratic items, such as:

- As the constitution of 1958, It made discrimination between the different Iraqi communities by saying that Iraq is constituted from the Arabs and Kurds, in

contradiction with all the international laws and the Universal Declaration of Human Rights.

- Thereby, it grants to the Kurdish minority which represents 17% of the Iraqi population, rights equal to those of the Arab majority which represents 65% of the Iraqi population while ignoring the rights of the Turkmen who represent 13% of the Iraqi population and also ignoring the rights of the Chaldo-Assyrian community, which represents about 5% of the Iraqi population and other minorities. Accordingly, the Kurdish language must be studied in all Iraq while the Turkmen and Chaldo-Assyrian languages could not be used officially in government schools, even in the regions where these nationalities constitute the majority.
- This Law gives the 3 Kurdish provinces the right to reject any decision made by the Iraqi parliament.

Any discrimination and marginalization of any Iraqi community in the **new constitution** will weaken its legality, in addition that it will be written under the hegemony of an occupier. As a consequence, the communities who have been ignored and marginalized will continue to fight for their rights.

Marginalization of Turkmen

Marginalization of the Iraqi Turkmen from dismember of the Ottomans Empire in 1918 can be attributed to mainly to the economical factors. Great Britain marginalized them to control the oil rich Mosul Wilayet, the successive Iraqi government were racist minded and the Kurds aimed to enrich their poor economy and found the Turkmen as an obstacle in front of building the Greatest Kurdistan. Marginalization of the Iraqi Turkmen by the United States before the occupation of Iraq can not be explained by any logic reasons; during the meetings of Iraqi opposition and minimization of Turkmen population size in official USA publications. The foreign Turkish policy during the second half of the 20th century showed very clearly that Turkey had no any desire to use Turkmen to have a control on the wealth of north Iraq. This negative policy of the USA toward the Turkmen of Iraq had been changed to an intensified vindictive and hating policy when the Turkish parliament refused to assist the USA occupation of Iraq:

- The Turkmen regions were opened by USA for invasion of Kurdish militants (Pashmargas).
- The administrative systems in Turkmen regions were handed almost completely to the Kurds
- Supporting the Kurdification of Turkmen regions, particularly, oil rich Kerkuk. About 350.000 Kurds were brought to Kerkuk city during about a year after the occupation of Iraq in 2003.
- Attempting to intimidate the Turkmen political parties:
 - - All the Turkmen political parties were deprived from financial supports while the Kurdish parties received huge amounts of financial supports.
 - The Turkmen political parties and politicians were disregarded:
 - Only one Turkmen lady from the civil society, with no political background was appointed to the Governing Council to represent the Iraqi Turkmen.
 - Appointing only one Turkmen academic without any political history in the Interim Government to represent the Turkmen community.
- Assisting the Kurds to manipulate severely the elections processes in northern Iraq, this lead to:
 - control of the city councils by the Kurds in almost all Turkmen regions

- winning of higher number of chairs in the Iraqi Parliament
- As in the Turkmen city Kerkuk, the Turkmen are deprived also from the posts in the level of ministries and general directors. Only one Turkmen minister appointed to represent the 13% of the Iraqi Turkmen, while 7 Kurds were appointed to represent the 17% of the Iraqi Kurds. Almost no Turkmen Ambassador is appointed. The number of Turkmen general directors is severely disproportional with their population size.

Kurdification of Turkmeneli

International and local powers have always sought to control oil-rich Kerkuk city. After occupying Iraq and annexing Mosul province, Great Britain controlled Iraqi petroleum for several decades. Thereafter Saddam Hussein started the Arabification policy in the Kerkuk region. After the occupation of Iraq by the U.S. troops, Kerkuk City and other Turkmen regions were presented as a gift to the Kurds. With the help of the Americans the Kurds managed to change the demography of the Turkmen regions, what Saddam's regime had not been able to achieve in 35 years.

The American occupiers constituted the city councils in Turkmen regions giving the preference to their Kurdish allies and giving them the lion's share by allowing them to get the majority of the seats of the Council in all the Turkmen regions.

As a consequence, the predominantly Kurdish Kerkuk Council appointed by the US military, elected a Kurdish governor, a Kurdish Mayor and a Kurdish Chief of the Police. Almost all the high official posts were handed to the Kurds. This Kurd-dominated Council has changed the ethnic composition of this Turkmen city by bringing in about 500.000 Kurds, under the pretext that all these Kurds had been expelled from Kerkuk by Saddam Hussein!^[30] In actual fact, the majority of these Kurds had nothing to do with Kerkuk and they had never been in Kerkuk before! The Kurdification policy in the Turkmen region is not limited to Kerkuk all other Turkmen cities were equally affected.

To legalize the Kurdification of the Turkmen regions and particularly Kerkuk city, the Kurdish politicians and militants were allowed by the Americans to manipulate the election processes, thus enabling the Kurds to win the majority in the Kerkuk council.

Today, while the deported Kurds are requesting the support from the international community to return their lands, they are building thousands of houses on any public lands and also on the lands of Kerkuk inhabitants. With the support of the Kurdish administration of Kerkuk, there are built several shanty neighborhoods for the Kurds. On the other hand, the confiscation of Turkmen lands by Ba'ath regime was legalized and given to the Kurds:

The Ownership Trial Commission was instituted by the Americans at the beginning of the occupation. The two most important personnel of the commission are Kurds. The Head is called Tahsin and the judge is called Najat Fakhri. These two Kurds made a decision by which they did not return thousands of Hectares of Turkmen lands, which were forcedly confiscated by Saddam regime, to the rightful owners. The most striking point is that all these Turkmen land and houses are now occupied by the Kurdish militants (Pashmarga) families and by the Americans! ^[31]

The tragedy of Erbil Turkmen

Erbil is one of the important Turkmen cities, ^[7] which has been heavily exposed to Kurdification. For economic and political reasons the Kurds began to move into this city at the beginning of the 20th century. Their migration gradually intensified. By the middle of the 20th century the Turkmen was still constituted the majority in Erbil city.

However, with the continuation of migration the Kurds became the majority in the 1970s. In 1972 in order to appease Mustapha Barazani's rebellion in the north of Iraq and put an end to the civil war, the Baath regime offered this Turkmen city to the Kurds to become the capital of the Kurdish autonomous region. After the institution of the 'safe haven' by the Americans in 1991, Barazani and Talabani have taken control of Erbil and Sulaymaniyya respectively, and the systematic Kurdification of the city started, tens of thousands of plots of lands were sold by the Kurdish authorities to Kurdish families and large new neighborhoods were built.

The Turkmen of Erbil remained at the mercy of the un-democratic Kurdish militant parties, in the 'safe haven. These Kurdish parties intensified their oppression on Turkmen political parties. In 1996 when the war between the two Kurdish factions was raging, Massoud Barazani, President of the KDP, asked the Ba'ath regime in Baghdad to give him a hand to defeat his opponents, Jalal Talabani's (PUK) Pashmarga militias. When the Ba'ath-controlled Iraqi troops entered Erbil they attacked the Turkmen political and civil organizations centers, damaging and destroying all their contents and taking away all the dossiers. They captured about 60 active Turkmen politicians who have never been found since.

Turkmen organizations, particularly the Iraqi Turkmen Front offices, were repeatedly exposed to the attacks of the KDP militants in Erbil and Duhok. Several Turkmen were killed. Today, Turkmen politicians and intellectuals are under continuous threat by Kurdish militants.

In Erbil, Barazani's KDP party adopted the policy of marginalization of the Turkmen in the region under his control and this policy has intensified and was extended to other Turkmen regions since the occupation of Iraq by the Anglo-Americans in April 2003.

- The Barazani Kurds, in order to limit the Turkmen presence and restrict their activities in Erbil, have forced the landlords in Erbil who rented their properties to Turkmen political parties and Turkmen organizations to either terminate their contracts or to abusively increase their rents.
- Turkmen political, social and cultural activities have been severely restricted. Conferences and congresses of Turkmen organizations have been prevented to take place out of the organizations' buildings.
- During campaigns Turkmen are not allowed to hang their boards and flags, except on their buildings and even then they disappear during the night. Almost the same inspection and security methods which were used by the Ba'ath regime are now used Barazani offices. The Turkmen of Erbil feel threatened, they avoid exposure fearing persecution and losing their jobs.. As a result; the Turkmen of Erbil are hesitating to register their children in Turkmen schools, the Turkmen staffs are afraid to talk Turkmen in their offices. Many employees have been dismissed for such reasons.
- In the Turkmen schools and in the education sector, Kurds imposed their will and hegemony by appointing Kurds to the Turkmen education office; these deliberately downgraded the Turkmen education system by ignoring the requirements of the Turkmen students.
- By appointing Kurds who cannot even speak the Turkmen language as directors or head masters to most Turkmen Schools in the regions under their control and by deliberately understaffing the Turkmen schools, they targeted the Turkmen education system in preparation of their Kurdification policies of the Turkmen regions.
- They have imposed the Kurdish language in the Turkmen schools from the first class in primary schools. Turkmen students are forced to sing the Kurdish

national anthem, although they have their own Turkmen national anthem which is forbidden and their history teaching books only contain Kurdish History.

- Turkmen newspapers are prevented to be distributed to the bookshops and libraries. Since the late 1990s, the cafés and other public places were prevented by the Barazani security elements to open the Turkmen TV and radio.
- In addition to the economical support from the Western powers and Israel for decades and the huge gains made from customs duties they imposed since 1991 on all imported goods to Iraq via the north of the country, the Kurdish political parties also received a considerable amount of money from the infamous U.N. 'oil for food program'. Meanwhile, the Turkmen political parties and organizations have received nothing and they were even deprived from their fair share from the 'oil for food program'.
- The Turkmen are being discriminated, they are seldom appointed in governmental offices or in the university in Erbil, those who want to be appointed must show allegiance to Barazani and support his party's ideology. For these reasons very few Turkmen have been appointed in governmental offices in the Kurdish region.

The last political attack on the Turkmen of Erbil by the Barazani authorities was carried out on 22nd April 2005 and it continues until now. After the agreement between the Barazani security authorities and the dissident representative of the Turkmen Front in Erbil, the following Turkmen organizations were occupied by armed Kurdish militias and the flags of so-called Kurdistan were raised on the following Turkmen buildings for several hours:

- Head office of the ITF in Erbil city
- Turkmeneli Television station and radio station – where instruments and archives were stolen
- Turkmeneli Printing House – most of its contents were stolen
- All types of publications of Turkmeneli printing house were stopped, such as the bi-weekly Turkmeneli Newspaper.
- Turkmen House
- The building of Turkmen Education and Culture Center, was occupied and its contents were stolen
- The Al-Shifa Dispensary, was evacuated and its contents were stolen

Turkmen prisoners in the Kurdish jails

The U.S. granted unlimited support to the Kurdish political parties and militants, who are threatening the unity of Iraq from the foundation of Iraq. In the north of Iraq they started their Kurdification program by usurping the lands and houses belonging to Turkmen and Arabs. They manipulated the election processes to win higher number of seats in local councils and parliament. They attributing to themselves an excessive number of high positions in the Iraqi state, far exceeding the number which should have been allocated to them according to their population size.

The Kurdish political parties and militants assured of the support of the occupying forces and in the absence of independent observers felt free to violate the rights of the Turkmen and Arabs in the north of Iraq. They started to abduct hundreds of Turkmen and Arabs in the town and the province of Kerkuk. They took them to prisons in Erbil and Sulaymaniyya which are under the control of Barazani and Talabani, with the knowledge of the American troops.[32] Their task has been

facilitated by the fact that the Turkmen did not have any organized militia to protect their community.

The following is a testimony which was presented in a program broadcasted live on the Turkmeneli TV in Kerkuk:

A 30 year old man called Sami Kasim was surrounded by a group of Kurdish militants from the National Guards at 5:30 a.m. when he was opening his shop in the great market of Kerkuk. The head of the group asked him for his identity card and then told him he was under arrest. Three Pashmargas caught him from behind blindfolded him, tied his hands and took him to the National Guards' office where his picture was taken, they treated him as if he had committed a crime and kept him in a room. The next day in the early morning, another Pashmarga chief and about 15 Pashmargas from the National Guards came they again blindfolded him, tied his hands and feet, put him in a vehicle and took him to Baghdad where he was questioned by three people. They told him that he was accused of:

- Being a Turkish officer.
- Supporting the Turkmen Front.
- Meeting the Turkish military leaders every week.

In another case an Arab fighter pilot was interrogated in Erbil on whether he participated in the chemical weapons attack on the Kurdish city of Halabja.

The Kurdish militants, often with the knowledge of the U.S. troops, arrested merchants, businessmen, members of tribal families and soldiers. In most cases the families of the prisoners could not get any information about their detained relative for several months. In many cases, the wives and children who had travelled hundreds of kilometers to visit their husbands and fathers were kept waiting for long hours and had to return home without having been allowed to see them.

In these Kurdish prisons up to 50 men were detained in cramped 19 x 9-foot cells, where the prisoners had to remain in a standing position and suffered from lack of sleep. Many of them were beaten or whipped with a wire cable, sometimes heated over a fire.

After the announcement on the Turkmeneli TV in which the families of the arrested people were asked to report their missing relatives to the Members of Kerkuk council, 104 cases of missing relatives were presented. It should be noted that most of the families **did not respond** to the announcement fearing this might cause more harm to their prisoners.

Mrs. Jala Naftachi, Member of the Kerkuk Council, has received 34 complaints from Turkmen families about the arbitrary arrests by the Kurds. She has contacted the Head of the Military Office, Kurdish Colonel Khattab Abdullah Arif, several times; she was informed that the prisoners were no longer in Kurds' hands and that they were most probably being detained by the Americans.

Fair Census and Election

In the absence of independent observers the 'US-made Iraqi election' in the north of Iraq was rigged. Despite this fact, Western countries accepted the results and considered the Iraqi election as 'successful'.

A significant number of violations were committed in the North of Iraq where Kurdish administration was involved in breaching election rules. Reports of these violations were sent to the Iraqi High Election Committee, but to no avail.

The Kurdish militants and politicians and the occupation authorities played the leading role in all the election processes in the Northern provinces: preparing the election forms and boxes, distributing them to the election centers, watching the voting processes, collecting and transporting the boxes from election centers and guarding centers. In the middle Iraq the followers of Pro-American Prime Minister Ayad Allawi and the American troops had played the same dominant role in the election processes. As a result the outcome of election came in the favor of the Occupation troops, Kurds and pro-American prime minister.

Below are a few examples of violations which took place during the 'US-made Iraqi election':

1. Kurds who were not residents of Kerkuk voted in Kerkuk to legalize Kurdification

- As a part of the American supported Kurdification policy of Turkmen regions about 150,000 Kurds voters were brought from Kurdish provinces to vote in Kerkuk to win the majority in the Kerkuk council. Four types of Kurdish voters participated in the Kerkuk city election:-
 - ❖ Those who were in Kerkuk at the time of the occupation are estimated to be 40,000
 - ❖ The 'really deported' Kurds, about 40,000 voters
The US Special Committee for Refugees estimated the number of this group at 100,000 Kurds and Turkmen, while the two main Kurdish parties put the total number at close to 120,000 Kurds and Turkmen see reference: [33]
 - ❖ The Kurds who entered Kerkuk 'for Kurdification' represent about 108,000 voters.
The Iraqi Ministry of Trade estimates the number of the Kurds which entered Kerkuk city **after** the fall of the previous regime **until June 2004** to be about 300,000.
 - ❖ Those who voted twice: the Kurds who came on the day of the election from Sulaymaniyya and Erbil provinces and who also voted in Kerkuk city are about 20,000.

2. Multiple voting:

- not inking fingers
- voting of under 18-years old
- voting for dead people
- more than one ballot paper to the same individual
- Voting in two different election centers.
- - The National Guards (about 2,000) voted twice: at the election center close to their place of duty **and** at the election center of their residency.
 - In (al-Sadr high school) center several National Guards attempted to vote twice. They fought with an observer who wanted to prevent them from voting twice.

3. Distortion of Election Regulations

- The election centers in some Kurdish regions have been opened one hour earlier.
- The election centers were opened late (10:00) and closed earlier (15:30) in some Turkmen sub-districts, namely at Bir Ahmand election center.
- Voting in Kurdish regions in Kerkuk province and in Tuz Khurmatu continued after the official closing time.
- Owing to the unsafe situation two of the four-election centers were closed after few hours in the Turkmen district of Talafar.

4. To decrease Turkmen votes

- Turkmen voters were forced to use lead pencils in Erbil city
- The boxes in the Turkmen sub-district of Bir Ahmand were confiscated by the Kurdish Pashmarga.
- In Zubayir bin al-Awwam Center forms sent by some Kurdish parties were accepted by the Kurdish staffs in lieu of the original ballot papers.
- Two boxes of Abi Tammam election center (Turkmen Region) were lost by the National guards.
- A tent was erected by the Kurdistan Union in front of the al-Izdehar High school center and voters were paid \$50 to vote for Kurdish lists.

5. The election was hindered

- Instead of 30 voting centers only 4 were installed in the Turkmen district of Talafar (with a population of 227,000) and its surrounding villages. To hamper the election processes, the American forces and the national guards started to bomb the citadel neighborhood of the city in the early morning. Due to the unsafe situation 2 of the four-election centers were closed after a few hours.
- Voting boxes, ballots, supervisors and other election necessities did not arrive in the following areas: the Turkmen sub-districts of Iyadiyah (plus 10 villages), Mahallabiya (plus 7 villages) and the large village of Rashidiya.
- The ballot boxes of Turkmen sub-district Mansuriyat al-Jabal was said to be stolen before the voting started.
- In the election center of 'The 1st March' school in Atabagler district of Kerkuk, the ballot papers were less than the number of voters and voting centers closed before the official closing time.
 - Many voting centers in the Turkmen regions ran out of ballot papers. Some of them were closed early and in the others voting halted for 2 to 3 hours. Consequently some citizens gave up waiting and left the voting centers without casting their vote.
- Relocation of some centers one day before the election in Turkmen regions, for example, election center of al-Wakeel Mohammed Ali Sadiq.

6. Interference with the election procedures

- Opening of additional 8 ballot centers on the day of the election in Kurdish neighborhoods besides the 17 centers which were opened about 10 days before election for the Kurds who had no official documents to prove they were Kerkuk residents.
 - in the following neighborhoods Shorjah, Rahimawa, Iskan, Qara Injir, Shuwan, Sargilan, and in the following centers: Koraan, Alaa, Imam Kasim Industril, Mamosta Rashad martyr, Mahabat school, Imam Kasim, Iskan, 11th April.

- The police forces were prevented to approach these centers by the national guards
- In the **Turkmen - Arab region** of Sulayman Pak and the Arab villages of Maftul Al Saghir and Maftul Al Kabir of the Tuz Khurmatu region, the result counting was **predominantly** for the Kurdish list (130) !
- The selection or appointment of the employees in election was predominantly by the Kurds. The few Turkmen who had been appointed as election employees and observers were forced out of the election centers before the official closing time and before the closing and sealing of the ballot boxes.
- In the Rahim Awa election centers, the election employees prevented voters **from voting for other than Kurdish lists.**
- In the Turkmen towns of Yengije and Bastamli, Kurdish militia members wearing National Guards uniforms:
 - Collected the ballot boxes and took them to an unknown location.
 - They dropped one of these boxes in the street where it broke open and all its ballot papers were dispersed and abandoned in situ without any remorse or regret!
- An officer of the security department of Sulaymaniyya known as “ Kak Tariq” has been appointed as deputy director of the Election Commission at Turkmen district Tuz Khurmatu the day of the election.
- Some Kurdish chiefs of ballot centers around Qadir Kerem and Tuz Khurmatu district had marked ballot papers themselves for certain parties and placed them in ballot boxes.
- Leaflets printed by Kurdish parties telling voters they have to vote for list number (130) or (167) were distributed in front of the voting centers. This occurred in Kerkuk and Diyala.
- In the Menguli center (located behind Alkarama Security) the Turkmen observers were not allowed to participate in sorting out the ballots and were kicked out of the center after 5 p.m.
- The non-Kurdish observers who complained about the irregularities have been badly treated and insulted by the members of the National Guards (Pashmargas), and have been kicked out of the election centers under machine gun threats in the Kurdish quarters of Kerkuk city and Duz Khurmatu. Mr. Mumtaz Ahmed, the director of the election center of Ibn Khaldun, was aggressed by members from the so-called “al-Asayish”, the security department forces of Iraqi Kurdistan. He was arrested and sequestered in a room in his election center.

7. Unjust utilization of facilities

- It was prohibited to use any type of vehicle on the Election Day in Iraq
Turkmen and Arab Parties emphasized that:
 - If the roads Erbil - Kerkuk and Sulaymaniyya - Kerkuk were not watched closely, people would come to vote in Kerkuk city too.
 - The Kerkuk governorate had published only one day before the election a correspondence by which it declared that these roads were closed
 - but it did not take any steps to control or apply the decision
 - The US authorities also promised to watch these roads but did not hold their promises

The Result:

- Before and on the day of election tens of hundreds of Kurds entered Kerkuk city from Sulaymaniyya and Erbil and remained in houses and in

schools in Kurdish quarters of the city. It is estimated that about 20.000 Kurds from these 2 provinces have voted in Kerkuk, too.

- Hundreds of the 150 permission cards for vehicles, which were allotted to officials from the Election Commission and to election observers in the Turkmen regions, particularly in Kerkuk, were used by the Kurdish staffs, national guards and political parties.

The non Kurdish voters:

- In most of the villages where the election boxes had not been installed the Turkmen and the Arabs were supposed to go to the largest nearby village or sub-district to vote but they could not find authorized vehicles to reach the election centers. While these vehicles and many non authorized vehicles were freely transporting the Kurds
- The elderly voters either could not reach these centers or reached them with great difficulties
- The non Kurdish Election Commission Members in Kerkuk city did not have authorized vehicles until 11 a.m.
- Many of these authorized permissions were given to vehicles of the security department of Sulaymaniyya province (al-Assayish).

Other major statistical abuses and other major election malpractices were presented in the statement which was presented to 11th session of the working group on Minorities. [34]

Demands

In view of the above stated facts and problems faced by us as Turkmen in Iraq, I address this assembly on behalf of the Turkmen, requesting your support and asking the UN to intervene in our favor to defend our just cause with the Iraqi authorities. So that finally the 3 million Turkmen obtain full rights equal to those obtained by the Arabs and Kurds and that these rights be clearly stated in the new Iraqi Constitution.

To stop further deterioration of the political, social, and security situation in Iraq and to avoid more bloodshed, more killing of innocent Iraqis and further destruction of the infrastructure of our country we demand the immediate departure of the occupation powers from our country. If needed, we demand the United Nations to send to Iraq peace keeping forces for a limited period of time and from neutral countries **who did** not participate in any of the wars against Iraq since 17th January 1991.

The Turkmen believe in a true democracy and demand the establishment of a TRUE DEMOCRACY in a FREE and UNITED Iraq. They want to be a part of this FREE and UNITED Iraq, and refuse to be 'a part of a part' of divided "federal" Iraq'.

But if a federal system is accepted by the majority of the Iraqi people, then the Turkmen should be given the right to govern their own federal region where they constitute a majority.

Since all the Iraqi censuses were designed to serve state policy and the last election was mainly to serve the occupation authorities and the Kurds, **we demand** that the upcoming census and/or upcoming election be organized and controlled by the United Nations and the international community. **We demand** that the Kurdish administration be prevented from interfering in the election and census processes in the Turkmen region and that security should no longer be exclusively in the hands of the Kurds but should be provided by neutral police forces from Central and Southern Iraq.

To safeguard the unity of Iraq, the sole official language should be Arabic since Arabs constitute the majority of the Iraqi people. However, as the Temporary Administrative Law has given the Kurdish language the status of second official language in Iraq while the Kurds represent a minority of no more than 17% of the Iraqi population, **we Turkmen** who are the third ethnic community in Iraq representing 13% of the total Iraqi population, **demand** that the Turkish language be considered as the third official language in Iraq along with Arabic and Kurdish.

We also demand a fair representation of the Turkmen in the Commission charged with the writing of the new constitution in order to safeguard our constitutional rights.

We demand with insistence that the Kurdification processes be stopped and that the hundreds of thousands of Kurdish immigrants who were brought to Kerkuk, Tuz Khurmatu, Dakuk and other Turkmen cities be returned to Erbil, Duhok and Sulaymaniyya where they came from.

We also demand that the thousands of Kurds who were brought by the two Kurdish parties KDP and PUK, after April 2003, to take positions and jobs in Kerkuk and other Turkmen regions, with the objective of imposing their policy of 'fait accompli' to Kurdicize the Turkmen region, be returned to where they came from.

We demand that the Kerkuk Council be dissolved and that the Kurdish governor, Kurdish mayor, Kurdish police chief be dismissed and that these high positions be fairly shared between the three main communities in Kerkuk: Turkmen, Kurds and Arabs.

We demand that the international community be engaged directly to stop oppression, marginalization and assimilation of the Turkmen of Erbil.

We demand that the Kurdish militias be disbanded and disarmed and that they leave the Turkmen region.

We demand that the Kurdish militias be prevented from arresting Turkmen and taking them to jails in Kurdish cities.

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