



## 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

Our reference: H/11-003/R/45

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Subject: **Violation of the Iraqi Turkmen Human Rights Continues**

The Turkmen of Iraq have faced huge challenges since the establishment of the Iraqi state in 1921. Underestimation of their population size during the Lausanne negotiations formed the base for the successive Iraqi governments to expose them to brutal assimilation policies, which reached their peak during the Baath period.

Unfortunately, even after the fall of the Baath regime in the so-called "new Iraq", Turkmen continue to suffer. Unfair election processes which handed their largest city<sup>(1)</sup> Kerkuk to the Kurds have deeply traumatized them.

In spite of significant differences between the population sizes of the nationalities of Kerkuk city, the United States commander asked from each community (Turkmen 60%, Arabs 15%, Kurds 20% and Christians 5%)<sup>(1, 2)</sup> to select 39 members representing the city council. To complete the number of 300 members the same authority selected 144 independent members who were almost all Kurds.

Another administrative council of 30 members was selected out of the city council; each group was asked to select 6 members, who in total made 24. The other 6 members were selected by the American officials. The Kurds, who count no more than 20% of the Kerkuk population, were given five memberships and the other one was given to the Christians who represent no more than 5% of the Kerkuk population.

The unjustly elected Kurdish dominated administrative council selected a Kurdish mayor for the Turkmen city of Kerkuk. An Arab deputy, who is well known for his friendly relations with the Kurdish Parties, was elected by the same council.

During the last few weeks, thousands of Kurdish families were brought to live and stay in Kerkuk city and the main administrative governmental offices are now staffed by Kurds.

The central police department in the large old Ahmet Aga (Korya) neighbourhood is staffed almost exclusively by Kurds.

A Kurd has been appointed as Chief of Justice.

Kerkuk TV station has been handed to the Kurdish staffs.

Officials for the education, health and all the other governmental sectors will be chosen by this unfairly elected Kurdish dominated council.

One can rightly say that Kerkuk city has been donated to the Kurds.

The Kurds who invested/occupied Northern Iraq in the course of the last centuries<sup>(3)</sup> continue to take over Turkmen cities,<sup>(2, 4)</sup> and Erbil city which was a pure Turkmen city until the not too distant past.<sup>(1, 4)</sup> has now been made the capital of an “imaginary Kurdistan”.

The unlimited support which was granted to the Kurds by the Western powers for over a century has resulted in a systematic Kurdification of the region. Forged information about Northern Iraq has been introduced to the Western community and this made many well known international writers and journalists repeat what the Kurdish writers publish and what the Kurdish politicians say without any further investigation. Well known writers unfairly describe the Turkmen regions, particularly Kerkuk city, as a “historical Kurdish city”.

Turkmen could not find allies due to the opportunist international policy; even Turkey remains inattentive to their sufferings, while the other sections (Kurds and Shiites) of the Iraqi community were supported for long time by the regional governments and the international powers. They were granted moral, political and **financial** assistance and even **military** equipments.

We call on the international community to pay attention and study the situation of the Iraqi Turkmen who have remained unknown to the world for about a century and even during the last decades when the Iraqi case attracted a great deal of international attention. To be objective and understand the real history of Northern Iraq, all the journalists and the Middle East specialists in Europe and the USA are asked to re-evaluate their knowledge about the reality of Northern Iraq.

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## References:

(1) Hanna Batatu in his book titled “The old social classes and the Revolutionary Movements of Iraq”, (Princeton University Press, New Jersey 1978), p. 913, mentions:

“Kerkuk, an oil center, lying 180 miles north of Baghdad, had been Turkish through and through in the not too distant past. By degrees, Kurds moved into the city from the surrounding villages. With the growth of the oil industry, their migration intensified. By 1959, they had swollen to more than one third of the population, and the Turkmen had declined to just over half, the Assyrians and Arabs accounting, in the main, for the rest of the total of 120,000. Other Turkish towns, **such as Arbil, had undergone a similar process**: Arbil itself was in great measure Kurdified, and the change occurred peacefully. But the Kerkuklis, who maintained close cultural links with Turkey, were of a tougher fiber and united by a stronger sense of ethnic identity”.

D. McDowall in his book titled “A Modern History of the Kurds”, I.B.Tauris & Co Ltd Publishers 1996, London & New York, page 305, mentions:

“In mid July 1959, another serious disturbance occurred; this time in Kerkuk, a town waiting to explode, once again, the spark was a rally by leftists. It will be recalled that the IPC in the north preponderantly Kurdish. Tension had been growing for some time between Turkmen, **the originally predominant element**, and Kurds **who had settled during the 1930s and 1940s**, driven from the land by landlord rapacity and drawn by the chance for employment in the burgeoning oil industry. By 1959 half the populations of 150,000 were Turkmen, rather less than half were Kurds and the balance Arabs, Assyrians and Armenians.”

(2) D. McDowall in his book titled “A Modern History of the Kurds”, I.B.Tauris & Co Ltd Publishers 1996, London & New York, page 144, mentions:

“The towns and villages along the high road running from Mosul to Baghdad were mainly Turkish speaking, being Turkmen”, “But, as the commission noted, the Kurd ‘is taking possession of the arable and in **“Kurdizing” certain towns’ specially the Turkmen’s ones** of the high road”

(3) Edger O’balance in his book titled “The Kurdish Revolt”, page 33 mentions: “right up until the end of the 19th century the sight of a large tribal federation, with all its livestock, moving across the mountains and plains of the northern parts of the Middle East in search of fresh grazing, was both splendid and **ominous** - as nomadic Kurds moved like a **plague of locusts, feeding and feuding**”.

(4) William R. Hay in his book titled “Two Years in Kurdistan 1918 – 1920”, (William Clowes and Sons, Limited, London and Beccles 1921), page 82 -83 mentions:

“The only 2 Turkish speaking populations which concern us closely are Erbil and Altun Kopri”. **“One mahalla** or quarter of the town is purely Kurdish, and in the rest the lower classes resemble the Kurds in appearance and dress. All can speak Kurdish fluently, but the **language of their homes** is Turkish. In the upper town which contains 6000 inhabitants, the **purest Turkish** element is found”.

In the page 77 Mr Hay mentions:

Dizai tribe descended from the hills about **3 centuries** ago, and occupied a few villages round Qush Tappah. In the middle **half of the 19th** century they started to expand, and rapidly covered the whole country up to Tigris. In the late 1920s, they constitute **one third** of the Erbil district population.