



## Iraqi Turkmen Human Rights Research Foundation

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

### Report

Our reference: L/28-04/R/12

Date: 28<sup>th</sup> December, 2004

Subject: **"US-made" Kerkuk City Council decides once again in favor of the Kurds**

In a previous report from SOITM entitled "*Violation of the Iraqi Turkmen Human Rights Continues*"<sup>1</sup>, we reported on how the US occupation authorities in Iraq have arbitrarily and unfairly "made up" the Kerkuk City Council.

While the Kurds represented no more than 20% and the Christians represented less than 5% of the population of Kerkuk just before the invasion of Iraq by the Anglo-american forces in March 2003, they were allocated 60% of the seats in the Kerkuk City Council, to the detriment of the Turkmen.

The Turkmen who represent the majority of the population in Kerkuk were once again marginalized, this time by the Americans who rewarded the Kurds for their collaboration during the invasion of Iraq. The Americans unfairly allocated the majority of the Council seats to Kurds and Christians, despite the fact that Kurds and Christians never represented the majority in Kerkuk. Turkmen were only given 6 seats (20%) out of a total of 30 seats in the Kerkuk City Council, while the Kurds were given 11 seats (36,7%), the Christians 7 seats (23,3%) and the Arabs 6 seats (20%).

The Turkmen reacted strongly to their new marginalization, considering their under-representation in the Council as the highest injustice committed against them by the Americans and Kurds. Indeed, never before had they been considered the smallest minority in Kerkuk, far behind the Kurds and even behind the Christians!

The Kurds pursuing their political objective to take control of Kerkuk, change its ethnic composition and annex it to their so-called Kurdistan, imposed not only their own over-representation in the Council but that of the Christians as well, having beforehand made a deal with the Christians in order to get their votes and constitute a majority in the Council with them. Of course, this maneuver was done to the detriment of the Turkmen.

The Turkmen, having rejected this composition of the Council, asked for its modification and wanted more seats to reflect their true ethnic representation in Kerkuk. The Arab members of the Council approved the Turkmen's demands and asked for more seats as well.

After waiting ten months without obtaining their rights, Turkmen and Arab members of the Council suspended their membership, on 20<sup>th</sup> March 2004, protesting against the unfair composition of the Council.

On 1<sup>st</sup> May 2004 the occupation authorities finally admitted the under-representation of the Turkmen in the Council and decided to modify the Council composition, but they did not meet the Turkmen's demands. They increased the Council members from 30 to 40, adding only 4 new members for the Turkmen.

These additional members were chosen as follows:

- 4 new members were chosen from the Turkmen community, bringing their representation in the Council from 6 to 10 (from 20% to 25%).
- 4 new members were chosen from the Arab community, bringing their representation in the Council from 6 to 10 (from 20% to 25%).
- 2 new members were chosen from the Kurdish community, bringing their representation in the Council from 11 to 13 (from 36,7% to 32,5%).
- The Christian members in the Council remained the same: 7 members (but their percentage passed from 23,3% to 17,5%).

In the selection of the 10 new members for the Council, the Kurds once again were prized by the Americans, imposing the selection of 2 pro-Kurdish individuals: one Turkmen and one Arab. The objective of the Kurds in imposing the selection of these 2 members was to guarantee their allegiance and obtain their votes in the Council in order to keep the majority for the Kurds even in the new Council.

The old and new Councils being under Kurdish majority and control decided the following, with the blessing and approval of the occupation authorities:

- Selection of a Kurdish governor for Kerkuk
- Appointment of Kurds to the highest positions :
  - o Police Chief
  - o Mayor
  - o 90% of the head officials in Kerkuk city and its districts became Kurdish
- Appointment of thousands of Kurdish staffs in Kerkuk offices.
- Although the number of Kurdish families who were expelled from Kerkuk province by the Ba'ath regime was admitted to be around 11.000 the Council brought 120.000 Kurdish families from Erbil, Duhuk and Suleymaniyya.<sup>2</sup> They were granted advantages by the Kurdish parties and they occupied scores of governmental buildings.  
22 schools and almost all the sport stadiums and facilities are until now occupied by them.
- Thousands of building-grounds were confiscated and Kurdish families built houses on them.
- Everywhere in the city they put up signs in Kurdish only: in the streets, in governmental offices and even in hospitals.
- The municipal properties and facilities were granted to the Kurdish neighborhoods.

To avoid losing their majority in the Kerkuk Council and to maintain the advantages obtained from their predominance in the "US-made" Council, the Kurdish politicians have lately asked for the **postponement** of the elections in Kerkuk province.

By deferring the elections in Kerkuk, they want to continue their Kurdification policy in order to obtain the majority. Furthermore, they want to give the possibility for tens of thousands of Kurds newly arrived in Kerkuk to vote twice, the first time in their

original provinces (if elections in Kerkuk are postponed) and the second time in Kerkuk (whenever the elections take place).

**In a recent monthly (November) meeting of the Kerkuk Council, the Kurdish members (who have the majority as explained above) brought a resolution to postpone the Kerkuk elections and asked the members to vote, the Turkmen and the Arab members of the Council rejected the proposal and left the hall.**

**The Kurds, in the name of the Council, then decided to send a proposal to the Independent Election Commission in Baghdad asking for the postponement of the election in Kerkuk province.**

We, representatives of the Turkmen community in Iraq, call upon the United Nations and all the Human Rights Organizations to reject the political maneuver of the Kurds and refuse the postponement of the elections in Kerkuk.

**Dr. Sheth JERJIS**  
Chairman of SOITM  
Nijmegen, The Netherlands

**Dr. Ayoub BAZZAZ**  
Chairman of Iraqi Turkmen  
Rights Advocating Committee (ITRAC) –  
London, UK

**Dr. Hassan AYDENLY**  
President of CDITR  
Committee for the Defence of the  
Iraqi Turkmen Rights, Belgium

**Engineer Salman MOFAK**  
Chairman of Turkmen National Action  
Front Ireland

**Merry FITZGERALD**  
Human Rights Activist  
Committee for the Defence of the  
Iraqi Turkmen Rights, Belgium.

**Engineer Orhan KETENE**  
Iraqi Turkmen Front U.S. Representative  
Washington D.C., USA

## References

1. SOITM Report, “**Violation of the Iraqi Turkmen Human Rights Continues**”, August 11<sup>th</sup>, 2003.  
(<http://members.lycos.nl/soitum/CouncilP.pdf>)
2. SOITM Report, “**Influx of Kurds into Turkmen Regions, Particularly Kerkuk City**”, October 12<sup>th</sup>, 2004.  
(<http://members.lycos.nl/soitum/influxP.pdf>)