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Mr. Chairperson,
Ladies and Gentlemen,

I would like to thank the organizers of this panel for arranging this discussion for one of the most important issues in Iraq - the Kerkuk Crisis. The current situation in Kerkuk is considered one of the main factors influencing the security and unity of Iraq.

Kerkuk is a region with 2.2% of the planet's petroleum deposit, amounting to over 10 billion barrels of the oil reserves. Kerkuk accounted for 70% of the state's total oil output in the 1970s and 40% before occupation. The oil of Kerkuk is well known for its good quality, and for the shallowness of its wells. Beneath the city are also substantial amounts of natural gas and sulfur.

Due to the underground wealth, Kerkuk region has always been targeted by local, regional and international powers and subjected both to Arabification and Kurdification.

The Arabification policies of Kerkuk City began as early as in the 1930s. During the dictatorial Ba'ath period, the systematic assimilation and forced deportation of non-Arabs and demographic distortion was achieved. During this Arabification policy some 367,000 Arabs were settled in Kerkuk Province.

Immigration of the Kurds towards northern Iraq provinces from the east has long history. This immigration in the provinces of Erbil, Kerkuk and Diyala, took place into Turkmen regions.

The western travellers of the 19th century limited the Kurdish regions to the mountains of the northeast Iraq and Sulaymaniya province. Erbil city, Kerkuk province and many districts in Diayla provinces were described as predominantly Turkmen regions. The Kurdish immigration toward Turkmen cities continued through 20th century.

Hanna Batatu mentions that Kerkuk had been Turkish through and through in the not too distant past. Kurds moved into the city from the surroundings. By 1959, they had swollen to more than one third of the population,

In another page: "The Turkmen owned much of the agricultural country in the Malhah region, along the lesser Zab and in the western outskirts of Kerkuk". These regions are now severely Kurdified and Arabified.

David McDowell in his book "A History of the Kurds" mentions: "In mid July 1959, --, --. Tension had been growing for some time between Turkmen, the originally predominant element, and Kurds who had settled during the 1930s and 1940s, --. By 1959 half the populations of 150,000 were Turkmen, rather less than half were Kurds and the balance Arabs, Assyrians and Armenians."

After the fall of Saddam Hussein, the Kerkuk region was taken by U.S. troops and Kurdish Pashmargas. Almost all government buildings were attacked, looted and burned. To eradicate the Turkmen nature of Kerkuk, the city's Land Registry, Population Registry Offices and census registrations were looted and burned by Kurdish Pashmargas.

The first Kerkuk city council instituted by the USA, the majority of seats was given to Kurds and Christians.

Iraqi elections took place in the sphere of war, lacking the simplest requirements of voting processes: Ineffective governmental administration, insecurity and absence of both democratic environment and mentality. Furthermore, the elections in Turkmen region were conducted totally under Kurdish administration, staff, police, security agents and military. Almost all kinds of manipulation took place. It is estimated that about 228,000 false votes were introduced.

As a result of these manipulations, Kurdish political actors won a majority in Kerkuk Council - 63%, granting them the decision making power in the Provincial Council. The Council elected a Kurdish governor which appointed a Kurdish Mayor, and a Kurdish Chief of Police.

At present almost all the higher posts in Kerkuk are held by the Kurds: Governor, Deputy of the Kerkuk Governor, Head of Kerkuk Council, Deputy of Head of the Kerkuk Council, Mayor, The chief of Kerkuk municipalities, Chief of Police, Chief of the security office, Chief of the military office, Chief of the military inspection office, Director of the University, 80% of the directors of governmental offices

Under the Kurdish administration large number of Kurds from other provinces was also brought into Kerkuk, These people were installed in hundreds of governmental offices, huge complexes of Iraqi army buildings and in the houses of Arabs who left Kerkuk. By permission of the administration, tens of thousands of houses were also built on municipality and Turkmen land. The population of Kerkuk governorate increased almost half million.

Article 140 of the Iraqi constitution

The interests of occupier and the other two ruling powers dominated the drafting processes. Unity of the country (article 115) and authority of the central government (article 111) are almost lost in the constitution.

The Baker-Hamilton report and UN Secretary General Mr. Ban Ki-moon are two of the important international authorities that have request that the Iraqi constitution be rewritten.

Both the transitional administrative law and the current Iraqi constitution orders the following processes for the resolving of the Kerkuk Crisis: Normalization, Census and Referendum.

Normalization phase includes the following:

1. Demographic distortions of past periods should be corrected, and new employment opportunities should be created.
This should also take into account the legitimacy of the huge number of Kurds that have recently entered into the Kerkuk region.

2. The confiscated lands should be returned to the owners
Hundreds of thousands of hectares of mainly Turkmen lands were confiscated by the consecutive Iraqi governments in Kerkuk, particularly, during the era of Ba'ath regime. As Much as of this land has been given to the Kurds, who were brought into Kerkuk after occupation.

The number of cases presented to the Kerkuk Property claim Commission of which more than 80% by Turkmen, is 36,011 - only 13% (4841 case) have been addressed.

3. Resettlement of those who were brought by Arabisation policy
 - a. About 367.000 Arabs were brought by Ba'ath regime
 - b. About 100.000 left Kerkuk after occupationThese people are living in Kerkuk for about 25 years and half of this population are children were born in Kerkuk.
4. Determination of Kerkuk inhabitants according to census 1957

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- a. Kerkuk land registry and population registration offices and censuses registrations for decades were robbed and the buildings were burned
How the real inhabitants of Kerkuk can be defined?

Census and Referendum

As it is mentioned above, the Iraqi elections took place in the theatre of war and lacked the simplest requirements of voting processes. In Kerkuk and other Turkmen regions the election achieved under hugely Kurdified administration. As a result all types of manipulation happened. Organization of census or referendum at the present will be severely manipulated in favor of the Kurds..

The solution

SOITM proposal for the resolving of Kerkuk Crisis

- The constitution should be amended and the article 140 should be rewritten after intensive study of the Kerkuk problem by the specialists.
- The government of Kerkuk should be temporarily but completely handed to United Nations.
- The Kerkuk military troops, which are now constituted from the Kurdish Pashmarga brought from the other Kurdish provinces, should be changed by a neutral Iraqi army from all the parts of Iraq or by troops brought by United Nations.
- The government of Kerkuk and tens of thousands of new appointments in the governmental offices should be invalidated. The redistribution of higher posts and new appointments should be made fairly under direct supervision of the United Nations.
- Normalization of the Kerkuk population
 - Because the Kerkuk land, population and census data has been destroyed, the United Nations should depend on historical facts and taking the huge Kurdish immigration to Kerkuk region along the 20th century, when determining the composition of Real Kerkuk's inhabitants.
 - The huge Turkmen lands confiscated after occupation and by Ba'ath regime should be returned to the Turkmen owners.
- The international support to the Kurdish authorities should withdrawn to force the Kurdish leaders accept the realities
- Democratization
 - To determine the limits of demands, it is crucial that the population should be taught about human rights and democratic basics. To achieve these goals, the institution of effective independent civil society organizations should be encouraged and supported.
 - The office of Kerkuk Ombudsman should be instituted
 - Soldiers, policemen, security agents and even officials should follow special course to help them deal with the mixed communities.

With its Turkmen nature, Kerkuk province has always hosted different communities, Arabs, Kurds and Christians. The region is considered the microcosm of Iraq and reflects Iraq's demographic structure.

In today's Iraq, while several conflicts play active role causing catastrophic daily casualties, the situation in Kerkuk threatens the relatively peaceful condition in the north and as a new conflict if it happened it will bring all the Iraq communities to share the fighting.

All the historical and geopolitical facts confirm the **fact** that Kerkuk province should be independent administrative unit annexed to the capital and administered equally by the different Kerkuk communities.

Thank you very much for your interest and attention.