

## The presentation of UNPO

### Marino Busdachin, UNPO General Secretary

*Mr. Marino Busdachin is the current General Secretary of the Unrepresented Nations and Peoples Organization (UNPO). He has spent decades campaigning for human, civil and political rights, focusing especially on Eastern Europe and the Soviet Union. Mr. Busdachin spoke of the need to address the Kerkuk problem with new perspectives coupled with inclusive political dialogue and firm political will.*

Mr. Busdachin highlighted the increasing international attention on the situation of Kerkuk, with the plight of Kerkuk's marginalized parties securing an increasingly significant position in international dialogue. It remains vital to recognize noted Mr. Busdachin, "such policy debates need to be coupled with firm political will to implement solutions." Unfortunately this will has been considerably lacking asserted Mr. Busdachin, and without this will any discussions, conferences or seminars will remain purely academic.

"Taking into consideration the continued postponement of the referendum in Kerkuk and the mounting frustrations of all parties involved, the time is ripe to re-approach the dilemma with different perspectives."

Mr. Busdachin quoted a philosophy of the Founding Fathers of the European Union which states if a solution to a problem cannot be found, then one needs to change the context of the issue. He further called upon those present at the conference to take heed of this advice when discussing the future of Kerkuk.

Mr. Busdachin noted the multiethnic nature of Kerkuk and the situation of multiple groups vying for influence and control. Given these realities Mr. Busdachin suggested policy-makers consider a system of governance which includes administrative divisions as a feasible option to quell tensions.

"Such systems have been successful in Trieste, South Tirol, Catalonia and Corsica. In all of these cases diversity was managed through a community oriented approach. Smaller political units were created which are able to cater to the needs of the community more effectively than a more centralized, top-heavy administration. A key factor in the stability of these regions is the strengthening and support of local economies, which ultimately fosters a significant level of fiscal independence."

In whatever approach is adopted Mr. Busdachin stressed the necessity of engaging all parties – Arabs, Chaldo-Assyrians, Kurds and Turkmen – in dialogue.

"The European Parliament is a particularly apt stage upon which to continue this work, as Europe's own laws on the rights of minorities rank amongst the most developed in the world. Substantial and effective dialogue, linked with firm political will are cornerstones to hurdling the obstacles surrounding Kerkuk."

Mr. Busdachin concluded that Article 140 of the Iraqi Constitution should be considered a failed legislative act. An order by law, argued Mr. Busdachin, is needed in order to fully implement Article 140. Mr. Busdachin therefore urged Iraqi authorities to consider implementing such an order, so as to reduce further deterioration of the already dire situation in Kerkuk and to finally end the question of Article 140.