

The EU should pay special attention to the deteriorating human rights situation of the Turkmen community in Iraq

Metin Kazak, ALDE Coordinator and Vice-Chairman of the Subcommittee on Human Rights made a statement on the situation in Iraq during the plenary session of the European Parliament in Strasbourg (24 to 27 February, 2014). The Bulgarian MEP noted that 2013 will be remembered as "the bloodiest year" after the war on Iraq and the Iraqi people. He stressed that the European liberals are extremely concerned about the deteriorating security situation of the population, especially the Iraqi Turkmen.

The MEP underlined that the Resolution on "Iraq: the plight of minority groups, including the Iraqi Turkmen" adopted by the EP on March 14, 2013 is seen as a positive step forward, but not a sufficient measure taken by the EU given the current situation. He argued that cultural, religious and economic damages on the Turkmen population are highly visible and that it cannot be ignored by the Union.

Metin Kazak gave as an example the bloody incident in January 2014 in the cities of Kirkuk and Tuz Khurmatu, where two doctors were kidnapped and killed and 14 explosions killed a total of 20 and injured over 163 Turkmen. "This openly illustrates the existence of deep tensions between ethnic groups in Iraq, which increases the risk of a civil war involving the Iraqi people in bloody clashes," said Kazak.

According to the MEP, the EU should pay special attention to the deteriorating human rights situation of the Turkmen community in Iraq. He said that contractual relations between the two sides and the creation of a legal framework for relations covering political dialogue, trade relations, legal cooperation, human rights, development aid and others were established for the first time by the signing of the Agreement on Partnership and Cooperation in May 2012. Kazak pointed out that the purpose of the agreement is to significantly expand cooperation with Iraq on key foreign policy issues for the EU such as human rights, the rule of law, non-proliferation of weapons, the International Criminal Court, migration and others, because the situation in the country is directly linked to the overall stability in the Middle East region.

Finally, Metin Kazak called on the European Commission and the European External Action Service to exert additional pressure on the Iraqi government to achieve a peaceful solution on the situation of the Turkmen in Iraq in order to avoid irreversible consequences in the region.