

UNPO URGENT APPEAL - The European Parliament Must Pressure the Iraqi Government To Adequately Protect the Turkmen From Kidnappings, Land Confiscation and Assimilation

Brussels, 14 November 2013 - The Unrepresented Nations and Peoples Organization (UNPO) calls on the European Parliament to urge the government of Iraq to put security measures into place to protect the Turkmen community in Northern Iraq as a matter of urgency.

On Sunday 3 November 2013, the administration of Kirkuk Province, in Northern Iraq, in cooperation with the Security Forces of the province, used violent methods against the population of the village of Turkalan. These measures were used to repress the villager's protests against the **illegal appropriation** of a great part of their agricultural land. The Iraqi government illegally confiscated 332 acres of the village agricultural land, despite the objection of the land owners who had obtained a Court decision to halt the project.

The Governor of the province, in cooperation with the Head of Police force in Kirkuk, General Jamal Tahir Bakr and the heavily armed forces of Kirkuk Emergency Police together with the District Police Force in Kirkuk tried to take over the lands by force. As a consequence of the events, 5 young villagers, 4 farmers and one student were arrested. In an attempt to **boycott the coverage** of the incidents during the protests, Special Forces confiscated television cameras and mobile phones containing footage of the event.

On the days following these occurrences, at least 4 **explosions** took place injuring several people. On Friday 8 November 2013, the Turkmen poet Jasim Muhemed Ferej Tuzlu was found killed after 24 hours of being **kidnapped**. These incidents have only heightened anxiety amongst the Turkmen, who, having already been subjected to obvious discrimination and frequent assimilation policies, are now facing further insecurity.

In light of the European Parliament's resolution of 12 March 2013 on the plight of the Iraqi Turkmen, and Lady Catherine Ashton's statement of 18 June 2013, to encourage the addressing of political and governance issues in Iraq through dialogue, UNPO calls on the European Parliament to exert further pressure on the Iraqi Government. It must comply with Court decisions to halt land confiscations and guarantee the implementation of the country's Constitution, ensuring the protection of the Iraqi Turkmen and other vulnerable communities. Violence continues to escalate dangerously, and there is a looming threat that if no action is taken, these vicious attacks might trigger an even greater civil conflict.