

Who Owns Kerkuk? Examination of the Basic Dimensions

Date: 13 September, 2011

No: Art.5-J1311

The purpose of the Iraqi Turkmen Human Rights Research Foundation was to begin a discussion, initiated by Open Democracy in 2007, about ethnic issues surrounding the city of Kerkuk. In particular, Open democracy proposed a discussion regarding the differences that have arisen between Turkmen and Kurdish communities. In our first article, entitled "The fate of a city",¹ We attempted to present aspects of a Turkmen perspective of these issues.

Mr. Xulam, a Kurdish writer, replied in an article titled "Attacking the victims".² The core of his argument included criticisms of little relevance to the current problems in Kerkuk. His article detailed Kurdish tragedies and was designed to exploit the compassion of the reader.

The title of Xulam's article confirms a concern which SOITM expressed in its early reports. For more than a century, the West has reported extensively on the Kurds in the media, and in academic and political discourse. Numerous books and articles chronicling Kurdish sufferings have also been published. While most of these publications are misleading in their conclusions, most of them remain free of criticism. This lack of critical analysis has contributed to the development of exaggerated sympathy for the Kurdish case in the western world. Kurdish political actors and intellectual community are aware of this pattern and continue to exploit it. Therefore, the majority of the Kurdish intellectuals and politicians continue to concentrate on Kurdish sufferings in their articles or speeches even if those issues do not relate to the subject of the discussion.^{3,4}

With the overstating of the Kurdish case, Western perspectives of realities in Northern Iraq have become distorted due to media saturation. As an example, human rights violations against the Kurds have been overstated while violations committed against other communities in the region have largely been ignored. As a result, international authorities have supported the implantation of Kurdish policies in all of Iraq, particularly in the so-called disputed areas and Kerkuk province without understanding the full socio-political landscape of north of Iraq. Despite historical documentation to the contrary, the Kurds are now considered the original inhabitants of Northern Iraq and Turkmen and Chealdo-Assyrian cities are deemed to be historically Kurdish cities.

As a foundation, we recommend that the approach to this discussion should be crafted in the context of ethnicity, geography and history, administration, and demography.

Ethnic nature of Kerkuk region

Before the 20th century

As a result of the Ottoman failure to record ethnicity in its census statistics, it is difficult to find exact and reliable information about the population size of different ethnic communities in Kerkuk before the 20th century. Additionally, statistics later released by successive nationalist Iraqi governments severely minimized population sizes of Iraqi non-Arab communities. Traveller narratives and publications of independent writers thus serve as the only source of information regarding ethnic composition of the region. Accounts that comment on this information confirm that the Kerkuk region during this period was largely inhabited by Turkmen.⁵

In 1810, Giuseppe Campanile found that the inhabitants of Kerkuk were not Kurdish.⁶ In 1816, James S. Buckingham further confirmed Campanile's findings, portraying the south-eastern region (Kifri and Kara Tepe) of the Kerkuk province⁷ as ethnically and linguistically Turkish. Buckingham adds that Kerkuk is located a four days distance from Kurdish lands.⁸

SOITM

Stichting Onderzoekcentrum Iraaks Turkmeense Mensenrechten
Kan Pelsstr. 56, 6525 VZ Nijmegen, The Netherlands
Tel: 0031 (0)616262586 email: soitm@chello.nl
Website: www.turkmen.nl

Nearly eighteen years later, J. Baillie Fraser described almost the same landscape as Buckingham.^{9, 10} In 1836, Shiel's account described the ethnic composition of Kerkuk city as follows: "The inhabitants are Arabs and Osmanlis, with some Christians and Jews, but no Kurds."¹¹ Between 1817 and 1820, Robert Ker Porter characterized the ethnic composition of Kerkuk city as "chiefly composed of Turks, Armenians, Gourds, Arabs, and a few Jews."¹² Just one year later, Claudius J. Rich confirmed that the Kerkuk's inhabitants were not Kurds and that all the inhabitants in the south, east and north regions adjacent to Kerkuk were populated by Turkmen.¹³⁻¹⁵ In his publication, "Dictionary of Erudition and Historical Church of St. Peter's", published in 1846, Gaetano Moron classified the Kerkuk population as Turkish, Armenians Nestorians and Kurdish.¹⁶ Toward the end of the 19th century Vital Cuinet, estimated the total population of Kerkuk and its annexed sub-districts and villages as 30.000 with Turkmen comprising almost 95% of the population (28.000).

The aforementioned data refers to the insignificant presence of Kurds in the region before the 20th century.

Twentieth century

Interest in the ethnic composition of the Kerkuk region greatly increased during the eight year conflict between Turkey and the United Kingdom for the oil-rich Ottoman province of Mosul after World War I. Because the Iraqi Turkmen population was not essential in the achievement of British objectives for the region, the early Iraqi censuses organized by British mandate underestimated the number of Turkmen in Iraq, particularly in the Mosul province.¹⁸ It was fixed at 2%, a figure repeated by successive Iraqi governments.

In 1909, Ely B. Soane considered Kerkuk famous for Turkmen.¹⁹ In 1945, Cecil J. Edmonds estimated that a great majority of Kerkuk city was of Turkmen heritage.²⁰ He described the ethnic composition of Tuz Khurmatu and the villages surrounding it as primarily Turkmen.²¹ Furthermore, Stephen H. Longrigg described Kara Tepe as a Turkmen region,²² and in 1918, William R. Hay stressed that Turkmen were the main inhabitants of Kerkuk city and surrounding villages.²³⁻²⁵

In the first half of the 20th century, Wallace A. Lyon concluded that, "the country between Kifri and Kerkuk and onwards to Arbil and numerous villages is inhabited by people of Turkish origin speaking the Turkish tongue."^{26, 27} He also stressed the Turkmen nature of the Kerkuk city: "Kerkuk city was not without its culture - Turkish and proud of it."²⁸

The *commission of the league of the nations*, which conducted a comprehensive study on the demography of Kerkuk region in 1924, reported that²⁹

- the basis stock of the population of Kerkuk is Turkish
- Altun Kopru is definitely Turkish
- The population of Tuz Khurmatu is, except for a few Jewish families, entirely Turkish or Turkmen.
- 75 per cent of population of Kara Tepe is Turkish,
- Taze Khormatu and Daquq are also mainly Turkish.

Razuq Isa in his book "Mukhtasar Gugrafiyat, al-Irak" considered almost all the districts of Kerkuk province to have a Turkmen majority: Kerkuk city, Malha district at the West, Tawuk at the south, Kifri district and Kara Tepe at the south-eastern and Tuz Khurmatu at the south-western.³⁰ The Iraqi Historian Taha B. al-Hashimi approximated the majority in the province to be Turkmen.³¹ Mohammed H. al-Daftari estimated the Turkmen as the first inhabitants of Kerkuk city.³² The English Air minister Christopher B. Thomson referred to "Kerkuk [as] a Turcoman city".³³ The English peerage Samuel JG Hoare asserted that "Kerkuk [is] a place that is mainly Turcoman".³⁴

William Warfield described the Kerkuk of the early 20th century as distinctly Turkish.³⁵ Gordon in the 1930s mentioned that Kerkuk is a Turkish speaking city.³⁷ In 1913 and 1936, the Encyclopedia of Islam highlighted³⁸ that "Turkmen are the predominant element in the city". The Encyclopedia considers the city to be a "bulwark of the Ottoman Empire and a center of

SOITM

its culture". Liora Lukitz's account also confirmed the Turkmen nature of Kerkuk city³⁹ In 1959 Hanna Batatu considered Kerkuk city to be predominately Turkish until very recently.⁴⁰ He said that even the Melha region which was exposed to Arabification was owned by Turkmen.⁴¹ David McDowall in his book titled "A Modern History of the Kurds" presents valuable information on the Turkmen regions in Kerkuk province.⁴²⁻⁴⁵ Phebe Marr considers Turkmen the leading family of Kerkuk city and she says that many Kurds migrated into Kerkuk city.⁴⁶ Prof. Edward Y. Odisho, a Christian native of Kerkuk, writes "Turkmen's largest population concentration is in the city of Kerkuk whose linguistics, cultural and ethnic identity is distinctly coloured by their presence"⁴⁷

Until the end of the 19th century, there is almost no source which describes the Kerkuk province of 1976, before administrative alteration, as a Kurdish inhabited region. The politically oriented British military officers, who published many studies on the region, began to impose the Kurdish culture on the north of Iraq as a whole, particularly Kerkuk region, despite continuing to consider Kerkuk as Turkmen city.

Cecil J. Edmonds was the first to increase abnormally the Kurdish population in Kerkuk province to 53% in his estimation of Kerkuk's ethnic breakdown.⁴⁸

Early results of the 1957 Iraqi census underestimated the total number of the Turkmen in Iraq putting them into 136,200. The reviewed results of the same census increased this figure to 567,000, which made 9% of total Iraqi population. According to the new results, the total number of the Iraqi Turkmen was increased five folds. The reviewed results did not applied to the census figures of the Kerkuk province, which accounted the Turkmen as the largest population of Kerkuk city by 37.7% and the Kurds as the largest population of the province by 48%. Therefore, the results of the 1957 census of Kerkuk province as whole, which made the Kurds the majority, should be considered unreliable. Noting worth that the same census figures accounted the total number of the Kurds in Iraq as 819,000, making 13% of total Iraqi population.^{49, 50}

Geography and History

Kerkuk province is located in a non-mountainous plain region, while the traditional homeland of the Kurds has always been documented as mountainous regions.⁵¹ They have only in recent history started to migrate towards the plains.^{51, 53} Encyclopaedia Britannica dates Kurdish abandonment of their traditional lifestyle in the highlands and mountains to after World War I.⁵⁴

In order to correctly analyse the Kurdish claim to Kerkuk, the terms Kurd and Kurdistan should be analysed.

The Term Kurd

The socio-economic meaning of the term Kurd was first applied to Seleucid or Parthian mercenaries dwelling in the Zagros in the second century BCE.⁵⁶⁻⁵⁹ It is unclear when the term *Kurd* acquired the meaning *Persian nomad*.⁵¹ However, the socio-economic meaning of the term can be found in the 36 volumes of the history of celebrated Arabic Historian al-Tabari.⁶⁰ This definition was confirmed and used by celebrated Islamic historians, Masudi and Hamawi. Many historians and travellers, including many westerners, of the 19th century used the term Kurds for brigandage.⁶¹ Marco Polo's definition of the term in the 13th century supports the idea that the term *Kurds* was not used as an ethnic term.⁶² In the 16th century, Leonhard Rauwolf considered the Kurds to be Nestorians that spoke no Persian, which implies that the term Kurd during that period had no relation with the Kurds of today.

The Term Kurdistan

Kurdistan has never referred to a state with an independent administrative system. When used in the administrative context, the term referred to a mixed population.⁶⁴ It was used for

SOITM

the first time by Sultan Sanjar of the Seljuk in the middle of the 12th century to describe the western part of the Jibal Province in Iran. Turkmen and Kurds formed the majority of this Kurdistan.⁶⁶ The Mongol sultan Oljay built a new capital for the province and called it Chamchamal (the derivation of which may be Mongol).⁶⁵ At that time, the north eastern mountainous region of what now constitutes north of Iraq was shared between al-Jazira in the west and Azerbaijan in the east, separated by a frontier line just east of the Amadiya and Erbil.^{5, 67} Tawuk and Kerkuk were located in al-Jazira province.⁶⁸ Ali of Yazd, who used the word Kerkuk for the first time in the early 15th century, placed Kerkuk and Tawuk in Mesopotamia.⁵⁵ The word Kurdistan only started to appear in the registers of the Ottoman Empire in the third decade of the 16th century, describing an area below the lake of Van.⁶⁹ Rauwalf in 16th century also used the original Turkmen name of the town Tauk and Altun Kopri of the Kerkuk province.

Sharafname of Sharaf al-Din of Bitlis, which was published in 1597, and Seyahatname of Evliya Celebi, written in mid 17th century, both incorrectly depicted expanded frontiers for the term Kurdistan. A map published by Evliya, who succeeded Bitlisi by several decades and possibly read his texts, is almost a copy of the map of Sharafname. The Kurdistan of these two authors includes Malatya and extends to Baghdad and then to Basra, inclusions which invalidate these maps.⁷⁰ Furthermore, Çelebi took the road along the Tigris in his travels in Iraq³⁸ which was a considerable distance from the Kurdish region.

In the 18th century, Maurizio Garzoni and Carsten Niebuhr⁶² described the region presenting inclusive descriptions of the term Kurdistan. Garzoni divided the region called Kurdistan into five principalities: Bitlis, Giulamerk, Amadia, Djezira and Kara Djiolan. Erbil was excluded and Shahrizur and Kerkuk were considered two independent principalities governed by Mutasellims.⁷¹ Niebuhr's account of his travels in Iraq included Mardin and Diyarbakir in Mesopotamia. He described Kurdistan as forming "the northern part of the ancient Assyria a mountainous region to the east of the Tigris, and immediately at the back of Mosul, Nisibin, and Mardin. The inhabitants for the most part speak a corrupt dialect of Persian."⁶²

In the early 19th century, Claudius J. Rich gave valuable information on the boundaries of so called Kurdistan and the Kurdish regions. He determined Derband, Sagirma and Ibrahim Kanja as the western boundaries.^{72, 73} He recorded the distance to Kifri as 27 mile and nine hours on horse.

During the 1830s, William F. Ainsworth, gave the clearest view on the boundaries of imaginary Kurdistan. He wrote "In the present day, Kerkuk and Arbil are considered as towns attached to the Pashalik of Baghdad, and the ancient Adiabene forms part of the Pashalik of Mosul. It is not customary, although quite arbitrary, to consider the country of the plains W. of the outlying ranges of hills in either of these Pashaliks as forming part of Kurdistan. Jezireh Zakho and Koi Sanjak, like 'Amadiyah and 'Suleimaniyeh', are in the hills"⁷⁴

In 1856, M. A. Clement further displaced the boundaries of Kurdistan toward Kerkuk city, but excluded it from the boundaries of what is called Kurdistan: "Kerkout, chef-lieu du pachalik de Chehrèzour, est situé à l'extrême limite orientale du désert sur le versant Sud de la première colline qu'on doit franchir pour pénétrer dans le Kourdistan"^{75, 76}

Clement unknowingly contradicted almost all the other travellers of the same period when he recorded three quarters of the city's population as Kurdish.⁷⁷ However, the same estimation was given by Şemseddin Sami in his book "Kamus iil-Alam" without referring to Clement.

According to these traveller accounts, it is clear that the boundaries of Kurdistan steadily moved towards the west. This evidence implies that Kurds moved constantly for centuries toward the interior of Iraq expanding their boundaries by migration and not by historical claim.

Kurdish presence in Kerkuk

Leonhard Rauwolf was the first European traveler to visit Kerkuk in the second half of the 16th century and considered Kerkuk as part of a Curters province. According to Rauwolf's

SOITM

accounts, Curters were Nestorians and spoke no Persian (of which Kurdish is a dialect) sharing no linguistic links with present day Kurds.⁶³

Despite meeting no Kurds and visiting no Kurdish dwellings during his journey through Iraq, Thomas Howel in 1787 named Kerkuk the capital of so-called Turkish Kurdistan. By the word Kurds, he was referring to a Yazidi population, few of which actually lived in the cities at the time.⁷⁸ John Jackson in 1799 referred to the town Altun Kopri, about 50 km north west of Kerkuk, as the capital of Turkish Kurdistan. Like Howel, Jackson met no Kurds and visited no Kurdish dwellings in Kerkuk region during his travels.⁷⁹

In 1818, Claudius J. Rich described only Chamchamal and Shuwan regions of Kerkuk province as inhabited by the Kurds, but he excluded both regions from Kurdistan.^{80, 81} He recorded that the northern region of Kerkuk was neither inhabited with Kurds nor a part of Kurdish land.⁸¹ Rich did not consider the natives of Kerkuk to be Kurdish.⁸² His data held the Kerkuk province of before 1976, when the administrative boundaries were altered by the Ba'ath regime, out of the term Kurdistan. This argument supports the statement by H. Batatu regarding increased Kurdish immigration into Kerkuk in the 20th century.⁸³ During the same period, James B. Fraser regarded Sagirma as a pass into the Kurdistan region as well.^{5, 84}

Abu Talib Khan, James S. Buckingham, Robert Ker Porter and Claudius J. Rich passed through Kerkuk province during the first 3 decades of 19th century without meeting any Kurdish elements or confronting robbers. After a decade the travelers started writing about scattered Kurdish robbers on the High Way (Baghdad – Tuz Hurmatu - Kerkuk – Erbil).

In 1818, Rich placed Kifri about 27 km away from the Kurdish boundaries. A decade later, Mignan placed the same border near Kifri.⁸⁵ In 1834, Fraser showed that the road between Kifri and Kara Tepe had become unsafe, which suggest an influx of Kurdish robbers.⁸⁶ In 1878, the road between Tuz Khurmatu and Tawuk region was overwhelmed by Kurdish robbers.⁸⁷⁻⁹⁰

In 1924, a mission commissioned by the League of Nations confirmed the Kurdification of the Turkmen lands on the High Way, which included Kerkuk province.^{91, 92}

Following the precedent set by Bitlis and Evliya, the British were responsible for inaccurately expanding the borders of Kurdistan to include Kerkuk.

Administration

From the Seljuk era to the fall of the Ottoman Empire, Kerkuk was administered by the Turkmen. Shortly after the annexation of the Kerkuk region to the Ottoman Empire by Suleyman the Magnificent in 1534, the area became the headquarters of the Ottoman sub-district of Shahrizur which had been administratively annexed to Baghdad. This region was comprised of the modern provinces of Kerkuk, Erbil and Sulaymaniya. Its status as a Ottoman's territory was confirmed by the treaties of 1550 and 1554.^{93, 94} Despite Kerkuk's intermittent annexation to Mosul or Baghdad, it remained an important part of the Shahrizur province during the following three centuries. Midhat Pasha (1869-1872) excluded Sulaymaniya from Shahrizur. In 1879, Kerkuk (including Erbil) was incorporated into the Mosul province.

It should be noted that the Shahrizur region, which was described by Arab historians Maqdisi and Tabari as a Kurdish region, was the Sasanian Shahrizur and not Ottomans Shahrizur. The latter Shahrizur has never been seen as Kurdish region by travellers or historians.⁹⁵

The majority of governors and mayors of the Kerkuk province during Ottoman and Iraqi Kingdom rule were Turkmen.^{96, 97} Habib Talabani, the first Kurdish mayor of Kerkuk City, was appointed – not elected - in the late 1930s. The other two Kurdish mayors of Kerkuk City were Fadhil Talabani and Maruf al-Barzanci. The latter who held the position for only six months

SOITM

was appointed by leaders of a coup in 1958.⁹⁸ Until American occupation in 2003, the higher administration of the city, and most of its districts have never been predominantly Kurdish.⁹⁹

Despite the fact that Kurds controlled all the legal and political apparatus of the Kerkuk province in late 1950s,¹⁰⁰ the Turkmen won overwhelmingly majorities in all syndicate and civil society organizations between 1958 and 1959:¹⁰¹⁻¹⁰³

- The election of Chamber of Lawyers in September 1958,
- The Student Union lists in all the schools of the governorate at 22 November 1958.
- The administrative committee of the Al-Thawra Club in November 1959.
- The Teachers Syndicate at 23 January 1959,
- The administrative committee of the Children protection Association in January 1959
- The administrative committee of the Teachers Club in January 1959
- The administrative committee of the Red Crescent at 13 February 1959.

Table 1, Administrative regions (districts) of Kerkuk in the 20th century

| 1912 - Kerkuk Salname | 1922 Razuq Isa | 1929 - T. B. alHashimi | 1947 Edmonds | 1954 M. H. al-Daftrai | before 1976 | 1989 |
|-----------------------|------------------|------------------------|--------------|-----------------------|--------------|--------|
| Kerkuk | Kerkuk | Kerkuk | Kerkuk | Kerkuk | Kerkuk | Kerkuk |
| Rawanduz | Rawanduz | Chamchamal | Chamchamal | Chamchamal | Chamchamal | |
| Koysancak | Koysancak | | | | Hawija | Hawija |
| Raniya | Raniya | | Daquq | Tuz Khurmatu | Tuz Khurmatu | |
| Salahiya (Kifri) | Salahiya (Kifri) | Kifri | Kifri | Kifri | Kifri | |
| Erbil | | | | | | |

Demography

By the early 20th century, Kerkuk region has been exposed to different kinds of demographic changes. While an economic boom due to the oil production was the main catalyst for earlier immigrations, later geopolitical factors motivated further aggressive and systematic demographic changes in the province. The resource wealth of Kerkuk and its status as a multi-ethnic region have served as the primary source of unrest for the Kerkuk inhabitants. Recognizing the economic value of Kerkuk as a resource depot, which facilitates their independency, the Kurds expanded the boundaries of their region to include the city.

The demographic changes in Kerkuk province can be categorized as follows:

Kurdish Immigration,

In the last century, several factors have increased the movement of the Kurds to the plains. This movement can be divided into four stages:

1. The early stage (Until 1910s).

Kerkuk province had received the lion share of the Kurdish immigration into the Iraq for centuries, which was gradual, and due to the socio-economical factors. During this stage, the Kurds left their traditional life in the mountains toward inside Iraq and spread at the eastern part of the Kerkuk province, too.^{104, 105}

2. The intermediate stage (1920 – 1960) which characterized with an increase in immigration and was a result of socioeconomic and geopolitical reasons.

Industrialization of Kerkuk's oil in the 1920s flourished greatly the economy of the province. This brought large numbers of poor Kurds from the eastern villages of the province and from the provinces of Erbil and Sulaymaniya. The Kurdish immigration steadily increased during this stage with constant development of the province's economy.

A large number of Kurds established themselves in the Imam Kasim Neighbourhood of Kerkuk at the eastern north of the city during this period.¹⁰⁶ A second Kurdish

SOITM

neighbourhood of Kerkuk which is called Shorja started to appear on the eastern border of the city in 1940s. Two other Kurdish neighbourhoods called Iskan and al-Jumhuriya were built inside Kerkuk city toward of the end of this stage,^{83, 107}

It is worth noting that the Kerkuk massacre of 14 July 1959,⁸³ during which the Turkmen were massacred by Communists and Kurdish militias, led to emigration of hundreds of Turkmen families from the region. Many of these families settled in Baghdad.

3. The late stage (1960 - 2003),

The Kurdish immigration further increased in this stage and was mainly due to political reasons. It started with the Kurdish armed uprising in 1961, which further intensified ethnic conflict in the region. Hundreds of Kurdish villages in between the mountains were emptied and the inhabitants poured into the cities of neighbouring provinces, including Kerkuk.

4. The current stage (after occupation in 2003),

This stage has seen the greatest influx of Kurds into the Kerkuk province, which is exposed to a politically oriented systematic Kurdification.

The geopolitical environment created by occupation of Iraq in 2003, granted Kurdish militia parties the opportunity to realize their dream and invade the Kerkuk province. They changed the demography of Kerkuk province at such a pace that not even the Ba'ath regime achieved in 35 years. Kurdish parties during this stage settled about 600.000 Kurds in Kerkuk.

Several Kurdish neighbourhoods estimated at several kilometres width was built along the eastern border of Kerkuk city during this stage.⁷³ Thousands of houses were taken by Kurdish families and huge Iraqi military complexes were taken by the Kurds. The population of small sub-districts, for example, Kara Injir and Shiwan unusually increased.

The population of Kerkuk province was around 870,000 on the day of occupation, but in 2007 it was estimated to be 1,368,860.¹⁰⁸ Approximately 150,000 Arabs have fled or left the city since that point.

Arabic Emigration

The emergence of the Israeli state and escalation of the Arab-Israeli problem amplified Arab nationalism in the region and brought nationalist powers to rule in certain Arab countries. This tide of Arab nationalism had great influence on the political situation in Iraq.

The multiethnic nature of the population, the resource wealth of the region and Kurdish demands for independence have all contributed to the Iraqi government's concerns regarding the stability of Kerkuk.

This has played an important role in the exposure of the non-Arabs to aggressive assimilation policies seen before occupation.

The politically oriented Arabic emigration can be divided into 2 stages:

1. The monarchical stage (1920 – 1958) was gradual and mainly due to the social and political factors.

Settlement of nomadic Arabs in the western plains of Kerkuk started in the early kingdom period.

2. The republican stage (1958 – 2003) was characterized by intense and systematic establishment and due to the political factors.

SOITM

The second stage of Arabization policy of Kerkuk began with the establishment of the Republic. Appointment of Turkmen to governmental offices decreased and many Turkmen were discharged. Many of these officials were later expelled from Kerkuk.

The comprehensive demographic changes of Kerkuk region in this stage were initiated by Ba'ath regime in early 1970s. Hundreds of thousands of Arabs immigrated mainly from the south, while non-Arabs, mainly Turkmen, were deported from the province.¹⁰⁹ The Arabs enjoyed special incentives and rights, while the non-Arabs were deprived of governmental facilities and work opportunities.

In January 1976, two large administrative Turkmen districts and one Kurdish district were detached from Kerkuk, leaving only the Arabic district of al-Hawija within the province. The names of tens villages and districts in Kerkuk governorate were officially given Arabic names. The non-Arab families were forced to change their nationality to Arab.

Assyrian Emigration

The Christians of Kerkuk City can be divided into two groups. The first group, called the Christians of Kerkuk Citadel, are the original natives of the city. They are of Turkmen origin. They continue to conduct religious rituals in Turkmen language. The Petroleum Company, which was completely administrated by the British in 1920s, brought Christian workers from the other governorates. They mainly settled in the neighbourhoods around the Company: New Kerkuk, Almaz and Gavur Bagi.

Cultural Characteristics

The folk song of Kerkuk, which is called 'Kerkuk Türküsü', is well known in the Turkish world, and played almost daily on radio and television, whereas there are no Kurdish folk song of Kerkuk. There are almost no Kurdish singers born in Kerkuk city other than those in the last several decades. Additionally, architecture of historical houses and monuments in the major cities of Kerkuk province all reflect Turkish influence. The names of neighbourhoods and most towns in the Kerkuk region are Turkmen. Almost all the poets of Kerkuk region are of Turkmen origin, and the publications of Kerkuk region are historically Turkmen. However, The number of Turkmen publications has decreased gradually since the establishment of the Iraqi state in 1921. Kurdish publications in Kerkuk have on the other hand appeared only recently.

Conclusions

The Kurds exploit the exaggerated sympathy of the western community.

At least since the early decades of the 15th century, the districts of Kerkuk had Turkmen names. Traveller accounts of the latter half millennium considered Turkmen the first component of Kerkuk region. The independent sources of the first half of the 20th century also prove the Turkmen nature of Kerkuk city. It is also clear that Kerkuk had never been part of so-called Kurdistan. Culture, literature, demography and publications of Kerkuk were Turkmen until the recent past.

The region was exposed to aggressive Arabification. Kurdish immigration to Kerkuk region continued for centuries and greatly increased in the 20th century and systematic establishment of Kurds takes place after occupation of 2003 the systemic Kurdification processes started. It is also clear that the wealth of the province and being inhabited mainly with Turkmen has constituted the main cause of the demographical changes of Kerkuk province.

Approach to the Kerkuk problem

SOITM

Stichting Onderzoekcentrum Iraaks Turkmeense Mensenrechten
 Kan Pelsstr. 56, 6525 VZ Nijmegen, The Netherlands
 Tel: 0031 (0)616262586 email: soitm@chello.nl
 Website: www.turkmen.nl

The historical and geopolitical facts do not support the argument that the Kerkuk region has ever been a Kurdish land. In fact, the region has always been inhabited by a multi-ethnic mosaic. Separating the region from Iraq will deepen the already serious religious and ethnic sectarianism.

Whilst the national and the regional situation requires stability, linking Kerkuk province to the Kurdish region will only further motivate the Kurdish fight for independence and will make relations with the other communities in the region -- Turkey, Iran, Iraqi Arabs and Turkmen -- increasingly tense.

To maintain the confidence of the region's citizens -- who have pledged support to Iraq's democratic development -- the international community should help rebuild Iraq. Stabilization in the region and preservation of the unity of Iraq will no doubt facilitate reconciliation and accelerate the development and prosperity of the entire region.

The solution for the Kerkuk problem outlined by the Iraqi constitution does not correctly define the complexity of the challenges faced in the city and should therefore be amended to include a more complete version of the city's socio-political landscape.

The Iraqi people as a whole are in favor of keeping Kerkuk as a part of the central government rather than annexing it to the Kurdish region. This idea is also supported by the Assyrians, the fourth largest indigenous population in Iraq.

Equally sharing the power in the province attached to Baghdad should remain the most appropriate solution for Kerkuk province.

References:

1. Sheth Jerjis, "The fate of a city", July 24, 2007:
http://www.opendemocracy.net/article/the_fate_of_a_city
2. Kani Xulam, "Attacking the victims", August 1, 2007:
http://www.opendemocracy.net/article/attacking_the_victims
3. SOITM Report, "Western intellectuals fall collectively into error", September 1, 2004:
http://www.turkmen.nl/1A_soitm/w_intellectualsP.doc
4. SOITM report, "An Unfair Aspect of the Western Approach to the Kurdish Case in Iraq", issued at October 23, 2006:
http://www.turkmen.nl/1A_Others/Western_approch.htm
5. SOITM report, "To the participants in seeking a solution to the Kerkuk problem: The historical anatomy of Kerkuk region", November 29, 2008:
http://www.turkmen.nl/1A_soitm/art.30-K2908.pdf
6. William Ainsworth, "Researches in Assyria, Babylonia, and Chaldæa", Oxford University 1838, P. 232 – 245
7. James .S. Buckingham, "Travels in Mesopotamia: Including a Journey from Aleppo to Baghdad", Gregg International Publisher 1971, P. 348 – 349
8. Ibid., P. 338
9. J. Baillie Fraser, "Travels in Kurdistan", Samuel Bentley, Bangor House, Shoe Lane, 1840, P. 149 – 150
10. Ibid., P. 194
11. Lieutenant-Colonel J. Shiel, "Notes on a Journey from Tabriz, through Kurdistan, via Van, Bitlis, Se'ert, and Erbil, to Suleimaniyeh in July and August, 1936", The Journal of the Royal Geographical Society 1838, P. 100
12. Robert Ker Porter, "Travels in Georgia, Persia, Armenia, Ancient Babylonia", the Monthly Review 1823, Ser. 2, Vol. 100 (1823), P. 147
13. Claudius James Rich, "Residence in Kurdistan", (Printed by Anton Hain KG, Meisenheim / Glan, West Germany; Republished in 1972 by Gregg International Limited West mead, Farnborough, Hants, England 1972), Vol. II, P. 314

SOITM

Stichting Onderzoekcentrum Iraaks Turkmeense Mensenrechten
 Kan Pelsstr. 56, 6525 VZ Nijmegen, The Netherlands
 Tel: 0031 (0)616262586 email: soitm@chello.nl
 Website: www.turkmen.nl

14. Ibid., Vol. I, P. 23
15. Ibid., P. 346
16. Gaetano Moroni, "Dizionario di erudizione storico-ecclesiastica da S. Pietro sino ai nostri giorni", Tipografia Emiliana 1846, Vol. 37, P. 36
17. Vital Cuinet, "La Turquie d'Asie : géographie administrative, statistique, descriptive et raisonnée de chaque province de l'Asie-mineure », Paris: Leroux, (1890) Vol. II, P. 851
18. Worth noting to be mentioned that the Turkmen voted against annexation of Mosul province of the Ottomans to the Iraqi Kingdom and Iraqi Flag was hoisted over the Kerkuk for the first time in 1924. This should have further influence on the underestimation of the Turkmen population size during several census or estimations which were organized between 1918 and 1924.
19. E.B. Soane, "To Mesopotamia and Kurdistan in disguise", John Murray 1926), P. 120-124
20. Cecil John Edmonds, "Kurds, Turks and Arabs": Politics, Travel and research in North-Eastern Iraq", P. 265
21. Ibid., P. 159 - 160
22. Stephen Hemsley Longrigg, "Iraq, 1900 to 1950: A Political, Social, and Economic History", Oxford University Press 1953, P. 91
23. William R. Hay, "Two Years in Kurdistan 1918 – 1920", P. 81
24. Ibid., P. 86
25. Ibid., P. 82
26. Wallace A. Lyon and David Kenneth Fieldhouse, "Kurds, Arabs and Britons: The Memoir of Wallace Lyon in Iraq 1918-44", I.B.Tauris 2002, P. 87
27. Ibid., P. 141
28. Ibid., P. 176
29. League of Nations, "Question of the Frontier between turkey and Iraq", Report submitted to the Council by the Commission instituted by the Council Resolution of September 30th, 1924, P. 38
30. Razzuq Isa, "Mukhtasar Gugrafiyat, al-Irak", Syrio-Catholic press house Baghdad 1922, P. 260 – 278
31. Taha baker al-Hashimi, "The Geography of Iraq", Dar al-Salam print house in Baghdad 1929, P. 244
32. Mohammed Hadi al-Daftari and Abdullah Hasan, "The Iraqi North", volume 1, al-Fhafiq press house Baghdad 1954, P. 220
33. Christopher Birdwood Thomson, "Air Facts and Problems" J. Murray 1927, P. 133
34. Samuel John Gurney Hoare, "A Flying Visit to the Middle East ", University Press 1925, P. 32
35. William Warfield, "The Gate of Asia: A Journey from the Persian Gulf to the Black Sea", 1916 G. P. Putnam's Sons, P. 104
36. Maria T. O'Shea, Trapped Between the Map and Reality: Geography and Perceptions of Kurdistan, Rutledge 2004, Page 38
37. Cyrus Herzl Gordon, "Lands of the Cross and Crescent, Aspects of Middle Eastern and Occidental Affairs", Ventnor Publishers 1948, P. 100
38. Martijn Theodoor Houtsma, "First Encyclopaedia of Islam, 1913-1936", Brill 2007, P. 1028
39. Liora Lukitz, "Iraq: The Search for National Identity", Rutledge 1995, P. 41
40. Wikipedia, the free encyclopedia: http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Hanna_Batatu
41. Ibid., P. 45 - 46
42. D. McDowall, "A Modern History of the Kurds", I.B.Tauris & Co Ltd Publishers 1996, London & New York, P. 3
43. Ibid., P. 117
44. Ibid., P. 118
45. Ibid., P. 305
46. Phebe Marr, "The Modern History of Iraq", P. 165
47. Edward Y. Odisho, "City of Kerkuk: No historical authenticity without multi-ethnicity". North eastern Illinois University, Chicago, IL U.S.A. <http://groups.yahoo.com/group/kerkuk/message/576>
48. Cecil John Edmonds, "Kurds, Turks and Arabs": Politics, Travel and research in North-Eastern Iraq", P. 438-9

SOITM

49. Ethics and Public Policy Center, "Iraq: Making Ethnic Peace After Saddam: A Conversation with Kaman Makita and Patrick Clawson"
http://www.eppc.org/publications/pubID.1532/pub_detail.asp
50. Erased Hurmuzlu, "Kerkük ve Türkmeneli Bölgesinin Etnik Yapısı", Kardaşlık journal, vol. 34.
51. Michael Morony, "Iraq after the Muslim Conquest", Princeton university press, Princeton, New Jersey, 1984, P. 265
52. Phebe Marr, "The Modern History of Iraq", Westview Press Inc., USA 1985, P. 9
53. Edger O'balance, "The Kurdish Revolt", page 33
54. Britannica.com, "Kurdistan", <<http://www.Britannica.com/eb/article?indxref=113781>>, 2001.
55. Sharaf al-Dīn 'Alī Yazdī, "Sharaf al-Dīn Histoire de Timur-Bec, connu sous le nom du grand Tamerlan, empereur des », A. Des Hayes 1722, P. 260 – 261
56. D. McDowall, "A Modern History of the Kurds", P. 9
57. Paul White, "Ethnic Differentiation among the Kurds: Kurmancî, Kizilbash and Zaza", http://members.tripod.com/~zaza_kirmanc/research/paul.htm
58. V. Minorsky, "The Gūrān", Bulletin of the School of Oriental and African Studies, University of London, Vol. 11, No. 1 (1943), pp. 75-103
59. Martijn Theodoor Houtsma, "First Encyclopedia of Islam, 1913-1936", Vol. IV, P. 1130
60. Al-Tabari, "the History of al-Tabari: Prophets and Patriarchs", translated by William M. Brinner, State University of New York Press, vol. II, P. 58
61. D. McDowall, "A Modern History of the Kurds", P. 13
62. Marco Polo and Hugh Murray, "The Travels of Marco Polo", Oliver & Boyd 1845, P. 38
63. Leonhard Rauwolf, "A Collection of Curious Travels and Voyages, J. Walthoe 1738, P. 161 – 162
64. Martijn Theodoor Houtsma, "First Encyclopedia of Islam, 1913-1936", Vol. IV, P. 1132
65. Le Strange, "The Lands of the Eastern Caliphate", Cambridge University Press 1930, Page 192
66. P. M. Holt, "The Cambridge History of Islam", Cambridge University Press 1970, P. 338
67. Le Strange, "The Lands of the Eastern Caliphate", , P. 86
68. Ibid., P. 92
69. M. Kunt, M. van Bruinessen and Hendrik Boeschoten, "Evliya Celebi in Diyarbakir" E.J. Brill 1988, P. 17, A deep note
70. Hakan Özoğlu, "Kurdish notables and the Ottoman state: evolving identities, competing ...", SUNY Press 2004, P. 29, 34
71. Conrad Malte-Brun et al, "Universal Geography: Or a Description of All Parts of the World, on a New ...", Wells and Lillyp 1826, 108 – 109
72. Claudius James Rich, "Residence in Kurdistan", Vol. I, P. 58
73. "Satellite Maps of 2002 is compared with maps of 2007" <http://www.turkmen.nl/photo/all-maps.pdf>
74. William Francis Ainsworth, "An Account of a Visit to the Chaldeans, inhabiting Central Kurdistan; and of an Ascent of the Peak of Rowdndiz (Tur She'ikhiwa) in the Summer of 1840", The Journal of the Royal Geographical Society 1841, P. 21
75. M. A. Clement, "Excursion dans le Kourdistan ottoman Meridional: de Kerkout a ravandouz", Le Globe by Société de géographie de Genève 1866, P. 184
76. ibid., P. 200
77. Ibid., P 199
78. Thomas Howel, "A Journal of the Passage from India", C. Forster 1789, P. 69
79. John Jackson, "Journey from India, Towards England in the Year 1797: By a Route Commonly", G. Woodfall 1799, P. 118 – 126
80. Claudius James Rich, "Residence in Kurdistan", Vol. I, P. 8
81. Ibid., P. 9
82. Ibid., Vol. I, P. 142
83. Hanna Batatu, "The old social classes and the Revolutionary Movements of Iraq", (Princeton University Press, New Jersey 1978), p. 913
84. J. Baillie Fraser, "Mesopotamia and Assyria", P. 212-213
85. Robert Mignan, "A Winter Journey Through Russia, the Caucasian Alps, and Georgia", R. Bentley 1939, P. 20 – 36
86. J. Baillie Fraser, "Travels in Koordistan", P. 196 – 197
87. Grattan Geary, "Through Asiatic Turkey", Adamant Media Corporation 2005, Vol. II, P. 1-2
88. Ibid., P. 8
89. Ibid., P. 13
90. Ibid., P. 21
91. McDowall, "A Modern History of the Kurds", P. 144
92. League of Nations, "Question of the Frontier between turkey and Iraq", Report submitted to the Council by the Commission instituted by the Council Resolution of September 30th, 1924, P. 55
93. The map of Sasanian Shahrizur: <http://members.lycos.nl/kirkukjournal/Sheh.jpg>
94. Stephen Hemesley Longrigg, "Four centuries of Modern Iraq", 1925, Page 45.

SOITM

95. Map of Shahrizur of Sasanians: <http://www.turkmentribune.com/photo/persian-shahrizur.jpg>
96. The names of mayors of Kerkuk city 1920 until 1980s:
1920s: Fattah Aga, Mecid Yakubi and Sadik Sarraf.
1930s: Abdurrahman Bakir and Baki Aga Gedik.
1940s: Habib Talabani.
1950s: Shamil Yakubi, Nureddin al-Waid, Fazil Talabani and Maruf Al-Berzenci
1960s and 1970s: Hisameddin Salihi, Mazhar Tikriti, Nazim Salihi and Ibrahim Ahmet
97. The governors (Mutasarrifs) of Kerkuk since the beginning of the 18th century were:
Zulfikar Pasha 1614, Yusuf Pasha Topal in 1699, Mustafa Pasha Ascı in 1970, Hassan Pasha al-Firari Kesici in 1701, Ibrahim Pasha Yuruk 1702, Hassan Pasha al-Ayubi 1703, Ibrahim Pasha Damad Shahryari 1704, Yusuf Pasha Topal 1706, of Ibrahim Pasha 1707, Mohammed Pasha Shahswar Zade 1710, Yusuf Pasha Cetrefil Zade 1711, Abd al-Rahman Pasha Sufi 1713, Ibrahim Pasha Yuruk 1714, Ibrahim Pasha Damad Shahryari 1714, Ahmet Pasha ibn Hassan Pasha al-Ayubi 1715, abd al-Rahman Pasha 1722, Mustafa Pasha Kara 1723, Ibrahim Pasha 1725, Ali Pasha bin Hasan Pasha Ayubi 1728, Sulayman Pasha al-Sharkasi 1732, Muhammed Pasha 1736, Hussein Pasha Kemal Zade 1743, Abd al-Rahman Pasha Sari 1746, Avsaroglu 1748, Mohammed Pasha ibn Ahmet Pasha al-Ayubi 1751, Mohammed Emin Pasha al-Jalili 1753, Esper Aga 1761, Khamis Pasha Yuruklu 1762, Sulayman ibn Emin Pasha al-Jalili 1774, Hassan Pasha 1776, Hassan Pasha 1777, Osman Kahya 1782, Halil aga (mutasellim) 1813, Fadlullah bin Weli Efendi al-Kerkukli (mutasellim) 1814, Musa Aga 1819, Osman Pasha 1821, Sulayman Aga 1823, Mohammed Pasha Ince Bayraktar 1833, Ali Riza Pasha 1837, Selim Pasha 1845, Ali Pasha Kutahiyali (wali) 1850, Takiyeddin Pasha (wali) 1857, Ismail Pasha (wali) 1859, Hassan Efendi (mutasellim) 1869, Mohammed Sabit Pasha 1871, Nafiz Pasha 1874, Asim Pasha 1877, Fevzi Pasha 1879, Munir Pasha 1879, Tasin Pasha 1882, Cemil Pasha 1882, Ahmed Rushdi efendi 1885, Abd al-Wahab Pasha 1888, Mehdi Pasha 1890, Yahya Nezhbet beg 1891, Dhiyaa Pasha 1891, Abd al-Wahab Pasha 1892, Calal Pasha 1895, Abd al-Rahman Pasha 1896, Cemil Pasha 1897, Bayram Pasha 1898, Nezhbet Pasha 1899, Osman beg 1901, Ibrahim Mukhlis beg 1903, Cemal Beg 1904, Mahmut beg 1905, Salih Selim Pasha 1906, Mohammed Selim (Awn Allah Kadhim) 1909, Nuri Efendi 1912, Fattah Pasha 1922, abd al-Mejid al-Yakubi 1924, Omer Nazmi 1927, Tasin al-Askari 1930, Abd al-Hamid Abd al-Hamid 1931, Cemil al-Rawi 1932, Husam al-Din Cuma 1936, Ahmed al-Rawi 1938, Faik Shakir 1939, Faik beg Shukur 1940, Makki Sharbati 1941, Tawfiq beg Habib 1944, Emin beg Khalis 1945, Hassan Fahmi Madfai 1946, Abd al-Jalil Berto 1947, Said al-Qazzaz 1948, Murad al-Shawi 1949, Mustafa al-Karadagi 1950, Abd al-Kafi Arif 1953, Rashid Necib 1953, Yusuf Dhiya 1955, Bashir Hamid 1956, Abd al-Jalil al-Hadithi 1958 by republic iraq
98. SOITM report, "The Turkmen reality in Iraq: Kerkuk is not Kurdish city", issued at February 3, 2006, posted on webpage: http://www.turkmen.nl/1A_soitm/Art.7-B0306.doc
99. SOITM report, "The Summary of Violation of the human Rights of the Iraqi Turkmen and Attempts to assimilate them during the Dictatorial Ba'ath Period", issued at December 33, 2003, posted on webpage: <http://members.lycos.nl/soitum/GR.pdf>
100. Hanna Batatu, "The old social classes and the Revolutionary Movements of Iraq", p. 912
101. Beshir newspaper, Students corner, no. 10, November 25, 1958, P. 12.
102. Beshir newspaper, Regional news, no. 17, January 13, 1959, P. 10.
103. Beshir newspaper, Regional news, no. 19, January 27, 1959, P. 10.
104. Claudius James Rich, "Residence in Kurdistan", Vol. I, P. 39
105. Ibid., P. 45 – 46
106. Aziz Samanci, "Al-tarikh al-siyasi li Turkman al-Iraq" - The Political History of Iraqi Turkmen - El-Saki Print House, First edition, Beirut 1999, p. 87.
107. D. McDowall, "A Modern History of the Kurds", P. 305
108. The correspondence and table of statistics dated 08.10.2007, <http://www.turkmentribune.com/photo/Kerkuk-population%202007.jpg>
109. Max van der Stoel, Special Reporter of the Commission Human Rights, "Report on the Situation of Human Rights in Iraq", E/CN.4/1994/58, p. 49
110. Guardian Unlimited, "UN warns of looming crisis in Kerkuk", <http://www.guardian.co.uk/Iraq/Story/0,,1991752,00.html>

SOITM

111. Human Rights Watch report, issued in July 2007 and posted on web page:
<http://hrw.org/reports/2007/kurdistan0707/kurdistan0707web.pdf>
112. Judit Neurink, Een getrouwe kopie van het Saddam-systeem, posted at 10-07-2007 on web page:
http://www.trouw.nl/deverdieping/overigeartikelen/article747186.ece/Een_getrouwe_kopie_van_het_Saddam-systeem?backlink=true

SOITM

Stichting Onderzoekcentrum Iraaks Turkmeense Mensenrechten
Kan Pelsstr. 56, 6525 VZ Nijmegen, The Netherlands
Tel: 0031 (0)616262586 email: soitm@chello.nl
Website: www.turkmen.nl