



Main Article—Guest Column

The Emergence and Collapse of the Iraqi Turkmen Political System under the Domination of Turkey¹

Sheth Jerjis

“For each meeting of the Iraq Turkmen authorities with authorities from the Kurdish region or from outside the country, Turkish officials did identify the Turkmen representatives who were going to attend that meeting. The Turkish officials were writing a detailed report and reading it to the Turkmen representatives who were attending the meeting ... Every Turkmen representative had to take their notes, and then the report was given to the head of the delegation to remain committed to it during the meeting ... Most of the time, we were embarrassed because those whom we met were asking questions or making suggestions that were not included in the reports given to us by the Turkish authorities, and we were looking to each other and we spoke with our eyes and we couldn’t do anything ... Those we met were making fun of us for not being able to answer them; in fact, we were like a Robot”. **A Turkmen politician**

Abstract *This study presents the emergence and the workflow of the Turkmen political system under control of Turkish authorities in the form of time periods. It examines the objectives of the Turkish policy towards the Turkmen of Iraq, and analyses the continuous deterioration of the Turkmen policies and human rights situations, which have been subjugated to the Turkish national interests and policies. This study evaluates the influences of the geopolitical changes and the accompanied*



changes in Iraq on the Turkmen of Iraq and the Turkish policies towards the Turkmen there and elsewhere. This article is a summary of the book by the Iraqi Turkmen Human Rights Research Foundation (SOITM) titled Turkey's Iraqi Turkmen Policy: Merciless Exploitation and Violation of International Law (see SOITM 2019 in the Bibliography).

Introduction

Marginalisation of the Iraqi Turkmen started with the foundation of Iraqi state. Assimilation of the Turkmen and the changing of the demography of their regions by the Ba'ath regime began in 1970. The human rights violations of Iraqi Turkmen by the Kurdish authorities began in Erbil city after the establishment of the safe haven in 1991 and in all Turkmen regions after the fall of the Ba'ath regime in 2003 and the control of the Kurdish authorities over these regions. Then the so-called Islamic State (الدولة الإسلامية)—ISIS eventually changed its name to Islamic State or IS—has subjected the Iraqi Turkmen to the aggressive violations of human rights.

The geopolitical circumstances forced the Turkmen political system to be established in exile in Turkey in 1990 and grow there for a while. Since its establishment, Turkmen political institutions and civil society organisations have remained under the domination of the Turkish authorities, which have been subjected to the Turkish national interests.

The nucleus of the Iraqi Turkmen Council (*Irak Türkmen Meclisi* – مجلس تركمان العراق) which was founded in 1994 under the title of the Turkmen Shura, was part of the project of the Turkish authorities to establish the Turkmen Front. The Turkmen Shura developed into the Iraqi Turkmen Council in 2005.



The Iraqi Turkmen Council was dissolved in May 2011 by the Turkish embassy in Baghdad. Since then, Turkey has blocked all attempts by Turkmen politicians and intellectuals to establish an independent Iraqi Turkmen Council, and still prevents it from being realised. The revolution of a group of Turkmen students and youth in 2015 and their seizure of the building of the Turkmen Council was among those attempts to establish an independent general Turkmen Council that the Turkish state put an end to in a short time.

The Turkish policy towards the Iraqi Turkmen is considered the main reason for the failure of the Iraqi Turkmen political system and the continuing violation of their human rights. The system suffered from exploitation, tyranny, sanctions and humiliation under the domination of the Turkish administration until it reached its complete collapse. The collapse of the Turkmen political system is the main cause of the miserable conditions in which the Turkmen of Iraq live today.

The human rights situation of the Turkmen of Iraq

Violations of the human rights of the Iraqi Turkmen started since the establishment of the Iraqi state in 1921. Reducing the population number of the Iraqi Turkmen by the British Mandate and the Iraqi state to 2% during the establishment of the Iraqi Kingdom after WWI, through misleading estimations and censuses, made the large Iraqi Turkmen population unnoticed by the regional and international communities. This can be considered one of the main factors which has contributed to continued human rights violations of the Iraqi Turkmen—and the lack of attention by the Western media and relevant organisations.



Iraqi Turkmen were deprived of education in their mother tongue (SOITM Foundation 2009), their rise to high positions in the state became difficult, they were prevented from establishing cultural and political institutions—and they were exposed to the massacre of July 1959 (Batatu 1978).

After 1970 during the period of the Ba'ath regime, the Turkmen were subjected to fierce assimilation policies and human rights violations—including confiscation of hundreds of thousands hectares of Turkmen lands, deportation of Turkmen and bringing of Arabs to settle in Turkmen regions, Turkmen being forced to change their ethnicity to Arab, all of this leading to the change of the demography of Turkmen regions (Al-Samanci 1999: 209-216; SOITM Foundation 2013).

Violations of the Iraqi Turkmen human rights by the Kurdish authorities began in the city of Erbil after the first Gulf War in 1991 and in all the Northern provinces and Diyala province after the fall of the Ba'ath regime in 2003 (Iraqi Turkmen Doctors Association 2015; European Parliament resolution 2013; Institute for International Law & Human rights 2013; ICG 2018; MRGI 2017):

- In the city of Erbil and Kifri:
 - The historical Turkmen neighbourhoods were evacuated to disperse their concentration and facilitate their absorption (information taken from an anonymous source within the Kurdish regional authorities; the source's identity remains anonymous so as to safeguard his/her safety).
 - Turkmen have been repressed politically, culturally, and educationally (Lalani 2010).
- After the fall of the Ba'ath regime in 2003, the Turkmen suffered



under the control of the Kurdish parties and the Peshmerga (the military forces of the autonomous Kurdistan Region of Iraq) and in almost all Turkmen areas, especially in the Kirkuk province and the Tuz Khurmatu district. For example:

- o Hundreds of assassinations, kidnappings, arbitrary arrests, house raids and theft of their contents took place (SOITM Foundation 2017; see photo No.1 in the Appendix);
- o Tens of thousands of Kurdish families were brought and settled in Turkmen areas;
- o The Kurds controlled the economy in the Turkmen regions and marginalised the Turkmen in administration.

The so-called Islamic State or IS occupied vast Turkmen regions (2014–2017) in all the Northern provinces of Iraq, where most of the Turkmen were and still mainly followers of the Shia branch of Islam. Some Turkmen regions were liberated in the space of several months; other regions remained under IS rule until its defeat in Iraq. Other Turkmen regions (villages and towns) remained on the border of battlelines between IS and Iraqi forces, which were subjected continuously to all types of attacks:

- In the Nineveh governorate: Tal Afar district, Ayadiyah and Mahalabiya sub-districts, and in the Mosul city. A large number of villages in the Nineveh Plain, the Mosul central district and the district of Sinjar;
- In the west of the Kerkuk province: Bashir sub-district was occupied, and the districts of Tawuq and the sub-district of Taza Khurmatu remained on the border of battle, which were subjected to continuous attacks with all kinds of weapons. Taza Khurmatu was attacked even with chemical weapons;

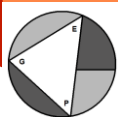


- In the province of Salah al-Din: IS occupied the western and northern parts of the district of Tuz Khurmatu almost completely (the liberation was gradual; different regions remained under the control of IS for different periods of time), and the sub-district of Amerli was besieged for more than a month. The city of Tuz Khurmatu remained within the range of IS's fire, and suffered hugely from all types of attacks;
- The Turkmen are everywhere in the province of Diyala. IS occupied the Turkmen regions of Qara Tepe, Saadiya (Kizil Rabat) Jalawla (Qara Khan) and Mansuriyah (Adana Koy) sub-districts, while Qazaniyah remained on the border of battlelines between the IS and Iraqi forces under threat.

Hundreds of thousands of Shia Turkmen in these Turkmen regions were subjected to ethnic cleansing (HRW 2015):

- Men were killed and buried in collective graves and women were taken captives in Telafer district and in the villages of district of Tuz Khurmatu and were sold in slave markets;
- Tens of thousands of Turkmen families were displaced, a large part of them could still not return to their homes until today;
- Hundreds of houses and entire neighbourhoods in some Turkmen regions were demolished, especially in Amerli sub-district and in many villages of Tuz Khurmatu.

The following sections of this study present the emergence and the workflow of the Turkmen political system under control of Turkish authorities in the form of time periods. In these sections, this study examines the objectives of the Turkish policy towards the Turkmen of Iraq, and analyses the continuous deterioration of the Turkmen policies



and human rights situations, which have been subjugated to the Turkish national interests and policies. The following sections also evaluate the influences of the geopolitical changes and the accompanied changes in Iraq on the Turkmen of Iraq—and particularly the consequent Turkish policies towards the Turkmen there and elsewhere.

Before the establishment of the Turkmen Front

Turkey did nothing for the Turkmen of Iraq before 1990, when they were subjected to the most aggressive human rights violations by the Ba'ath regime. Numerous Turkmen intellectuals and academics lived in Turkey at that time. This number increased to hundreds of thousands during and after the Iraq-Iran War in 1980-88. Turkey did not allow them to establish political parties.

After the Ba'ath regime invaded Kuwait in August 1990, the activities of all sections of the Iraqi opposition abroad increased dramatically. They began organising big congresses and holding important meetings with the ministries of foreign affairs and other government departments in foreign countries, as if representing the Iraqi government in exile. In order to gain a closer look and knowledge of the progress at work in the Iraqi opposition, Turkey allowed Iraqi Turkmen to establish a political party in Turkey.

The Iraqi National Turkmen Party (INTP; *Irak Milli Türkmen Partisi*, IMTP – الحزب الوطني التركماني العراقي) was founded at the turn of 1991, a few months before the first congress of the Iraqi opposition in Beirut on March 11, 1991. The INTP or National Turkmen Party in short became a hope for the Turkmen people, who had been deprived of political



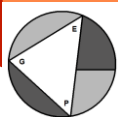
activities for a century and had been subjected to all kinds of human rights violations. The Turkmen people, with its academics, high-ranking soldiers, writers and opinion leaders, and all other segments, supported and embraced the National Turkmen Party. The INTP represented the Iraq Turkmen in the conferences of the Iraqi opposition and in the meetings with governments.

A few months after the establishment of the National Turkmen Party, a group of Turkmen members of the Iraqi al-Dawa Party established the Islamic Union of Iraqi Turkmen (*Irak Türkmenleri İslam Birliği* – الاتحاد الإسلامي لتركمان العراق) on March 2, 1991. The Islamic Union was beyond the control of Turkey and was thus marginalised by its government.

Ahmad Gunash founded the third Turkmen party in late 1991, which was called the Turkmen Union Party (*Türkmen Birlik Partisi* – حزب التركماني). The Turkmen Union Party was the second Turkmen party instituted beyond the control of the Turkish authorities. The Turkish authorities handed the party to Riyaz Sarikahya in 1993 and its name was changed to Turkmeneli party (*Türkmeneli Partisi* – تورکمن ايلي بارتيسي) in 1996.

The National Turkmen Party remained the major representative of the Iraqi Turkmen among the Iraqi opposition groups. The Iraqi opposition included major Arabic and Kurdish political groups, for example:

- Shia Islamist Groups, such as the al-Dawa Party and Supreme Council of the Islamic Revolution which includes several other parties;
- Iraqi Kurdistan Front, such as the Kurdistan Democratic Party, and the Patriotic Union of Kurdistan;
- Sunni Islamic groups, such as the Iraqi Islamic Party and different



Kurdish Islamic parties;

- Conservative groups, such as the Iraqi National Congress and the Iraqi National Accord Movement
- National Assyrian Party.

Holding a good position among the major Iraqi opposition groups in order to represent the third largest component of the Iraqi population (European Parliament resolution 2013/2562), had required intense professional efforts from the National Turkmen Party. With the constant exacerbation of the Iraqi problem—i.e. the human rights violations of mainly minorities during the 1970s Iraq-Iran War of the 1980s, the first Gulf War and economic embargo during the 1990s, etcetera—the works and activities of the Iraqi opposition increased steadily in the 1990s.

Congresses were held in different countries, such as Lebanon, Saudi Arabia, Iran, Austria, the United Kingdom and the United States. The opposition was contacting governments of the United States, European countries, and Arab countries, especially the Gulf States, to get political support and establish contacts. The expenses and expenditures of the National Turkmen Party had increased. The National Turkmen Party should have participated in all those activities, which required intensive professional political efforts and important financial sources.

Turkmen organisations faced difficulties in self-financing for various reasons:

- The Iraqi Turkmen were economically in dire strait, as they had been subjected to assimilation policies for decades;
- The lack of political culture in the Turkmen community led to a lack of conscious solidarity with the Turkmen institutions;



- The Turkmen institutions were unable to prove themselves in order to obtain a good popular base;
- It was difficult to obtain financial support from inside Iraq before 2003, as the vast majority of the Turkmen people lived inside Iraq and the Turkmen institutions were situated outside Iraq;
- The establishment and remaining of Turkmen organisations under the control of the Turkish authorities and forcing the Turkmen organisations to rely on Turkish funding only, which were not routinely granted and subject to the will of the Turkish managers and Turkish national policy.

As the politicians of the National Turkmen Party gained in experience and developed their relations with foreign countries, which were interested in the Iraqi problem, the party's chance of obtaining funding from sources other than Turkey increased.

However, any participation of the Turkmen politicians in the frequent meetings outside Turkey required the approval of the Turkish authorities (Ministry and Intelligence). After approval, financial support was provided and upon return a report was required. The approval of the Turkish authorities for financial support was not routine. There were very important cases where approval was not obtained. For example, Turkey banned the National Turkmen Party from participating in meetings to distribute the revenues of the Oil-for-Food program (SOITM Foundation 2019: 68-71).

Over time, the Turkish Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Intelligence organisations increased dictating its policies to the leaders of the National Turkmen Party. After Turkmen politicians got tired of the

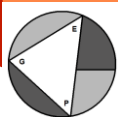


Turkish government's continued policies to keep control over them and the Party, they began to evade the Turkish authorities so as to avoid their interference in the decision-making process of the party. When Turkish authorities realised that they could no longer control the Turkmen politicians of National Turkmen Party, they began to oppose and undermine the leaders and founders of the Party, by cutting funding, obstructing activities and adopting the establishment of the Turkmen Front so as to control completely the Turkmen political system.

Establishment of the Iraqi Turkmen Front

The discussion by Turkish officials and some Turkmen politicians of subjugating Turkmen politicians, Turkmen political organisations and civil society organisations under the umbrella of a single institution began more than a year before the establishment of the Iraqi Turkmen Front (ITF; *Irak Türkmen Cephesi* – الجبهة التركمانية العراقية) in early 1994. Through this project, Turkey aimed to prevent any Turkmen activity or policy that contradicts Turkish national policies, redlines and interests, even if it conflicts with the most important Turkmen national interests.

In mid-1994, the Turkish Ministry of Foreign Affairs and the Turkish Intelligence Organisation began to establish the Turkmen Front (even though this Front is actually a Turkish Turkmen Front, I prefer to use the term Turkmen Front only). The world-renowned Turkmen academic Ihsan Dogramaci was persuaded by a high-ranking Turkish politician to oversee the establishment and administration of the Turkmen Front. According to some Turkmen politicians, the Turkish politician who



convinced Dogramaci to accept the mission was the Turkish Prime Minister Suleyman Demirel.

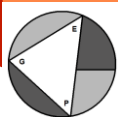
Dogramaci, along with some Turkmen academics, founded an institution in name only called “Turkmen Shura” to establish the Turkmen Front. The Turkmen Shura was not officially registered, did not have a statute, did not have regular meetings and never met with its full body of members (SOITM Foundation 2019: 129-133). On February 5, 1995, a declaration was published and on April 24, 1995, the establishment of the Turkmen Front was announced.

During the establishment of the Turkmen Front, the Turkish authorities excluded all the Turkmen politicians and organisations which were beyond the control of Turkish authorities (Al-Samanci 1999: 230; Jerjis 2020). For example, these included Shia politicians, who held many senior leadership positions in the large Iraqi Shiite parties, and the Islamic Union of Iraqi Turkmen. The establishment of the Turkmen Front was similar to the establishment of a Turkish governmental department:

- The interviews for the appointment of politicians and staff of the Turkmen Front were conducted by officials of the Turkish Ministry of Foreign Affairs and the Intelligence Organisation;
- Monthly salaries were allocated in US Dollars to the staff.

Neither the requirements of that period nor the political situation of the Iraqi Turkmen required the establishment of an umbrella organisation. The status and circumstances of the five Turkmen institutions that were announced to have joined the Turkmen Front were as follows:

- There were only two Turkmen parties;



- The largest Turkmen party, the National Turkmen Party opposed the project and refused to join it; thus in a meeting of Turkish intelligence with Turkmen politicians towards the end of 1995, a Turkish intelligence staff expelled the president of the National Turkmen Party, Muzaffer Arslan, from the meeting when he criticised the project of the Turkmen Front;
- The Iraqi Turks' cultural and solidarity association has been a civil society organisation that already has been subjected to the Turkish stipulations since its establishment in 1959;
- The Turkmen Brotherhood Club has been not a political organisation but a civil society institution and refused to join to the Turkmen Front.

As preparations for the establishment of the Iraqi Turkmen Front on April 24, 1995, and under the control of Turkish authorities:

- The Turkmen Independents Movement (*Türkmen Bağımsızlar Hareketi* – حركة التركمان المستقلين) was established towards the end of 1994, as part of the project;
- The leaders of the National Turkmen Party were neutralised and later on expelled in order to include the party under the umbrella of the Turkmen Front;
- The administrators of the Turkmen Brotherhood Club (*Türkmen Kardeşlik Kulübü* – نادي الإخاء التركماني) – Erbil branch could not be convinced to be included under the umbrella of the Turkmen Front. Despite this, the Club's name was included as being one of the founders of the Turkmen Front.

By establishing the Turkmen Front, Turkey completely controlled the



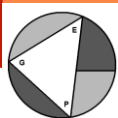
Iraqi Turkmen political system. Turkish authorities obliged the Turkmen politicians and political and civil society organisations, who were put under the umbrella of the Turkmen Front, not to receive any kind of funding from any source other than that allocated by Turkish government.

By controlling the funding, Turkey could control the activities of the Turkmen politicians and the Turkmen organisations as well. By this policy, Turkey deprived the Iraqi Turkmen from Azerbaijani funding and the funding of other kin countries. Thus, Turkey has been able to redesign the Turkmen political map in such a manner as to administer directly the Turkmen political system.

Failure of the Iraqi Turkmen Front

The eventual functioning of the Turkmen Front, which was established forcibly by Turkish officials, was not as the Turkish founder authorities desired and anticipated. There were continuous problems and daily disputes, especially in the meetings of the executive committee of the Front.

On December 19, 1995, an armed conflict broke out between the leaders of the Turkmen Front, which resulted in killing one person and wounding one other. Rivalries and conflicts between the centres of power in the Turkish administration—the military and intelligence services—were the main factor behind the major differences and violent confrontations between the politicians of the Turkmen Front.



What was happening within the Turkmen Front was not of any real importance to the Turkish authorities. The true importance for Turkey was to maintain:

- Control over the activities of the Turkmen Front and its policies and external relations;
- Control over the issues related to minorities not to be raised, as these issues constitute a problem for Turkey;
- Making sure that the Turkish redlines related to Iraq, particularly the north of that country, were not to be violated.

On the other hand, the Turkmen of Iraq are proud of their ethnic identity and demand its recognition, and argue for their cultural and political rights and education in their mother language.

Members of the executive committee of the National Turkmen Party from Erbil had already joined the Turkmen Front against the will of their leaders. The National Turkmen Party was deprived of financial and political support from Turkey. Those who joined the Turkmen Front got the salaries. The leadership of the National Turkmen Party dismissed its members who joined the Front.

About a year after the establishment of the Turkmen Front, members of the National Turkmen Party, who were dismissed from their party, left willingly the Turkmen Front due to the uselessness of the Turkmen Front for the Iraqi Turkmen and continuous disputes in the executive committee of the Turkmen Front.

The restrictions imposed by the Turkish authorities on the National Turkmen Party and its leaders led to restrictions of the party's activities



activities and of its participation with the Iraqi opposition in international venues. This happened when the National Turkmen Party could not participate in several meetings of the Iraqi opposition in England and America.

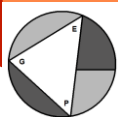
For example, the National Turkmen Party was prevented to participate in the meetings of distribution of revenue of the Oil-for-food program in the United States. The director of the anti-terrorism department in the Turkish Intelligence organisation requested from Ahmed Chalabi, one of the participants in organising the meetings from the Iraqi side, to remove the Turkmen from the list of attendees at the conference in the U.S. in early 1996.

Thus, Turkey had deprived the Turkmen of Iraq from a monthly income estimated at millions of US Dollars, while the Kurdish parties received 120 million US Dollars a monthly share from revenue of the Oil-for-food program (SOITM Foundation 2019: 68-71).

In early 1996, its president, Turhan Ketene, left the Turkmen Front. Thus, almost a year after its establishment, the Turkmen Front had almost completely failed as an organisation.

Reconstruction of a fully kneeled Turkmen Front by redesigning Turkmen organisations

By early 1996, when the Turkmen Front failed almost completely, the National Turkmen Party had almost completely collapsed. As a result of the seeds of division were sowed in the party leadership, due to the



establishment of a group that supported the project of establishing the Turkmen Front and mainly due to limiting the activities of the party by Turkish authorities and by cutting off the party's funding.

Turkish intelligence prepared its plan, possibly in March 1996, to pave the way for the re-establishment of the Turkmen Front and subjugate the Turkmen politicians and organisations completely to the Turkish authorities. A member of the executive committee of the National Turkmen Party, Mustafa Kemal Yaychili, a Turkmen politician affiliated to Turkey, had been assigned to implement the plan. In mid-1996, Yaychili appeared in the city of Erbil to achieve the following goals:

- Removing Turkmen politicians who were not subservient to the Turkish authorities, especially within the framework of the establishment of the Turkmen Front, by:
 - Organising of fake second congress of the National Turkmen Party;
 - Splitting the unity of the executive committee of the Turkmen Brotherhood Club (an official civil society organisation);
- Dissolution of the Turkmen Independents Movement.

Yaychili failed to convince the members of the National Turkmen Party from Erbil city, who joined the Turkmen Front against the will of the party leadership and then left the Turkmen Front as well. In the meantime they refused to work under the previous administrative system. They insisted on changing the party's working style. The idea of Yaychili was to rebuild the party and subjugate it to the Turkmen Front.

Yaychili organised the fake second congress of the National Turkmen Party, appointing himself the president, and changing nearly all members of the executive committee. At the same time, Yaychili was



able to create a rift in the executive committee of the Turkmen Brotherhood Club. This led to the resignation of the president of the club along with a group of members of the executive committee on September 24, 1996.

The group, which Yaychili supported, consequently dominated the Turkmen Brotherhood Club. The head of the latter group, Wadad Arsalan, who became the president of the Club, was elected as a vice for Yaychili, when Yaychili became the president of the National Turkmen Party by the fake congress. Later on, the way was paved for Arsalan to become the second president of the Turkmen Front.

The Turkish Army replaces Turkish Intelligence in the administration of the Iraqi Turkmen political system

In the midst of the intelligence operation to completely subjugate the Turkmen political system to the Turkish authorities, in accordance with an agreement with Masoud Barzani, the leader of the Kurdistan Democratic party (KDP), the Iraqi Army entered Erbil city on August 31, 1996, to change the governor of Erbil province from Patriotic Union of Kurdistan (PUK), the party led by Barzani's main rival Jalal Talabani, to Barzani's party. The Iraqi Army attacked the headquarters of the Turkmen Front and the headquarters of the Turkmen parties and civil society organisations:

- All the contents of the Turkmen institutions were either destroyed or stolen;
- Iraqi soldiers kidnapped fifty-nine Turkmen politicians and workers from these institutions;



- The kidnapped people disappeared and nothing was heard from them to this day.

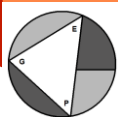
Some Turkmen leaders working directly under the command of Turkish officials left Arbil city shortly before the attack. Some Turkmen politicians who survived this attack claim that Turkey knew about the attack and did not warn other Turkmen politicians in time. The Turkmen Front, which meant almost the whole Turkmen political system, had almost totally disintegrated after these events.

The Turkish Army at this stage started to take over the Turkmen dossier from the Turkish intelligence organisation, so as to exclusively administer the Turkmen political system. A few weeks after the Iraqi Army left Erbil, some Turkmen politicians who were members of the Turkmen parties and institutions were called by the Turkish Army office in Erbil city. They were informed that the Turkish Army had become responsible for managing the Turkmen political system.

In the context of rebuilding the Turkmen Front, the Turkish Army started to dissolve the Turkmen Independents Movement, while a member of the Movement's executive committee managed to persuade the Turkish Army to change its mind:

- The Movement's congress was organised on September 3, 1997;
- The head of the Movement and most of the members of the executive committee were replaced by others.

As for the Turkmeneli Party, the party's president, Riyad Sarikhaya, was always behaving in the context of the Turkish policies, and accepted the project of establishing the Turkmen Front from the beginning. Thus, all



three Turkmen parties were brought into line to rebuild the Turkmen Front: the National Turkmen Party, the Turkmen Independents Movement and the Turkmeneli party. As the largest and oldest Iraqi Turkmen civil society organisation, the Turkmen Brotherhood Club – Erbil branch had also been subjugated.

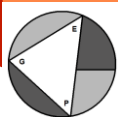
To show the Turkmen Front as supposedly independent and legitimate, the fake First Turkmen Congress was held between September 17 and 18, 1997. It was under the full control of the Turkish Army. Each of the following was elected:

- President and members of the executive committee of the Turkmen Front;
- The Turkmen Shura was rebuilt with thirty members.

Accordingly, the Turkish authorities had rebuilt the Turkmen Front in a manner similar to moving checkers.

Use of intimidation, punishment and media defamation against the Turkmen politicians and organisations

“However, all that took place under the direct domination of Turkey, either under the control of the Turkish intelligence or the generals of the Turkish Army. When one of the officials of the Iraqi Turkmen Front disobeyed their orders, they expelled and threatened him by various means. Sometimes they threatened some of the people to kidnap his daughter or his son”. **A Turkmen politician**



Intimidations and punishments

By this stage the Turkish authorities had expelled from the Turkmen Front any Turkmen politician or institution who refused to obey the orders of the Turkish authorities or continue to oppose or criticise the Turkish administration. Turkey marginalised and exerted pressure on any Turkmen politician or Turkmen organisation working outside or against Turkish policies, except the Turkmen Shia organisations, which were marginalised at any rate.

Reducing or cutting off financial support from the Turkmen organisations that Turkey provides, has been one way employed by the latter to bring them to their knees. It must be taken in consideration that these organisations are prohibited from receiving financial support from any source other than Turkey. Intimidation and kidnapping of Turkmen politicians who continue to oppose Turkish policies towards Turkmen continued unabated—including threatening to kidnap the sons or daughters of some Turkmen politicians.

Defamation by the media

In April 1996, the Turkish journal *Nokta* published an article on its page 56 of its weekly issue, entitled “Clean hands operation in Iraqi Policy: National Turkmen Party under the spotlight” insulting the leaders of the National Turkmen Party who rejected the project of the Turkmen Front of the Turkish Intelligence Organisation (see Photos Nos. 2 & 3 in the Appendix). The same journal was used by a power centre in the Turkish government, to defame Professor Ihsan Dogramaci, who supervised the



establishment of the Turkmen Front on the recommendation of the Turkish government.

The article in question included photos of the National Turkmen Party leaders, with the exception of the president of the Turkmeneli Party, Riyaz Sarikhaya, who supported the Turkmen Front project. Its defaming of the Turkmen leaders lacked the most basic moral values and were downright insulting to the Turkmen of Iraq.

These Turkmen leaders were and are still known for their integrity by the Turkmen inside Iraq and abroad. The article misleadingly fuddled information and incidents to make insulting and unfounded accusations to provoke the Turkmen people and the Turks against the targeted Turkmen leaders who rejected the Turkmen Front project. Therefore the article:

- Praises Riyaz SariKahya, and considers him the person who brought the president of the National Turkmen Party, Muzaffar Arslan, into the political arena and made him gain popularity among the Turkmen;
- Insults one of the National Turkmen party's leaders, Hassan Ozmen, calling him "The blind Hassan". Claims that he was a servant in the office of the Turkmen leader Iz al-Din Qojawa, and defames him by stating that Qojawa used to beat him constantly, additionally accusing Ozmen of collaborating with the Syrian intelligence and linking his rise in the party to his relation with the party's president, Muzaffar Arslan;
- Attacks Dr. Aydin Beyatli and claims that he has been a Ba'athist and 'Saddamist', and that, with the support of Ozmen, he rose in the party;
- Insults another member of the party leadership, Yasar Imamoglu, by accusing him that he sold his property in the city of Kirkuk to the Kurds,



and was involved in arms trade;

- Accuses Muzaffer Arslan of:
 - Marginalising the Turkmen politicians who were not members of the National Turkmen Party;
 - Expelling some others from the party;
 - Making many Turkmen politicians to leave the political arena.
- Distorts the facts and states that Arslan joined the Turkmen Front under pressure from the popular base, though it is well known that the National Turkmen Party joined the Turkmen Front under pressure from Turkish Intelligence; and Arslan never embraced the Turkmen Front project;
- Accuses all party leaders who oppose the Turkmen Front project of misappropriating funds without providing any convincing evidence;
- Arbitrarily accuses Arslan of spending 180,000 US Dollars from the budget of the Turkmen Front, even though Arslan was actually expelled from his party due to his refusal of the project of Turkmen Front and had no role whatsoever in the establishment and management of the Turkmen Front.

Management of the Turkmen political system by Turkish Army alone with an Iron fist (1997 – 2008)

“A minor Turkish employee was dictating to Turkmen politicians decisions that were negatively affecting the fate of Turkmen in Iraq. Turkey did not allow the Turkmen, even once, to make their own decisions”. **A Turkmen politician**



With the re-establishment of the Turkmen Front and its submission to the offices of the Turkish Army, the control of the Turkish authorities over the Turkmen organisations, and thus over the Turkmen community, became absolute. The chosen Turkmen politicians and officials were those who could easily be subordinated to the Turkish authorities and their national policies, which aimed to:

- Exploit the Turkmen to serve the Turkish national interests;
- Suppress the Turkmen struggle for their rights as a minority, due to the negative Turkish policy towards its own minorities.

The fact that the Turkish management of the Turkmen political system is illegal by its nature, as it falls outside the sovereign authority field of the Turkish government and submitted it to a closed military administration. Consequently, the sufficient proper follow-up and monitoring of the administration of the Turkmen political system by Turkish authorities was not possible in the sense of good and fair management and fair and impartial use of its financing.

The main features of the policy of the Turkish administration were as follows:

- Any external contact or any activities should be decided and supervised by the Turkish authorities;
- Complete submission to the Turkish red lines that dictated:
 - o No recognition of a federal Iraqi state; accordingly, no recognition of the Kurdish regional government;
 - o Not using the word Kurdistan;
 - o Not dealing with the Kurdish regional government;
- In important cases, the Turkish authorities were using other



Turkmen loyal to them, thereby marginalising the politicians and leaders of the Turkmen Front. As happened in the meetings of the Iraqi opposition:

- o Turkey imposed Mustafa Ziyai to participate in New York meetings in October 1999 (SOITM Foundation 2019: 162-163);
- o Ziyai was secretly sent to attend the meetings of the Iraqi opposition in London during December 14-15, 2002 (Al-Samanchi 2015).

Some of the many major events of this period were as follows:

- Under dictation of this Turkish policy on Turkmen towards the Kurds, Turkmen politicians and institutions have been subjected to many attacks by the Peshmerga and were marginalised by the Kurdish administration in every field;
- A petty Turkish staff official had prevented the Iraqi Turkmen to participate in the cabinet of the Kurdish region in 2000, after the Turkmen politicians got a reasonable share in the mentioned government (see photo No.4 in the Appendix);
- Any financial expenses or expenditures necessitated the signature of the head of the Turkmen Front. As a result:
 - o The second president of the Turkmen Front, Wadad Arslan, resigned in 2000, accusing the Turkish managers of interference and manipulation of the Turkmen Front's finance. After his resignation, Arslan, along with a large group of staff members left the Turkmen Front, and started working with the Kurdish parties;
 - o The fourth president of the Turkmen Front, Faruk Abdullah, refused to sign the checks of tens of thousands of US Dollars brought by the Turkish managers claiming that they were expenditures of the Front. Abdullah was dismissed from the presidency on April 24, 2005 at the



General Turkmen Congress held one year before its normal date;

- o The fifth president of the Turkmen Front, Saad al-Din Ergec, subjugated himself utterly to the Turkish military authorities, and was elected for the second time as president of the Turkmen Front in 2008 by manipulated fifth General Turkmen Congress. Ergec's period was known for misusing his powers and embezzling large sums of money. According to the Turkmen politician Hassan Ozmen, Ergec embezzled no less than five million US Dollars. If this has been Ergec's share, then what has been the share of the Turkish managers of the Turkmen Front? The rapid enrichment of Turkish Army officers who were running the Turkmen political system was the talk of some Turkmen politicians during that period.

- Turkey prevented Iraqi Turkmen from accepting American terms to participate in the post-Ba'ath regime political process. This led to the marginalisation of the Iraqi Turkmen in this political process, after the fall of the Ba'ath regime in 2003.

- That year, the headquarters of the Turkmen Front was moved from Erbil to Kirkuk, without making an agreement with the Turkmen of Erbil. This caused a large number of Turkmen from Erbil to leave the Turkmen Front to work with the Kurdish authorities;

- The Turkmeneli Party left the Turkmen Front in 2005;

- The Erbil branch of the Turkmen Front:

- o Was the second largest Turkmen political community;

- o Left the Turkmen Front in 2005;

- o Accused the Turkmen Front of being an instrument in the hands of Turkey;

- o Seized all the buildings of the Turkmen Front in Erbil, and started to cooperate with the Kurdish parties.



- The president of the Turkmen Front, Saad al-Din Ergec, refused in 2007 a constant financial support of Azerbaijan's government to the Iraqi Turkmen. Ergec could not have taken this a decision without orders from the Turkish Army;
- Regarding the Iraq elections:
 - The Turkmen failed to win significant votes and seats in all Iraqi elections since 2003; thus they sent very few deputies to parliament despite their large population;
 - Turkmen candidates for the Iraqi elections were selected by the Turkish Embassy in line with Turkish national interests;
 - The Turkish military office in Erbil obstructed an electoral agreement of the Turkmen Front in the parliamentary elections in December 2005, causing the Turkmen to lose more than ten representatives.
- After the fall of Ba'ath regime in 2003, as American-Turkish relations deteriorated, the Turkmen were marginalised in the formation of government in Baghdad:
 - Songul Cabuk represented the Turkmen in the first post-Saddam Governing Council. She was a Turkmen woman with no political experience whatsoever;
 - A Turkmen academician, Rashad Mandan Omar, without any political experience, was appointed as a minister in the first cabinet after the fall of Ba'ath regime.

In this period (1997–2008), the aggressive violations of Turkmen human rights was continuing and threatening the Turkmen existence in Iraq. Even though all the sections of the Turkmen community had to extend great efforts and activities, the Turkish authorities tied the hands of the Turkmen politicians.

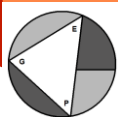


It was impossible to establish a Turkmen political institution outside Turkish control. Even if it had been possible, it would have been quite easy for the Turkish state and its intelligence services to oppose and undermine it. It would have been either dissolved as happened with the Turkmen People's Party, or remained an insignificant movement as happened with the Turkmen Decision Party.

The Turkish Army humiliates the Turkmen politicians, hence the Turkmen people (July 2008 – May 2011)

No matter how unscrupulous a people's politician and intellectual may be, it is impossible to accept and maintain such a treacherous and humiliating administrative system. On February 22, 2008, part one of SOITM Foundation's series of articles under the title "Turkey's Iraqi Turkmen Policy" was completed. The article was sent to some Turkmen intellectuals and Turkish officials. The subtitle of the article was, "The unconstructive role of the Iraqi Turkmen Front within the Turkmen Policy" (SOITM Foundation 2019: 27-32). The article criticised the Turkmen Front system and workflow without commenting on the negative role of the Turkish state.

The cooperation of the president of the Turkmen Front, Saad al-Din Ergec, with the Turkish managers from the Turkish Army and years of closed military administration paved the way for the blatant manipulation of the financial resources of the Turkmen Front. As a result, the share of the branches of the Turkmen Front and the parties affiliated to the Front in the budget has been seriously reduced.



Additionally, the president of the Turkmen Front was ruling the Front by an iron fist. The heads of the branches of the Turkmen Front and the presidents of the affiliated parties, who were forming the executive committee of the Turkmen Front, revolted against the president of the Front, and issued a decision to dismiss him in May 2008.

The retribution of the Turkish Army was harsh and swift; it effectively redesigned the entire Iraqi Turkmen political system. First of all, the Turkish military authorities refused the dismissal of the president of the Turkmen Front loyal to them. In response, the Fifth General Turkmen Congress was organised under the hegemony of the Turkish Army, on July 13 and 14, 2008.

Obviously all the stages of the congress were manipulated and rigged. The heads of the branches of the Turkmen Front were contained and subjugated. All the parties under the roof of the Turkmen Front were expelled from the Front. Elections were arranged in a manner whereby Ergec could be re-elected as President of the Turkmen Front. By forged elections, the members of the Turkmen Council were determined. No rule was used in the elections other than the rule of obedience to the Turkish authorities. The Turkmen Front was transformed into a political party with the same name.

The Turkmen Justice Party (*Türkmen Adalet Partisi* – حزب العدالة التركماني) was one of the marginalised and expelled parties at the Fifth General Turkmen Congress. The Turkmen Justice Party is a party with Muslim Brotherhood ideology, as AKP of R. T. Erdogan, leader of the Justice and Development Party (*Adalet ve Kalkınma Partisi*, AKP – حزب العدالة والتنمية). This means that the one which ran the Turkmen Front at that



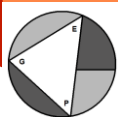
period was still the Turkish Army alone. After this congress, Turkey ceased organising general Turkmen Congresses that were held formally every three years to elect the leading cadres of the Turkmen political system.

In 2010, all members of the Baghdad branch of the Turkmen Front were expelled due to a verbal altercation between the head of the branch and Ergec, the former president of the Turkmen Front.

To unify Turkmen institutions and create a climate for joint action, the Turkmeneli Party and a number of Shiite Turkmen politicians organised a conference in Baghdad in June 2009. The Iraqi Prime Minister attended the conference. The project was undermined by the Turkish embassy in Baghdad, which contacted many Turkmen politicians and intellectuals and warned them not to participate in the conference.

This period (2008–2011) was one of the darkest periods in the history of the Turkmen of Iraq, a totally perverted, usurped Turkmen political system with:

- All Turkmen regions being controlled by Kurdish parties, security forces and Peshmerga;
- Turkmen being marginalised in the administrations of all their regions;
- Kurdish families being deliberately brought and settled in Turkmen regions;
- Turkmen being subjected to arbitrary detentions, kidnappings, assassinations and all kinds of violence including bombings;
- The Iraqi elections being organised under the absolute control of the Kurdish parties, Kurdish security forces and the Peshmerga. Notably,



practically all Kurdish politicians and intellectuals claim the ownership of almost all Turkmen regions—the regions were even included in the Kurdish constitution.

The activities of the Turkmen political system at this stage (2008–2011) were limited to:

- Occasional press releases from the Turkmen Front about daily events;
- Occasional declarations of the president of the Turkmen Front about the daily events;
- Participation in ceremonies and memorial anniversaries, such as:
 - o Martyrs day celebrations;
 - o Anniversary celebrations of Turkmen national days and important occasions of the Turkmen Front;
 - o Participation of Turkmen Front politicians in the celebrations by the Turkish embassy or consulate of Turkish national days.

The two periods of the Turkmen Front under Ergec's presidency (2005–2008 & 2008–2011) were characterised by corruptions, persistent neglect of the branches of the Front and almost complete absence of genuine Turkmen political activities.

Dwarfing the Turkmen political system and dissolving of the Turkmen Council (May 2011 – July 2016)

Turkey's President R. T. Erdogan—in cooperation with his erstwhile ally yet eventual enemy Muhammed Fethullah Gulen ²—liquidated a large number of generals and other high-ranking officers from the Turkish



Army beginning in 2005. In subsequent years, Erdogan's popularity reached its peak, receiving 50% of the vote in the 2011 general elections. The disagreements between Erdogan and Gulen began towards the end of the first decade of the 21st century, which surfaced when Jurists loyal to Gulen summoned the head of Erdogan's National Intelligence Service on 7 February 2012.

The second part of the series of articles by the SOITM Foundation was delayed by three years, for fear of its negative impact on Turkmen politics and of the Turkish authorities' retaliation against Turkmen politics. Turkey's misuse of the Turkmen political system continued and the difficulties of the Turkmen people increased.

It was written on February 27, 2013, with a subtitle "The Turkmen of Iraq are victims of subordination and deteriorated national politics" (SOITM Foundation 2019: 33-42). The article criticised Turkey's abuse of the Turkmen political system. This part of the series had been distributed to the same persons and addresses as the first part.

In May 2011, upon directives from the Turkish embassy in Baghdad, which meant that on orders of the Turkish civil government and not the Turkish Army:

- The Turkmen Council was dissolved;
- The president and the members of the executive committee of the Turkmen Front were changed without organising an involvement of a convened General Turkmen Congress. Arshad al-Salihi was appointed as president of the Turkmen Front;



- The Turkmen Council was replaced with a six-membered fake board called “Diwan of the Turkmen Council”, while:
 - o The Diwan did not have any open activities;
 - o The head of Diwan and his deputies attended the building just to spend their free time, and have coffee and a chat there;
 - o Members of the Diwan received their salaries from Turkey in US Dollars.
- For the first time, Erdogan could introduce a few members of the Muslim Brotherhood ideology into the executive committee of the Turkmen Front.

It should be known that the main authorities in the Turkish-made Turkmen political system, were all appointed by Turkish authorities, are as follows:

- The General Turkmen Congresses, which elects the
- Turkmen Council, which elects the
- Members of the executive committee of the Turkmen Front and
- The president of the Turkmen Front;
- The Turkmen Civil Society organisation, which includes about 20 associations, foundations, syndicates, etcetera, administered by a manager.

The Turkmen Council had been dissolved, while the Turkmen parties, civil society organisations and Turkmen intellectuals were working for months on a project to build an independent General Turkmen Council.

Radical changes in the Turkmeneli Satellite TV channel took place at the same period:

- Anchor, head of news bureau and technical staff were replaced;



- The channel started to broadcast in line with Erdogan's religious policies;
- Religious programs and programs on Ottoman history and glories increased in number;
- Turkmen politicians close to the Turkish Justice and Development party ideology, like Hassan Turan, started to appear more in TV programs, while others, like Hassan Ozmen, were marginalised.

The contradictions and rivalries in the policies of the various Turkish governments and the Turkish offices that run Turkmen politics were unconstructively and directly reflected on the Turkmen political system. While the Turkish Army was dictating to the Turkmen Front not to recognise the Kurdish administration in Iraq and not to cooperate with it, Erdogan forced the Turkmen Front to cooperate with the Iraqi Kurdish administration and accept Kurdish policies, especially with regard to the Kirkuk Governorate.

While the Turkish Army forced the Turkmen Front not to cooperate with Iraqi religious groups, Erdogan managed to compel the Turkmen Front to cooperate with the Sunni Islamist politicians and his loyalists like Tariq al-Hashimi, the founder of Renewal List (قائمة التجديد) who was the Vice-President of Iraq and Osama al-Nujaifi, the head of Salvation & Development Front (جبهة الإنقاذ والتنمية) who was Vice-President of Iraq and Speaker of Parliament.

Another Turkish blow to the Turkmen came with the problems surrounding the Iraqi Islamic politician Tariq al-Hashimi in late 2011 and early 2012. Al-Hashimi was the Vice-President of Iraq and the founder of Renewal List. After he was convicted of murder, he fled Iraq and settled



in Turkey. In solidarity with al-Hashimi, the Sunni group led by Ayad Allawi withdrew its ministers from the Iraqi cabinet.

The Erdogan government asked the Turkmen minister, Turhan al-Mufti, to withdraw from the Iraqi cabinet under prime minister Nouri al-Maliki as well, but the Turkmen minister refused to comply. The Turkmen minister was supported by a large section of the Turkmen people. The punishment of Erdogan's Turkish government was as a significant reduction in funding of the Turkmen Front, which effectively paralysed it.

A few months after forming the new executive committee of the Turkmen Front in May 2011, the disputes continued between the pro-Erdogan religious group and the group supported by the Turkish military, leading to a suspension of the meetings of the executive committee. After that, the executive committee of the Turkmen Front did never meet, except for obligatory meetings, like those called to embrace and announce the decisions taken by the Turkish authorities.

In this period (2011–2016), the situation of the Iraqi Turkmen was as follows:

- Continuing violations of their human rights which increased their daily difficulties and sufferings;
- Further deterioration of the Turkmen political system;
- Further increase of Turkish domination over the Turkmen politicians and Turkmen political system; in fact the Turkmen remained hands-tied prisoners in the hands of the Turkish authorities.

On April 22, 2015, the Turkmen Student and Youth uprising began in



response to the inefficiency of the Turkmen political system and the violation of Turkmen human rights. A group of Turkmen students and youth seized the building of Turkmen Council in the city of Kirkuk, demanding:

- Resignation of members of the Diwan of the Turkmen Council;
- Rebuilding an independent general Turkmen Council.

The revolting students and youth handed over the Turkmen Council building to a group of six Turkmen parties who pledged to fulfil their demands. The six Turkmen parties began intensive efforts to realise the goals of Turkmen student and youth.

Considering the uprising of the Turkmen students and youth as a movement against the Turkish state, the Turkish government started to suppress the uprising. Turkey was able to eliminate the uprising within the space of three weeks. Consequently, Turkey kept the Turkmen political system as it was in its collapsed state (SOITM Foundation 2019: 175-182).

Before the uprising of the Turkmen students and youth, Turkmen politicians and parties were continuing nonstop their attempts to establish the independent General Turkmen Council. The suppression of the revolt of the Turkmen students and youth by Turkey can be considered one of the most harmful blows to the political will of the Turkmen of Iraq. After Turkey thwarted it, the attempts of the Iraqi Turkmen to establish an independent Turkmen Council has come to a complete standstill.

The activities of the Turkmen political system by this stage became



limited to the following:

- Press releases from the Turkmen Front about the events of the hour;
- Declarations of the president of the Turkmen Front about the events of the hour.

Silencing the collapsed Turkmen political system (15 July 2016 – Present)

Despite Erdogan having managed to penetrate the executive committee of the Turkmen Front, impoverishing it and dwarfing its activities, the Turkish Army was still the main controller of the Iraqi Turkmen political system.

Since the beginning of the 1990s, Fethullah Gulen began infiltrating the Turkish Army's institutions, and his penetration into the armed forces was increasing day by day. The cooperation between Fethullah Gulen and the Turkish Army against Erdogan began at about 2010.

The infiltration of Gulen agents into the Turkish Army had reached a point where it became powerful enough to lead the failed coup of July 15, 2016, together with the Republicans, who were controlling the army. With the failure of this coup, the Republicans and Fethullah Gulen gave Erdogan an excuse not to show mercy in purging them of all state institutions.

Despite the apparent role of Gulen in the failed coup attempt of July 15, 2016, some sources claim that Erdogan exaggerated Gulen's role. However, the history of Gulen's organisation, particularly his speeches



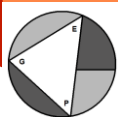
and his infiltration into the most important Turkish state institutions such as the security and military services, support the thesis of his major role in that attempt. The following is an excerpt from Fethullah Gulen's long speech broadcasted by Turkish TV channel ATV on 18 June 1999, which can be found on YouTube on the internet:

"It is a matter of going too far, as wandering in their vital arteries, coming back without being injured or felt, without making discover of our presence. Whether in terms of their financial strength, in terms of power and resources supplies in their own country, in terms of scientists, in terms to reach to the large parts of the society who has this (our) feeling and this (our) thought, until to come to a certain point and constancy, it is imperative, indispensable and necessary to continue serving in this (secret) way" (Gulen 1999a (quote); see further Gulen 1999b) .

After the failed coup, Erdogan took over the Turkmen file and the management of the Turkmen political system. He already had significantly weakened the Turkmen political system after 2011. The system had become nothing more than a writing on paper.

Within the framework of the radical cleansing of Republicans and Gulenists in Turkey, Erdogan started to put pressure on al-Salihi, the head of the Turkmen Front, who was still under the Turkish Army's control. Al-Salihi began to publish declarations from his Twitter account saying: "What you benefit, O Turkish government, from fighting Arshad Salihi".

Al-Salihi was summoned to Ankara, and it is understood that he was warned and conditions imposed on him to maintain his position as president of the Turkmen Front. After al-Salihi's return from Ankara, he



stopped publishing press statements, as if he had disappeared from the political arena. At this stage, all types of the activities of the Iraqi Turkmen political system were ceased—even the press releases of the Turkmen Front.

Dozens of offices of the Turkmen political system and hundreds of staff members kept receiving symbolic salaries from the Turkish authorities and continued to be directly managed by these authorities.

The changes that occurred in the Turkmen political system during this period were against the most basic administrative rules and did not comply with any of the articles of the Turkmen Front's Charter, but were in line with the political desires of the Turkish politicians. For example:

- Several changes were made in the institutions and branches of the Turkmen Front, during the first half of 2019, which included heads and personnel;
- On May 25, 2019, most of the members of the executive committee of the Turkmen Front, including heads of the branches, were replaced by even more subservient individuals;
- These changes were as usual decided by the Turkish authorities (Turkish Army) given that after the failed July 2016 coup attempt Erdogan controlled the Turkmen political system. Since these acts cannot be openly announced, they were communicated in a very irrational and obtuse manner. The press release published on May 25, 2019 by the Turkmen Front mentioned that the executive committee of the Turkmen Front made the changes. This means that the members of the executive committee dismissed themselves and appointed new members. These procedures were not subject to the most basic adminis-



-trative rules and violate the Charter of the Turkmen Front. According to the Charter of the Turkmen Front, appointments or replacements of members in the executive committee of the Turkmen Front are made by the Turkmen Council and from the members of Turkmen Council;

- On March 28, 2021, the president of the Turkmen Front was replaced by Ankara. The Turkmen politician with an ideology of the society of Muslim Brotherhood Hassan Turan replaced the conservative nationalist al-Salihi;
- In order to legitimise the administration and implementation of changes in the Turkmen political system, the Turkish Army was creating different measures, but Erdogan was making changes directly by administrative or intelligence orders, as happened in the aforementioned changes and the earlier radical changes in the Turkmen political system in 2011.

Some of the factors that help Turkey to dominate the Iraqi Turkmen and their political system

The blind obedience of the Turkmen of Iraq to the Turkish state and their absolutely misplaced confidence that Turkey is helping the Turkmen of Iraq, are due to the following reasons:

- Historical geopolitical factors: particularly the loss of high social and political status after the fall of the Ottoman Empire, and exposure to human rights violations and assimilation policies that led to isolation and a sense of loneliness among the Turkmen of Iraq. The situation prompted them to depend on kinsmen who were not expected to offend



more powerful neighbours. This is valid for the other Turkic communities in the region's countries as well;

- Turkish intelligence's possession and management of the Turkmen media, and the absence of an independent Turkmen media;
- The lack of political culture among the Turkmen of Iraq, as a result of:
 - o The absence of a democratic system and a democratic mentality in the region in general, exacerbated by decades of authoritarian rule in Iraq;
 - o The absence of independent political, cultural and media institutions for Turkmen since the establishment of the Iraqi state in 1921 and the denial of education in the Turkmen mother tongue;
 - o The exposure to suppression and assimilation policies for a long time.

Since the administration of the Iraqi Turkmen political system by Turkey is illegal, it has been carried out by the Turkish authorities—in particular by either the Turkish intelligence services or the Turkish armed forces. Therefore, the overwhelming majority of the Iraqi Turkmen do not know the fact that the Turkish state is mistreating them. Additionally, this situation removed the administrative and legal deterrence for the Turkish authorities in the mismanagement of the Turkmen political system, the Turkmen politics and the Turkmen people.

The inability of the Iraqi state and the silence of the international community are helping Turkey to intervene in Iraq's internal affairs and to control and exploit the Turkmen of Iraq.

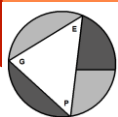


There are many institutions and organisations either affiliated or not affiliated with the Turkmen Front, all of which are run by Turkey. There are a large number of Turkmen employees in these institutions and organisations.

For example, there are dozens of fake civil society organisations, each of which has few employees and do not have any activities. The employees of these institutions and organisations receive small wages ranging from \$ 100 to \$ 150 from the Turkish state, which are good sums for poor families and unqualified workers in light of the deteriorating economic situation in Iraq.

Almost all the members of the Turkmen community consider this Turkish policy as a support for the Turkmen people. These employees advocate Turkish policy towards Turkmen and form a media and propaganda trumpet for Turkey. They oppose, prevent, suppress and work to silence those Turkmen who criticise the Turkish policy towards Iraqi Turkmen.

Turkey does not hesitate to use unfair and harmful punitive means to silence opponents of its policy towards Turkmen and to maintain its continued control over Turkmen politics and the Turkmen people, by intimidation, media defamation, psychological warfare, dismissal from work and cutting off funding.



Conclusion

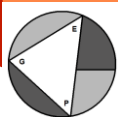
The Turkmen political system was founded in Turkey and remained under domination of Turkish authorities, affecting the fate of the Turkmen people. The system was exploited in the context of Turkish national policy and in line with Turkish interests. In order to realise this policy, Turkey used a large number of Turkmen affiliated to it and used unfair, repressive, punitive and arbitrary methods against those who rejected Turkish policy. The Turkmen political system has not been able to stand on its own feet since its establishment.

The absence of the Turkmen media led to the ill-development of the political culture of the Turkmen individual, maintaining the weak political cohesion in the Turkmen community. Among the main disadvantages of this situation are:

- The absence of teamwork required for institutional work;
- The inability to take voters to the polls;
- Unconstructive distribution of the electorate's vote;
- Winning of a small number of ineffective candidates.

In terms of the responsible Turkish government departments and the periods, the management of the Turkmen political system by the Turkish authorities can be divided into four stages, which are:

- Ministry for Foreign Affairs and Intelligence Organisation (1991 – 1997);
- Turkish Army (1997 – 2011);
- Turkish Army and Turkish government (R. T. Erdogan) (2011 – 2016);
- R. T. Erdogan (from 2016).



The violation of Turkmen human rights took place by:

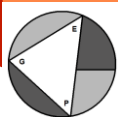
- The successive Iraqi governments (1921 – 1968);
- The Ba'ath regime (1970 – 2003);
- The Kurdish authorities (1991 – 2003 in Erbil and 2003 – 2017 in other Turkmen regions);
- The Turkish state (since 1991);
- The religious extremists, including those of the so-called Islamic State (after the fall of Ba'ath regime in 2003).

Turkey followed this harmful policy towards the Iraqi Turkmen, despite that the Turkmen of Iraq:

- Have kinship ties with the Turkish state, as they are considered cousins;
- Being in a very dire situation, because of having been subjected to human rights violations for decades;
- Rely on and trust the Turkish state;
- Regard the Turkish state as their only saviour.

The Turkish state is responsible for the following:

- Impeding the establishment and development of independent professional Turkmen political, strategic and cultural institutions. The Turkmen political and non-political institutions today lack not only the basic requirements for a specialised institution, but also the simplest requirements that any simple institution should have. The political failure of the Turkmen of Iraq and their absence from the Iraqi political arena;
- Therefore, Turkey is responsible for the failure of the Turkmen to obtain their usurped rights, for the continuation of human rights violations against the Turkmen;



- Accordingly, Turkey plays an important role in the assimilation of the Turkmen of Iraq.

Sheth Jerjis is Chairperson of the Iraqi Turkmen Human Rights Research Foundation (Stichting Onderzoekscentrum Iraaks Turkmeense Mensenrechten (SOITM) in Dutch) based in Nijmegen, the Netherlands. s.jerjis@kpnmail.nl soitm@turkmen.nl

Endnotes

1. The Turkmen political system means the Turkmen Council, the Turkmen Front, the Turkmen parties and the Turkmen civil society organisations.
2. Mohammed Fethullah Gulen is the leader of an Islamic religious organisation known as Service Organisation ‘Society’ (*Hizmet Kuruluşu* ‘Cemaat’); however, Gulen was able to infiltrate all the Turkish state’s institutions, particularly the security and military forces and bureaucracies. Gulen is the major suspect of organising 15 July 15, 2016 coup attempt in Turkey.

References—Bibliography

A report by four international organisations (2015), “Between the millstones: the state of Iraq’s minorities since the fall of Mosul”. Report by IILHR, MRG, NPWJ and UNPO, esp. p.19.



Al-Samanci A. Q. (1999), "التاريخ السياسي لتركمان العراق" (The Political History of the Iraqi Turkmen). First Edition Beirut: El-Saki Print House, esp. pp.209-216,230.

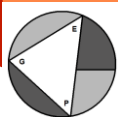
_____ (2015), "A tour in the corridors of politics ... more than frank dialogue, with the Turkmen politician Aziz Qadir al-Samanchi" (جولة في دهاليز السياسة .. حوار أكثر من صريح، مع السياسي التركماني الأستاذ عزيز قادر الصمانجي). An interview with the Turkmen politician and writer Aziz Qadir al-Samanchi, conducted by the Turkmen writer Nusrat Mardan; www.turkmen.nl/1A_Others/ak-alturkmani.pdf.

Batatu, H. (1978), "The old social classes and the Revolutionary Movements of Iraq". New Jersey: Princeton University Press, pp.913-921.

European Parliament (2013), "Iraq: the plight of minority groups, including the Iraqi Turkmen". European Parliament resolution of 14 March 2013 (2013/2562 (RSP)); www.europarl.europa.eu/doceo/document/TA-7-2013-0101_EN.html.

Gülen, Fethullah M. (1999), 'Gülen 'in 1999'da yayınlanan olay videosu: "Sivrilirsek sonumuz Cezayir gibi olur" (Gülen's surprising video of 1999: "If we come into prominence, we will end up like Algeria")'; www.youtube.com/watch?v=7Y_cLmsmOuY. 'Gülen 1999a'

_____ (1999), *Fethullah Gülen Devleti Nasıl Ele Geçireceklerini Anlatıyor* (Fethullah Gülen explains how they will take over the state); www.youtube.com/watch?v=SdngYPJMyV8. 'Gülen 1999a'



HRW (2015), "After Liberation Came Destruction: Iraqi Militias and the Aftermath of Amerli". A report of Human Rights Research Foundation, 2015, p.19; www.hrw.org/sites/default/files/reports/iraq0315_forUpload.pdf.

Institute for International Law & Human Rights (2013), "Iraq's minorities and other vulnerable groups: legal framework, documentation and human rights, may 2013". Baghdad: Institute for International Law and Human Rights, First Edition, p.143; http://ezidis.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/03/MinorityHB_EN.pdf.

International Crisis Group (2018), "Reviving UN Mediation on Iraq's Disputed Internal Boundaries". ICG Middle East Report N°194 | 14 December 2018, esp. p.8 & note 25.

Iraqi Turkmen Doctors Association (2015), "The current human rights situation for Iraqi Turkmen 2014-2015" A report presented to the Danish ministry for foreign Affairs.

Jerjis Sh. (2020), "The Religious Doctrines of the Iraqi Turkmen: a Focus on the Shia Turkmen". *Forum of EthnoGeoPolitics* Vol.8 No.1, pp.146-162.

Lalani, M. (2010), "Still Targeted: Continued Persecution of Iraq's Minorities". Minority Rights Group International, esp. p.25.

MRGI (2015), "Turkmen". A report by Minority Rights International, November 2015.

SOITM Foundation (Iraqi Turkmen Human Rights research Foundation, *Stichting Onderzoekscentrum Iraaks Turkmeense Mensenrechten* [Dutch], *مؤسسة بحث حقوق الانسان لتركمان العراق* [Arabic], *İrak Türkmenleri İsnan Hakları*



Araştırma Vakfı [Turkish]) (2009), “Obstacles preventing the use of mother tongue in Iraqi Turkmen education”. A report presented to Expert Mechanism on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples, Council of Human Rights, second session, 10-14 August 2009.

SOITM Foundation (2013), “Summary of confiscation of the land and demographic changes of the Iraqi Turkmen region”, 1 July 2013.

_____ (2017), “At the mercy of the Kurdish parties Turkmen are subjected to constant terror”. A Press Release of SOITM Foundation, 29 April 2017; www.turkmen.nl/1A_soitm/PR.4-D2917e.pdf.

_____ (2019), *Turkey's Iraqi Turkmen Policy: Merciless Exploitation and Violation of International Law*. Publications of the SOITM, Benda Print House, esp. pp.27-32, 33-42, 62-63, 68-71, 129-133, 162-163, 175-182.



Appendix

Photo No.1 Press release of SOITM Foundation entitled “Violence against the Iraqi Turkmen (Part 2): It continues at the mercy of the Kurdish parties”, 29 April 2017

Press Release

Violence against the Iraqi Turkmen (Part 2): It continues at the mercy of the Kurdish parties



Date: April 29, 2017
No: PR.4-02917

Around 19pm of March 11th 2017, a group of 7-8 masked armed men talking Kurdish and wearing Kurdish costume stormed the house of Mr. M.M. at the Piryadi neighborhood of Kerkuk city. They impersonalized as Kurdish security service (Asayish) and came to search the house for weapons; however, they squeezed the home residents in a room and robbed the house.

Again on March 14th 2017 the house of Mr. E. Sh. in the Gharnata neighborhood and on December 6th 2016 the house of Mr. S.H. in the neighborhood of Sahat Al-Ihtifalat were subjected to the same raid.

These are only few out of tens of similar awful attacks to which the Turkmen of Kerkuk city are recently suffering from. This situation has been continuing since the fall of the Baath regime in 2003.

Since 2003, in insecure and instable Iraq, large part of Turkmen regions, particularly Kerkuk province, remain at the mercy of the Kurdish parties. The Kurds dominate almost all the governmental administration and claim the ownership of these regions. The Turkmen are subjected constantly to kidnappings, assassinations, raiding houses and marginalization. These ruthless offences, which are likely to get out of control and burst into massacres in the near future.

The central Iraqi government and the international community, particularly the United States, the International Coalition and UN, are called to intervene directly to stop such continuous Kurdish suppression against the non-Kurdish components of the Kerkuk city and the whole region ruled by the Kurdish regional governments.

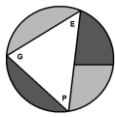


Photo No.2 Article entitled "Clean hands operation in Iraqi Policy: National Turkmen Party under the spotlight" published by Turkish journal *Nokta*, dated March 30, 1996



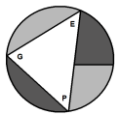


Photo No.3 Article entitled "Clean hands operation in Iraqi Policy: National Turkmen Party under the spotlight" published by Turkish journal *Nokta*, dated March 30, 1996



Necmettin Kasapoğlu



Muzaffer Arslan



Hasan Özmen

büyük bir özveri ile çalışan Oğuz Gür-gür (Riyaz Sarıkahya) ile tanışması. Genç olması, tahsili ve başlangıçtaki olumlu tavırları, Arslan'a siyasetin kapılarını açıyor. Böylece, Türkmen toplu-mu güne kadar varlığından haberdar olmamış Arslan'ı tanıyıp kabulleniyor.

Bu dönemde, Türkmenler arasında Kör Hasan olarak da tanınan Hasan Öz-men'in devreye girdiğini görüyoruz. Özmen, Şam tarafından Irak rejimine karşı Suriye'de yedekte bekletilen Türkmen lider İzzettin Kocava'nın yanı-na "ofisboy" olarak girerek getir götür işlerine bakıyor. Ama sert kişiliği ile ta-nınan Kocava, Özmen'i sık sık dövu-nür. Özmen'in Suriye gizli servisi El Muhabarat El Syria ile tanışmasının da bu yıllara rastladığını öne sürülmüyor.

Diğer önemli bir Türkmen lideri Sa-id Ketene ise Özmen'in iyiliyetli oldu-ğu için kullandığını düşünüyör, biraz da Kocava'dan dayak yemesine son ver-mek için Özmen'i Türkiye'ye getiriyor. Özmen, Türk vatandaş oluyor. Daha sonra Muzaffer Arslan ile tanışması, onu IMTP'nin üst düzey kademelerine taşıyor. Bu hızlı yükselişin ardından, zamanında kendisine büyük emeği ge-çen Said Ketene'yi hain ilan ediyor. Öz-men ile birlikte Türkiye'ye getirilen ve Özmen'in aracılığı ile IMTP'ye giren Türkmen, Göz Doktoru Aydın Bayatlı ise Irak'ta yaşadığı dönemde BAAS üyesi ve hızlı bir Sadlakam olarak ta-nınıyor.

1980'lerin sonunda temasa fırsatı Mısrırlar sayesinde yarıdışı yollarıdan küçük bir servet kazandığı iddia edilen Mühendis Yaşar İmamoglu ise Irak'ta edindiğı bütün gayrimenkulleri satarak Türkiye'ye dönüyor. Burada önemli bir nokta var. Irak'tan Türkiye'ye göçen Türkmenler, mal varlıklarını Araplar'a veya Kürtler'e satmıyorlar. Ya bir Türkmen'e devrediyorlar ya da terkedi-yorlar. Türkmen için bu tavır, yıllarca kendilerini asimile etmeye çalışan Arap

ve Kürtler'e karşı bir tepki. İmamoglu, bu temaileri uymuyor. Türkiye'ye gel-dikten sonra silah ticareti ile de uğraştı-ğı öne sürülen ve 1991'de IMTP'ye gi-ren İmamoglu, daha sonra dört kardeşini daha Irak'tan Türkiye'ye getirip Türk vatandaşlığına geçiriyor. Bugün bu kardeşler Danimarka'da "siyasi mülte-ci" olarak yaşıyor...

Arslan'ın 1991'den itibaren IMTP'yi Türkmen toplumunun tek temsilcisi olarak göstermek için yoğun çaba harcadığı dikkat çekiyor. Arslan ve çevresinin varlığı çok sayıda Türk-men'in, siyasetten uzak durmasına ne-den oluyor. 1995 yılının başlarında ta-bandan gelen baskı üzerine IMTP, Türkmen Birlik Partisi ve Erbil'in önde gelen Türkmen aileleri ile birlikte Nisan 1995'de Türkmen Cephesi'nin kurul-masına "kerhen" razı oluyor.

IMTP yönetimi bu konuda büyük kayıplar taşıyor. Birincisi, Ankara'nın Türkmenler'e yapacağı yardımlar artık IMTP üzerinden yürütmeyecekti ki, bu ciddi bir para kaybı anlamına geliyor-du. İkincisi ise Türkmen toplumu Arslan ve çevresinden memnun değildi.

Dosyalardaki iddia. Cephe'nin kurulduğu andan itibaren IMTP bu yeni oluşumu baltala-mak için elinden ge-len yapıyor. Hatta el altından cephe karşıtı bilgililer dağıtıyor bile iddia ediliyor. Arslan ve çevresi için öncelikle, cephenin sona erdirilme-si ve eski maddi imkanlara kavuşulma-sı gerekiyordu. Bunun nedenini anla-mak için Arslan ve adamlarının dosya-lara intikal eden mal varlıklarına ve id-dialara bakmak yeterli.

Türkmen Cephesi'nin kasasında bu-lunan 180 bin doların gerçek amacını d-şında ve keyfi olarak harcadığını öne sü-rülüyor. 180 bin dolar yüzünden Muzaf-fer Arslan'ın dönemin Türkmen Cephe-

si Başkanı Turhan Ketene ile kanlı bu çaklı olduğu da söz konusu iddialar ara-sında. Bu durum, Türkmen tabanında "K-rant kavga-sı" olarak yorumlanıyor. Ke-tene-Arslan uyumsuzluğunun bir nedeni daha var. Arslan, Ketene'yi Talabani ile tanıştırmıyor. Bundan sonra Talabani kendisine direkt mütahap olarak Kete-ne'yi seçiyor. Devrediyi bırakılmış ol-mak Arslan'a ağır geliyor ve Ketene'nin kuyusunu kazmaya başlıyor.

Bunun üzerine Ketene, Kuzey Irak'ta bulunduğu dönem zarfında gi-lenliğinin sağlanmasını için Talabani'ye bağlı 40 peşmerge tarafından koruma-ya başlıyor. Türkmen toplumu arasında Talabani'nin himayesinde olduğu söy-lenen Arslan, bugün eski "nohut oda, bakla sofrası" günlerinden çok uzak. Kardeş ve kayınlardan üzerine de bir-çok gayrimenkulün kaybolu olduğu öne sürülüyor. Hatta Arslan'ın Side ve An-talya'da iki otelin de gizli ortağı olduğu iddia ediliyor.

Arslan'ın kardeşlerinden Samih'in 1991 yılında göç dalgası ile Türkiye'ye geldiği ve altı ay sonra Irak'a döndüğü biliniyor. Samih bugün Musul Üniver-sitesi Veterinerlik Fakültesi Dekanı... Bayatlı Konya'daki yedi katlı hastane-nin ve Özmen'in de Ankara, İstanbul ve Adana'da çok sayıda lüks dairenin sahi-bi.



Yaşar İmamoglu

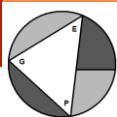
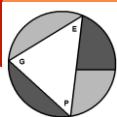


Photo No.4 *Türkmeneli* newspaper, "Iraqi Turkmen Front have indicated their willingness to participate in the fourth cabinet of KRG", issue dated January 19, 2000



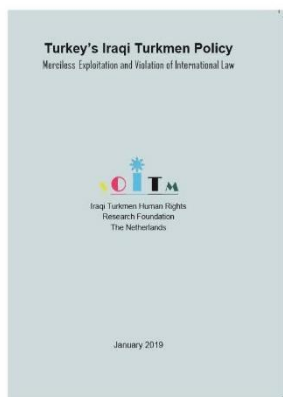
NB: do you have any comments on Sheth Jerjis' article? Please send these to info@ethnogeopolitics.org, or by contact form at www.ethnogeopolitics.org.



(Advertisement)

Turkey's Iraqi Turkmen Policy *Merciless Exploitation and Violation of International Law*

By Iraqi Turkmen Human Rights Research Foundation (SOITM Foundation)



Publisher: SOITM Foundation
Published: January 2019
Language: English
Format: 135 x 195 mm
Edition: First
Extent: 200 pages
ISBN: 978-90-9031494-5
Imprint: Benda printing
Price: 40 Euro

xxiii + 186 pp. a map

Please note that the price of shipping may vary depending on your country of residence

Requested from SOITM Foundation
WhatsApp/Viber 0031 (0)6 16 26 25 86
Email: soitm@turkmen.nl

About "Turkey's Iraqi Turkmen Policy"

The Turkmen in Iraq are of ethnic Turkic communities living in several countries neighboring Turkey.

The animosity and the hatred that had developed towards the Ottomans in the later decades of the Empire reflected onto those Turkic origin communities in the newly created countries after the Ottomans dismembered, which all were ruled by non-Turkish governments. The Turkic communities in the Balkans were exposed to massacres, in Greece they are still deprived of their ethnic rights, and in the Arabic countries, they are marginalized and exposed to serious assimilation policies, as in the cases of the Iraqi and Syrian Turkmen.

These suppressed communities had no other choice than to consider Turkey as their only rescuer and subjugate themselves to Turkey. At the same time, this has increased the animosity against them in their new countries and removed the possibility of getting help from any other national, regional or international powers.

On the other side, Turkey had neither ability nor intention to help these Turkic communities, in contrary, Turkey remain inattentive to their sufferings, even misused these communities benefiting from their blind obedience.

This book presents the history of 3 decades of the Turkish policy towards the Turkmen of Iraq, which can be considered a vivid view of the Turkish relation with Turkic communities in the neighboring countries.