

## **Press Release**

### **The attitude of the military forces in Iraq should be further improved**

**Date:** July 07, 2008  
**No:** PR.19-G0708

One would expect military forces in Iraq to learn from the numerous massive disasters that have transpired in Iraq since occupation. Hundreds of thousands of the Iraqis have been killed, women have been widowed and children have been orphaned. The infrastructure of the country has been destroyed. The Iraqis have been treated inhumanely and cruelly.

One would also expect the recent improvements in the security situation of Iraq to prompt a shift in American military policy towards protecting human rights and respecting Iraqi civilians, and their Iraqi military comrades should have also learned how to behave with their Iraqi brethren. Indeed, one would presume American soldiers to be at the forefront of the promotion of human rights and democracy in the region.

However, despite a recent decrease in killings and destruction, violations of human rights are still widespread in Iraq. The Iraqi people are regularly exposed to disgraceful and humiliating attacks.

*On Thursday July 1, 2008, at 17.00, as staff, participants, and members of the steering committee of the Turkmen Kardashlik (Brotherhood) Club were exiting a meeting, a group of American and Iraqi soldiers stormed into the building and gathered the civilians in one corner of the hall. Without providing any explanation, the soldiers damaged the doors, used violence, and searched the entire building. They did not find any illegal materials. They confiscated all the licensed weapons but one left for the guards.*

*In spite of the absence of any evidence of illegality, the weapons were photographed. The photographs were later used misleadingly in broadcasts and on the websites of pro-occupation news agencies. It was reported that occupation soldiers had found a stockpile of weapons in the Turkmen Brotherhood Club.*

*Notably, the steering committee of the Turkmen Kardashlik club is comprised mainly of well known Turkmen academics.*

The Turkmen Kardashlik (Brotherhood) club is amongst the few official national Turkmen organizations allowed by the Iraqi administration to be instituted by the Turkmen after institution of the republic Iraq 1958. It was established by Turkmen intellectuals in Baghdad in 1960. The Mosul branch was instituted in 1971 and the Erbil branch in 1975. It published the Kardashlik (Brotherhood) periodical – a literary, cultural and social journal – amongst the few national Turkmen publications published by Iraqi Turkmen under Baghdad administration before occupation.

In the 1970s, the Ba'ath regime oversaw the club's members being repeatedly exposed to the persecutions and executions. In particular, members Cevdet Avci and Kemal Terzi were disappeared after arrest in 1980s. In 1980, members of the steering committee of the Kardashlik journal were executed by Ba'ath regime (Retired Colonel Abdulla Abdurrahman, Associated professor Dr. Necdet Kocak and businessman Adil Sherf), and Dr Riza demirci was disappeared after arrest.

Each branch of the Turkmen Brotherhood Club boasted of their individual theater, music and national dance teams. These clubs organized social activities for the thousands of Turkmen students in the universities of Baghdad, Mosul and Erbil. Introductory concerts were designed as networking functions, endeavoring to introduce first year Turkmen students in different faculties to each other and to more senior students. Qualification concerts were designed for final year university students.

Hundreds of Turkmen students attended events organized by these clubs, as they presented an extraordinarily rare opportunity for Iraqi Turkmen to present their national dances, music, theater traditions and other national folklore. These clubs also provided free student dormitories for poor university students.