

**European Parliament**  
Subcommittee on Human Rights

Public Hearing on  
Human rights situation of Turkmen in Iraq

15.30 - 16.30  
5 December 2011

Room: Altiero Spinelli (ASP) 1 G 2  
European Parliament, Brussels



Date: December 4, 2011

No: Rep.7-L0411

**Agenda Item:** The plight of the Iraqi Turkmen

**The Human Rights Situation of the Turkmen of Iraq**  
**(After the fall of Ba'ath Regime at 10 April 2003)**

The Turkmen of Iraq are considered the third largest component of the Iraqi Population. According to the adjusted statistics of the Iraqi census of 1957, the Turkmen constituted 9% of the total Iraqi population, [1, 2] which would now approximate to 3 million out of 32 million – the total Iraqi population. Turkmen live mainly in the north and middle of Iraq: Kerkuk, Mosul, Erbil, Salah al-Din, Diyala, Kut and Baghdad. The largest Turkmen population concentration is found in Kerkuk whose linguistic, cultural and ethnic identity is distinctly colored by their presence. [3]

**After the fall of the Ba'ath regime**

On April 10, 2003, after occupation, the Iraqi army and security units dissolved, the state's archives were sacked, and life and property security disappeared. Fully prepared, Kurdish armed forces entered almost all the Turkmen regions, including Kerkuk, seizing the administration and establishing their own order. Assimilation of the Turkmen, Assyrians and Arabs had started. Intimidations, killings, arbitrary detentions, assassinations and kidnappings still continue. In almost all Turkmen regions from Telafer to Khanaqin, particularly in the oil-rich province of Kerkuk, the demographic structure was changed, with the Kurds intending to gain ground.

**Kerkuk**

Kerkuk is an oil-rich fertile land holding about 10 billion barrels of oil reserves. [4] Its population, originally Turkmen, has suffered severely from assimilation, both during the Ba'ath period and after occupation. Most of the Turkmen victims are from Kerkuk province. Being that the Turkmen are the original inhabitants of Kerkuk, they are found in the center of the province; the Arabs are living mainly in the south and west, the Kurds in the north and east. Therefore, the Turkmen regions become the area mostly exposed to explosions

For instance, the population of **Kerkuk** province was around 870.000 on the day of occupation, but now is more than 1.500.000. Approximately 200.000 Arabs have fled or left the city since that point. The total building surface area of Kerkuk has been increased 23 KM sq. since occupation.

Of course, with this population shift and demographic changes, massive amounts of government and citizens' lands have been taken by Kurdish families who built houses under the auspices and financial assistance of the Kurdistan Regional Government.

This is the reason why the council elections and the Census have been hampered in Kerkuk province. [5, 6] The laws and orders state that during this time, Kerkuk should be administered jointly, by all its components. Violating the laws issued by the Iraqi parliament, the Kurds are still dominating the decision-making mechanism in Kerkuk province.

**Iraqi Turkmen support a decent election organized according to international norms and request:**

- 1. Appointment of a commission by United Nations to participate in the organization of election**
- 2. Removal of Kurdish domination in administration, security, police and Peshmerga in non-Kurdish regions. This allows the non-Kurdish people (Shabaks, Yezidis, Chaldea-Assyrians, Turkmen and Arabs) vote freely.**
- 3. Reviewing of the voter lists, which are severely inflated in Kerkuk and other disputed regions**
- 4. Correction of demographic changes**

We the Turkmen of Iraq suggest that Kerkuk province should be administered for 10 years jointly by 32% in the city council for Turkmen, Arabs and Kurds and 4% for the Chaldea-Assyrians. This will improve cooperation between the province's components. Such a period is also needed to achieve normalization, which the Iraqi constitution states.

### **Confiscated Turkmen Land**

Confiscation of land was one of the major features of the assimilation policies of the Ba'ath regime. The total surface area of the lands which were confiscated in the Kerkuk region was 357.305.000 M sq. of which about 280.000.000 M. sq., or 80%, was owned by Turkmen. The total lands that were confiscated in Tuz Hurmatu was 50.000.000 M. sq., of which the majority was possessed by Turkmen. In spite of passing of several pieces of legislation and instituting property courts, very little land was either returned to the Turkmen owners or compensated. The complaints which have been presented to the Property Claim Commissions in Kerkuk province numbered about 45,000 of which only 5,000 cases have been decided, with some of these case still in the appellate court. To speed the process, Iraqi Turkmen presented a proposal to the Iraqi parliament which, unfortunately, faces extreme opposition by the Arab nationalist groups. It is worth noting that the confiscated lands have been granted to the Arabs. Being that there are also confiscated Kurdish lands, the Kurds support our proposal.

### **Education in mother language**

Turkmen education suffers from many important difficulties in Iraq, and in the Kurdish region, too. Article 4, Item 4 of the Iraqi constitution ambiguously refers to a notion which further complicates the use of mother tongue by the Turkmen, making a decision in favor of the vulnerable Indigenous communities more difficult. Large numbers of schools in Turkmen regions are still not able to use their mother tongue or offer only one lesson in the Turkmen language. The major difficulties within these schools are that a large percentage of teachers and all school materials are not paid for by the Iraqi ministry of education. Teaching staff and facilities are insufficient, and there is a shortage of experts and supervisors of Turkmen language and literature. There is also a shortage of materials and resources, including: books, science equipment, computer and internet facilities, photocopying facilities, temperature regulating systems.

### **Different issues**

- In most of the Turkmen regions, the Kurds dominate the security and police forces. The Peshmerga are widely distributed in Turkmen regions.
- All recent Iraqi elections have been organized while the Kurds are dominating the administration, police and security in most of Turkmen regions. All the election stages have been violated and exposed to fraud.

- The shortage of governmental and municipality utilities in Turkmen areas can be clearly observed.
- The appointment of Turkmen in governmental and municipality offices has decreased. The decrease of Turkmen appointments is also severe in the higher governmental posts; for example, ministries and embassies.

### **Terror against Turkmen**

As with other Iraqi communities, the Turkmen of Iraq are also targeted by the terrorists, whilst the Turkmen started early in 2003 to be exposed to extensive attacks. Political factors, blackmail, and shakedowns are the possible reasons for exposure of Turkmen to terrorist attacks. Hundreds of bombing attacks and kidnappings have taken place in Turkmen regions. Turkmen are severely exposed to intimidations. Large numbers of Turkmen are arrested, many are lost.

The major attacks on Turkmen include, for example:

- 11 April 2003: attacks on a group of Turkmen youth in front of Iraqi Turkmen Front (ITF), 1 killed.
- 24 August 2003: attack on a Turkmen protesting group in Tuz Hurmatu killing 8 and injuring several others.
- 31 December 2003: attack on a Turkmen protesting group in Kerkuk killing 3 and injuring several.
- 9 September 2004 and in 5 September 2005: Telafer district has been attacked twice by helicopters, tanks and tens of thousands of Soldiers.

Some of the casualties in **Telafer** include; 1350 dead, 2650 wounded, including a large number of children, women and elders. About seven thousand were arrested; one thousand are still in prison. 3658 houses, 563 shops and 469 cars were damaged. About 500 houses were completely demolished. 1468 houses were robbed. During these catastrophes about 48.000 families were displaced from Telafer, of which about 13.000 families are still not returned. On 20 June 2009, a massive explosion in Taze Hurmatu destroyed 65 houses, killed 75 and injured 228. The total amount of the ransom which paid by Turkmen is estimated to be about 50 million US dollar.

Turkmen of Mosul city had suffered almost the same, even in recent years many Turkmen have been assassinated. The inhabitants of Kaz Koyu, which was demolished by the Ba'ath regime, established themselves in the Hadbaa neighborhood and were exposed to repeated bombings, which made the Turkmen leave the region. Other bombings took place in the villages of Kara, Bazwaya, and Sherihan.

The Turkmen of Iraq have been severely oppressed in Erbil. In April 2005, Kurdish security agents broke into Turkmen institutions and took over 24 buildings, including Turkmeneli Television and Radio. The educational quality in the Turkmen schools was deliberately worsened which lead to a decrease in the number of students. The oppressive policy of the Kurdish administration hinders the appearance of Turkmen civil society activists and stalls the establishment of Turkmen civil society and political organizations. The Iraqi Turkmen Front (ITF) could only recently start its activities and was allowed to realize political, social and cultural activities only inside the small buildings of the organization.

The Turkmen of Tuz Hurmatu are suffering for two reasons: firstly, being Turkmen and secondly being of Shiite sect. For example, attack on protesting peoples, several massive explosions inside the city, huge bombing in the village of Amirli. More than 100 peoples were either threatened or kidnapped and paid fees.

Some of the important recent attacks on Turkmen are: [7]

- Bombing of the house of the president of the ITF, Erşed al-Salihi, which destroyed large part of the house on 12 May 2011
- Assassination of the Mosul province representative of the ITF on 22 November 2009

- Assassination of Colonel Sabah Kara Altun on 3 June 2005
- Assassination of Dr. Amir Said Selbi, academic staff in Mosul University on 8 March 2011
- Four offices of the ITF were attacked during the last three months
- Assassination of Neurosurgeon Yildirim Abbas Demirci and his brother on 5 September 2011
- Gunshots of Abdul Emir, a guard of president of Kerkuk province council on 11 September 2011
- Kidnapping of two Turkmen academic staff of the faculty of technology, Kerkuk University; Sami Aslan Riza and Musa Mustafa Veyis, on 5 November 2011
- Bombing of the house of the Kerkuk province council member and the speaker of the ITF Ali Mehdi on 28 November 2011 which killed a neighbor and injured 15 people.

The appeal of the Iraqi Turkmen to the Iraqi parliament to send a commission to investigate these events failed because of the ignorance of major political groups.

## **Conclusions**

The goal of the terrorism in Iraq is to hamper the institution of a democratic Iraq and to assimilate the non-ruling Iraqi communities; Turkmen, Chaldeo-Assyrians, Yazidis, Shabaks and Mandaens.

In view of the above stated facts, it becomes clear that the Turkmen of Iraq are suffering from genocide and ethnic cleansing; they are exposed to daily violation of human rights, their security is absent, their economic situation deteriorates and they flee from their land.

The Turkmen of Iraq support a unitary democratic Iraq and equal power-sharing in Kerkuk province, which should be attached to Baghdad.

## **Demands**

**In view of the above stated facts and problems faced by us as a Turkmen in Iraq, We would kindly ask Mr. Metin Kazak and the Subcommittee on Human Rights of the European Parliament to:**

- **Send a fact-finding commission from the members of the European Parliament to Turkmen areas to investigate the human rights situation in Turkmen regions**
- **Consider organizing a meeting for Turkmen leaders with Mr. Herman Achille Van Rompuy, the president of council of the European Union, Mr. Jerzy Buzek, president of the European parliament and Mr. José Manuel Durão Barroso, President of the European Commission**
- **Help us to present an oral presentation about the Iraqi Turkmen at a meeting of the Foreign Affairs Commission of the European Parliament.**
- **Help us organize a series of conferences in the European Parliament to present the human rights situation of the Iraqi Turkmen**

---

*\* Prepared with London Representative of the Iraqi Turkmen Front*

-----

## **References:**

1. 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](http://www.eppc.org/publications/pubID.1532/pub_detail.asp)
2. 50. Erased Hurmuzlu, "Kerkük ve Türkmeneli Bölgesinin Etnik Yapısı", Kardeşlik journal, vol. 34.

3. Edward Y. Odisho, City of Kerkuk: No historical authenticity without multi-ethnicity. North-eastern Illinois University, Chicago, IL U.S.A., Page 5 – 6.
4. Iraq Petroleum Company, <http://almashriq.hiof.no/lebanon/300/380/388/ipc/>
5. Provincial Councils Act No. 36, art. 23 adopted in 2008 prevented elections in Kerkuk, which asked that the voters and electoral billets should be reviewed.
6. Article 16 of the Parliamentary Election Law Article 6, 2009
7. Annex I, a list of Turkmen physicians who were either threatened or kidnapped and the amount of ransom which they paid. [http://www.turkmen.nl/1A\\_Others/t-physicians.pdf](http://www.turkmen.nl/1A_Others/t-physicians.pdf)

\*\*\*\*\*