



Main Article

The Dark Era of the Turkmen of Tuz Khurmatu District under the Protection of the Kurdish Parties and the Peshmerga (2003-2017) *

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Abstract This article seeks to provide details and revealing insights about the difficult, indeed dire conditions experienced by the Turkmen in the district of Tuz Khurmatu, due to the policies of the Kurdish parties and the behaviour of the Peshmerga fighters, who monopolised the administration and governance of the district, along with other Turkmen areas, after the fall of the Ba'ath regime led by Saddam Hussein in April 2003, for 11 years until mid-2014, and with the Shi'ite armed factions since then until October 2017. This occurred at a time when the Iraqi state had collapsed and the rule of law was absent, and the Kurdish parties were the second largest force in the administration of the Iraqi state after the international, US-led coalition forces.

The article also examines the ethnic and sectarian composition of the Tuz Khurmatu district, the suffering of the district's Turkmen majority under the ethnic cleansing policies practiced by the Ba'ath regime, and the administrative and political situation after its fall. It also discusses how Western media, strategic centres, and human rights organisations dealt with the Turkmen presence in Iraq in general, and with the bloody events and the suffering of the Turkmen there during the period of study. The article concludes that the Turkmen of Tuz Khurmatu experienced the



worst period in their history, specifically between 2003 and 2014, when they were under the sole control of Kurdish parties and were 'protected' exclusively by Kurdish security forces and the Peshmerga.

The article argues that the Kurdish parties and the Peshmerga played both a direct and indirect role in the violent attacks on the Turkmen, and that Western media outlets, strategic institutions, and research centres did not paint a true picture of those events. Instead, they relied on Kurdish politicians and the Peshmerga to gather, provide and interpret information, resulting in a lack of neutrality that favoured the Kurds.

The article also shows that the Western approach to the Kurdish issue is superficial and biased, influenced by the overwhelming sympathy stemming from the largely unintentional exaggeration of Kurdish suffering in Western publications and the influence of Western political approaches. It also argues that Western studies of the Anfal campaigns (April–May 1988) lack adherence to scientific principles and rely entirely on Kurdish narratives, with all their attendant exaggerations and biases. As a result, thousands of inaccurate reports, articles and studies have emerged, portraying the operation as a fable brutal myth.

These criticisms target the credibility of Western strategic centres, including the media, human rights organisations and academic research centres, which should rightly cast doubt on their integrity. Therefore, these Western centres are required to review their claims regarding the number of Kurdish victims in the Anfal campaign, which they estimated at between 50,000 and 200,000 people, while adhering to the principles of scientific research.

Keywords Tuz Khurmatu, Kirkuk, Kirkuk, Turkmen, violence, Kurdish parties, Islamic State, Islamic state (ISIS), Peshmerga fighters, Iraq



Introduction

Nationalist sentiments have dominated Middle Eastern societies since the beginning of the twentieth century, and because Iraq has been part of this region, their impact on the multiethnic Iraqi society has been profound. Arab nationalist sentiments reached their peak in Iraq with the Ba'ath Party (حزب البعث), while Kurdish nationalist sentiments reached their peak with the launch of the Kurdish armed movement against the Iraqi state in the early 1961. On the other hand, nationalist sentiments among Iraq's smaller communities, the third largest of which is the Turkmen, grew with the same momentum, prompting them to insist on demanding their ethnic and cultural rights.

The events that followed the fall of the Ba'ath regime in Iraq fuelled ethnical and religious conflicts. Iraqi society is a mosaic of diverse sects and religions. The challenges faced by Iraqi society, including racist dictatorship, ongoing wars and an economic blockade, have exacerbated internal divisions and conflicts. The absence of a democratic culture and system has made smaller, less powerful communities, such as the Turkmen, who lack the means to protect themselves and their regions, vulnerable to all forms of human rights violations.

Iraqi Turkmen have suffered from this situation since the establishment of the Iraqi state in 1921. Their numbers were deliberately reduced immediately after the declaration of the Iraqi state, and this process continues to this day—although this intentional reduction in their population size has been somewhat abandoned after the fall of the Ba'ath regime. Moreover, education in the Turkmen language was abolished in the 1930s, and their presence in state institutions dwindled



over time. The Ba'ath regime violated the most basic human rights, extending to all Iraqi communities, with the Turkmen being the most affected. For example, vast Turkmen lands were confiscated, the demographic composition of their regions was altered, and they were forced to change their ethnicity to Arab. The Turkmen's adherence to their national culture, the oil wealth of their regions and the fertility of their lands have been among the most important reasons why they were subjected to the injustice of the fanatical racist nationalist powers that usurped the reins of government in Iraq.

Shi'ite Turkmen suffered from the Ba'ath regime's racism on both the national and sectarian levels. Tuz Khurmatu is one of their most important areas, where their suffering and rights violations have been widespread and ethnically based. At the sectarian level, large numbers of the district's citizens were arrested and sentenced to life imprisonment or death on the pretext of belonging to secret Shiite parties. Many of them disappeared without any information or trace of their whereabouts. Their areas were subjected to attacks and artillery shelling by the army and armed Ba'athist militias after the Second Gulf War in 1990 during the Sha'ban uprising. The Dutch anthropologist Van Bruinessen observed that the "Shiite Turkmen city of Tuz Khurmatu was destroyed" (Van Bruinessen 2005: 46).

The fall of the Ba'ath regime in 2003 was followed by a period of chaos and catastrophe in Iraq. The state collapsed, along with the security and military apparatuses. Laws lost their force, security stability was completely lost, and sectarian conflicts emerged. This coincided with the onset of various terrorist attacks across Iraq, reflecting acutely in the Turkmen regions, as most of these were and are religiously and ethnically mixed.



The complete control of the Kurdish parties and Peshmerga fighters over almost all of northern Iraq immediately after the fall of the Ba'ath regime and for more than a decade after it, posed another extreme challenge to the Turkmen regions, no less serious than the sectarian conflicts of the same period. The Kurdish parties claim ownership of almost all Turkmen lands, considering these historically Kurdish lands and incorporating into the map and constitution of the Kurdish region. This monopoly enabled the Kurdish parties to monopolise power in Iraq immediately after the US-led occupation, with the full support of the latter's coalition forces, to place almost all Turkmen lands within the disputed territories, thus casting doubt on the Iraqi and Turkmen identity of these regions (Kane 2011: 13-14,22,32,37).

General information

Tuz (Duz) Khurmatu is a Turkmen name meaning salt, dates, and berries, which was a subdistrict of Kifri District in the Kirkuk Governorate. In 1922, it became a subdistrict of Tawuq (Daquq) in the same governorate (Edmonds 1957: 277). In 1951, it became a district of Kirkuk Governorate. In 1976, as part of the Arabisation policy pursued by the Ba'ath regime aimed to reduce the Turkmen population density in Kirkuk governorate, Tuz Khurmatu was separated from the Kirkuk and annexed to the Salah al-Din governorate, despite being closer to the central city of Kirkuk than to the central city of Salah al-Din Governorate. Additionally, the district forms a promontory approximately 60 km eastward in relation to Salah al-Din Governorate, indicating that its connection to Salah al-Din is political in nature. The



Tuz Khurmatu district also included the Amerli subdistrict until 2018, when the latter became a district.

The Tuz Khurmatu district is located 75 km south of Kirkuk governorate. The district consists of dozens of villages and three subdistricts: Markaz, Amerli and Sulayman Bek. Amerli separated from Tuz in 2018 and became an independent district. Tuz District had a population of 30,000 in 1922 (Edmonds 1957: 277). In the 1957 census, the population of the district's central sub-district, which covered roughly the same area as today's Tuz district, was 88,466 (Principal bureau of statistics 1958: 15). In the censuses of 1977, 1987, and 1997, the population of Tuz district was estimated at 61,744, 86,471, and 115,942, respectively (al-Bayati 2014: 60). In the 2018 estimates, the population of the district, including Amerli, was 191,729. The area of Tuz Khurmatu district, along with Amerli, is 2,316 square kilometres (Central Statistical Organisation 2018: 278).

Ethnic composition

Tuz Khurmatu is considered one of the Turkmen regions least exposed to Kurdish and Arab migration compared to many other Turkmen regions, such as the many regions in Kirkuk Governorate and the city of Erbil city (Jerjis 2022: 76). The vast majority of Arabs in Tuz Khurmatu are Arabised Turkmen from the Bayat Turkmen tribe, who reside mainly in the Sulayman Bek subdistrict and some of its villages, as well as other villages in the district. They are accompanied by a small pocket of the Arab Albu Hamdan tribe and some other Arab tribes, particularly in the Al-Hlewa area. The Kurds in the district live in the centre, and there are a few Kurdish villages to the east of Tuz Khurmatu.



It can be said that Kurdish migration westward to the Turkmen regions was relatively smaller the further south one went. Kirkuk accounted for the largest share, due to its economic recovery as a result of oil extraction, while Tuz Khurmatu's share of the Kurdish immigration was smaller than Erbil and Kirkuk's. Until the 1950s, when Kurdish migration to Kirkuk was massive, their arrival in Tuz Khurmatu was less frequent.

After the declaration of the republic in Iraq in 1958, Abdul Karim Qasim's government has built neighbourhoods in many Iraqi cities, naming these the Iskan or al-Jumhuriya Neighbourhood. Kurds acquired most of these houses in the Tuz Khurmatu city and the city of Kirkuk. The influx of Kurds continued into Turkmen areas with the start of the armed Kurdish movement (الحركة الكردية المسلحة) in the north in 1961, interspersed with periods of increasing numbers as events unfolded, like for example:

- With the collapse of the Kurdish movement in 1975, after the conclusion of the Algiers Agreement between Baghdad and Tehran.
- With the Kurdish Aghas (rural notables) selling their lands to the Iraqi government in the second half of the 1970s, particularly from the Surji, Khailani, and Khoshnaw tribes, this led to the displacement of large numbers of Kurdish villagers from their mountainous regions to cities and villages in neighbouring governorates, including Turkmen areas such as Erbil city, Kirkuk governorate, Tuz Khurmatu district and Diyala governorate.
- With the Ba'ath government demolishing a large number of villages in the northern provinces, particularly Kurdish ones, in the late 1970s and early 1980s, which triggered another large wave of Kurdish displacement.

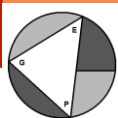


- With the Anfal operations of 1987 and 1988, which were followed by the migration of larger waves of Kurds to Turkmen districts and cities.

The Tuz Khurmatu district had its share of these migrations. The Jamila district, an unofficial name, emerged within the predominantly Kurdish Al-Jumhuriya neighbourhood toward the end of the 1970s following the migration of Kurds, particularly from villages in the Qadir Karam subdistrict in the eastern part of the Tuz Khurmatu district.

After the fall of the Ba'ath regime in 2003, and with the northern part of Iraq remaining under the control of Kurdish parties and their militants, it was easy for them to bring in thousands of families from Kurdish areas and settle them in all Turkmen areas. They built illegal housing on municipal, government, and Turkmen lands, and took control of all government buildings, housing Kurdish families in these or turning these into headquarters for Kurdish parties or the Peshmerga. The same events happened in most areas of northern Iraq, particularly in Kirkuk governorate.

In the Tuz Khurmatu district, Kurdish families built hundreds of homes on a vast expanse of land between the Al-Jumhuriya and Jamila neighbourhoods on one side and the mountains east of the city on the other. Both neighbourhoods expanded to several times their original size. The vast majority of Kurdish families were not residents of the district but had migrated from the east. When the Iraqi army entered the city on November 17, 2017, all Kurds—families, employees, and Peshmerga—left the district in fear of retribution and all of them returned seven to eight months later, with the exception of the Peshmerga, security forces and employees who had abused the Turkmen.



Thus, most of the Kurds who entered the district after the fall of the regime remained in Tuz Khurmatu. As for the expulsion of families from Tuz Khurmatu during the Ba'ath regime, the number of Turkmen people expelled reached in the hundreds, while the number of Kurds expelled did not exceed a few dozen families.

As for the Turkmen areas in Tuz Khurmatu, the district centre, which contains more than half of the district's population, and the city of Amerli, the overwhelming majority are Turkmen. The centre of Sulayman Bek district is home to an overwhelming majority of residents belonging to the Arabised Turkmen Bayat tribe, with one-tenth of the population speaking Turkmen as their first language. Turkmen also inhabit many villages in the Amerli district, the largest of which are Bir Awchili, Chardaghli, and Qara Naz, as well as villages in the Sulayman Bek district, and some villages of the Tuz Khurmatu city, including the large village of Yengija.

Thus, although Tuz Khurmatu is considered a historical Turkmen district, and the Turkmen still constitute the vast majority there despite significant Arab and Kurdish migration, many Western sources err in presenting an ethnic composition that is contrary to the reality of the population of Tuz Khurmatu. They either present equal proportions of nationalities (Gaston 2018: 52), mention Kurds first (European Asylum Support Office 2018: 2; Human Rights Watch 2017), or mention Turkmen as a third nationality (International Organisation for Migration 2024A: 1).

As is the case in all Turkmen regions, many Western sources exaggerate the size of the Kurdish presence in Tuz Khurmatu. For example, a Zoom News report indicates that "the Kurdish population in Tuz Khurmatu has decreased to 30% due to the Arabization campaign" (Zoom News



2024). However, today, after the settlement of hundreds of Kurdish families in the district after the fall of the Ba'ath regime, the actual percentage of Kurds in the district is much lower than the claimed percentage (Kirkuk Now 2024).

As for the Kurdish media, their exaggeration in distorting the facts about the ethnic distribution of the population of the Turkmen regions in favour of the Kurds is even more pronounced. In one of its reports, the Kurdish Rudaw media network increased the percentage of Kurds in the district to 40% (Rudaw 2017).

There are international reports that do confirm the Turkmen nature of the Tuz district. A report by the United Nations International Organisation for Migration states: "The Tuz Khurmatu district, home to Shia, Sunni Turkmen, Sunni Kurds, and Sunni Arab communities, is strategically located on the Kirkuk-Baghdad highway in central Iraq. The centre of Tuz Khurmatu is Turkmen in origin. Its urban centre is composed of Turkmen, Kurds, and Sunni Arab populations" (International Organisation for Migration 2024B: 7).

Today, Turkmen constitute 65% of the district's population, Kurds 25% and Arabs 10%. These proportions have been agreed upon among the district's components (Kirkuk Now 2024). In the city of Tuz Khurmatu, the proportions are as follows: Turkmen 75%, Kurds 20%, and Arabs 5%.

Historically, the vast majority of the names of people, villages, plains, valleys and rivers in the Oblique Turkmen Line (Tal Afar-Badra) were Turkmen until the early twentieth century (see Map 1 below). For example, Ali Yazdi mentioned the names of Daquq and Altun Kopru with their Turkmen names in the fourteenth century (Yazdi 1723: 451).

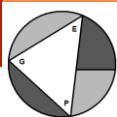


The Ottoman Almanac dating back to the Ottoman Sultan's conquest of Kirkuk in the sixteenth century mentions the names of people, cities, villages, rivers, valleys and mountains all with Turkmen names (Nakip 2008: 37-47). Likewise, all travellers who passed through the Turkmen Line for centuries mentioned these Turkmen names.

For example, James Claudia Rich, in his journey from Baghdad to Kirkuk, Sulaymaniya and to Mosul in 1820, mentioned almost all the villages, towns, and districts along the way with Turkmen names. He mentioned these names from Kifri until he headed to Sulaymaniyah from Kirkuk: Kifri, Kör Dere, Kara Oğlan, Kız Kalası, Oniki İmam, Eski Kifri, Çemen, Bayat Plain, Kuru Çay, Kızıl Haraba, Aksu River, Yenijeh, Tuz Khurmatu, Çubuk, Demir Kapı, Tawuq, Kehriz, Tawuq Çayı, Ali Saray, Jumaila, Matara, Taze Khurmatu, Laylan and Kara Hasan (Rich 1972).

The traveller Rich visited Tuz Khurmatu in 1820 and considered the ethnic nature of Tuz Khurmatu to be Turkmen and estimated its population at five thousand (Rich 1972: vol. 1, 26, 33). A British political officer who served in the Iraqi governments at the highest levels, described Tuz Khurmatu as the most important centre of the Qizilbash Turkmen sect in the province (Edmonds 1957: 277-278). The League of Nations commission that determined the fate of Mosul Vilayet in the 1920s, described Tuz Khurmatu as being entirely Turkish or Turkmen (League of Nations 1924: 38).

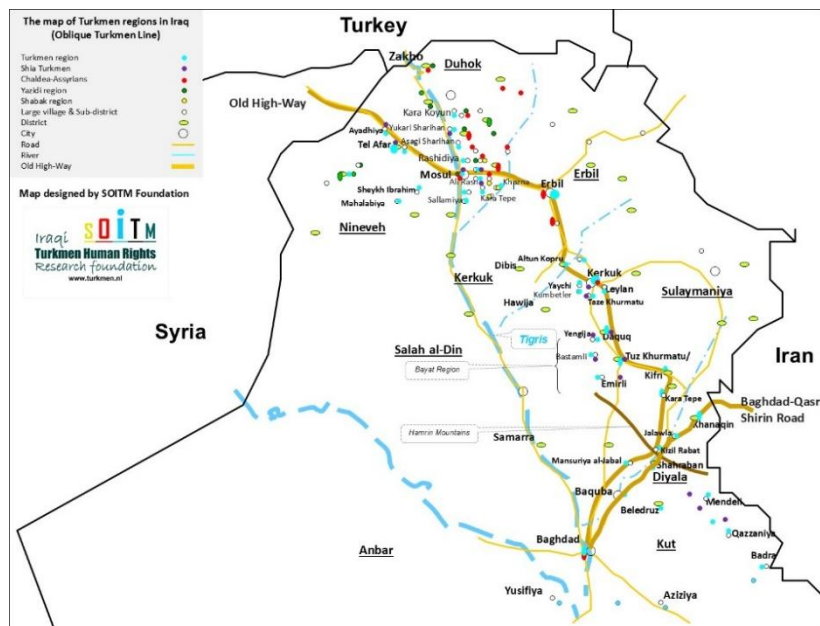
In 2018, a report by the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), supported by the United Nations Assistance Mission for Iraq (UNAMI), listed Tuz Khurmatu as one of the largest Turkmen-majority areas in Iraq considering that Turkmen constitute 7% of the population of the Diyala



province, stating “Turkomen comprise ca. 7% of the population (with significant minority populations in Kifri, Muqdadaya, Jalawla and Saadiya, and Qarataba being among the largest Turkomen-majority cities in Iraq)” (United Nations Development Programme 2018: 29).

As for the Kurdish presence in eastern Tuz Khurmatu, it is not ancient. For example, the Dawuda tribe constitutes the majority of Kurds in the eastern part of the district. Abbas al-Azzawi and Edmonds estimated their presence there to be 150 years old at most (al-Azzawi 1947: 165; Edmonds 1957: 272-273).

Map 1 Turkmen regions on the Oblique Turkmen Line from Tal Afar to Badra



Source: map designed by SOITM Foundation



Sectarian structure

The sectarian composition of Tuz Khurmatu District is as follows:

- The Turkmen in the cities of Tuz Khurmatu and Amerli, and the villages of Bir Awchili, Chardaghli, and Qara Naz, follow almost entirely the Shi'a sect of Islam.
- The centre of Sulayman Bek subdistrict, many of its villages and the villages of Amerli district are entirely follow the Sunni branch of Islam. In the large village of Yengija, Sunnis make up 80% of the population.
- The Arabs and Kurds of the district are all of Sunni sect.
- Even so, there are always some families of one sect in the areas of the other sect.

The Ba'ath regime period

Before 2003, the Turkmen in Tuz Khurmatu district faced hostility from the Ba'ath regime for two reasons: first, because they are of Turkmen origin, and second, because the majority of them are Shia. The district was also subject to Kurdish migration due to its location on the continuous Kurdish migration route to the west.

Within the framework of the racist policy that characterised the Ba'ath regime for more than three decades, Tuz Khurmatu district, like other Turkmen areas, was subjected to all forms of human rights violations. By hundreds of measures, Arabisation policies included the settlement of hundreds of thousands of Arabs in Turkmen areas, the displacement of Turkmen from their areas, forcing them to change their ethnicity,



removing all Turkmen names for cities, villages, streets, schools, businesses and even family names.

Hundreds of thousands of dunums (a little more than 900 square metres) of Turkmen land were confiscated and living conditions in Turkmen areas were made difficult by obstructing government transactions and restricting the scope of private businesses. Thousands of Turkmen were arrested, and hundreds of them were executed on the pretext of belonging to political parties. This racist policy of the Ba'ath Party was accompanied by neglect and deterioration of urban services and infrastructure in the Turkmen areas.

In the 1970s and 1980s, Arab neighbourhoods and alleyways began to appear within the city of Tuz Khurmatu. The al-Tin neighbourhood and the al-Askari neighbourhood were built for Arabs. Land was also granted to them in the Al-Asriya neighbourhood, where the government financed the construction of homes. Similarly, homes were built by Arab families in the Imam Ahmed neighbourhood.

As for land confiscation, by Revolutionary Command Council Resolution No. 369, dated March 31, 1975, as part of the largest confiscation of Turkmen land in Kirkuk Governorate, 29,871 dunums of land were expropriated in the Tuz Khurmatu district, all of whose owners were Turkmen from the district (see Appendix 1), as Tuz was one of the districts of Kirkuk Governorate.

After the fall of the Ba'ath regime, the new Iraqi government established a governmental institution called the Property Claims Commission to resolve the issue of confiscated lands throughout Iraq. The number of lawsuits filed by the Turkmen of Tuz Khurmatu before this commission reached 4,970 by



2014 to 2015, and not a single land was returned to its Turkmen owners (Unrepresented Nations and Peoples Organisation 2013: 7).

The Ba'ath regime regularly accused of hundreds of Tuz Khurmatu's Turkmen of being either nationalists belonging to national political parties or Shi'a religious parties. In a campaign of arrests that took place between 1980 and 1982, hundreds of Turkmen were arrested for their alleged affiliation with Iraqi Shi'a parties. As many as 101 of them were executed, while many others were sentenced to various harsh sentences, including life imprisonment. Many disappeared after their arrest, and many Tuz Khurmatu residents left Iraq for fear of persecution and death (Islamic Union of Iraqi Turkmen 1999).

With the withdrawal of the Iraqi army from Kuwait in March 1991, local residents took control of the administration in most Iraqi provinces. Ba'ath Party leaders were arrested, and their headquarters, as well as those of the Popular Army, security services, and police stations, were attacked, with many wounded and killed.

During this upheaval, Turkmen youth gathered in groups in the city of Tuz Khurmatu, particularly from the neighbourhoods of Mulla Safar, the Kuchuk Mosque area and the Tanki neighbourhood. They armed themselves and began writing and distributing leaflets to homes and shops, taking control of the intelligence and postal offices.

Contact was made with some Kurdish groups, and on the evening of March 11, 1991, most of the city's districts were seized, including the main police station, the security office, and later the Popular Army (الجيش الشعبي) headquarters. Turkmen armed youth set up guard posts on the outskirts of the city and prevented Kurdish militants from attacking educational



institutions. Thefts then spread to state institutions by Kurdish groups and sometimes by residents of the city itself.

The city had been subjected to artillery and mortar shelling, and occasional aerial bombardment by the Ba'athist forces and paramilitary loyalists for more than a week since the uprising began. The city was then stormed. The Iraqi army and Arab tribes overcame the resistance of the city's residents, entered the city and suppressed the uprising after residents were threatened with chemical weapons attacks following a demonstration by warplanes across the city's skies. The city was also bombed before and during the assault, killing and wounding dozens of residents and damaging many homes.

On the first day of the government regained control of the city, all residents were evacuated. When they returned to the city more than a week later, many found their homes or shops empty and their cars stolen, having been looted by the Popular Army and members of the Arab tribes. The army had arrested approximately 500 young Turkmen, most of whom were assaulted and imprisoned. Many armed Turkmen who resisted the army fled to neighbouring countries for fear of retribution.

After the fall of the Ba'ath regime

This phase began with the overthrow of the Ba'ath regime on April 9, 2003, through US military intervention. The Coalition Provisional Authority was then formed, headed by Paul Bremer, who was directly linked to the US Secretary of Defense as the governor of Iraq. Immediately after the fall of the Ba'ath regime, all Iraqi state institutions



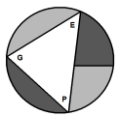
being staffed by Ba'ath Party members were dissolved, including the civil administration, security forces, and army (Baker 2003: 4).

Within the framework of the strategic partnership between the United States and Turkey, the United States was confident of Turkish support for the overthrow of the Ba'ath regime in Iraq in 2003. However, the United States was disappointed when Turkey refused to participate and did not allow the use of Turkish territory. The United States then replaced Turkey with the Kurdish parties as its sole strategic partner in Iraq.

The Kurdish parties and Peshmerga forces became the second largest force after those of the United States in administering Iraq and in rebuilding the Iraqi state and its new institutions, having received full support from the United States. The Kurdish parties came to dominate the mechanisms of governance in Iraq. The Kurdish Peshmerga fighters became the equivalent of the Iraqi army and took control of northern Iraq. Thus, all Turkmen and other minority areas in Iraq came under Kurdish control. The region remained under the absolute administrative, security, military, and economic control of the Kurdish parties for fourteen years, until 2017.

All non-Kurdish parties, including Arab, Turkmen, and Assyrian parties, were founded abroad, with the exception of the Iraqi Dawa Party; all of those parties lacked experience in governing a state even on the local level or operating as a professional opposition. The Kurdish parties, however, had thirteen years of experience in governing their regions and had established their own security and military forces, represented by the Peshmerga and the Asayish (Kurdish security).

The Kurds have long enjoyed excessive sympathy from the West, particularly because they were subjected to attacks from the states they



fought, particularly in Iraq. This was reflected in the substantial financial, logistical, political, and media assistance provided to the Kurdish parties and Kurdish society, while ignoring other Iraqi communities, the largest of which were and are the Turkmen.

In short, after the fall of the Ba'ath regime, the state's administrative, security and military institutions had collapsed and remained so for a considerable time, the rule of law was absent, chaos was rampant and violence was prevalent throughout Iraq. Kurdish parties and the Peshmerga had come to dominate the Iraqi political scene. Under these trying and harrowing circumstances, the construction of a new Iraq began from scratch, including the drafting of a new constitution.

General situation

When the Ba'ath regime fell, the same things happened in Tuz Khurmatu as happened in most of Iraq. In Tuz Khurmatu, particularly the Kurdish Peshmerga and Kurdish security forces looted all government offices and emptied them of their contents. They seized control of all government buildings, turning these into headquarters for Kurdish political parties or the Peshmerga. Kurdish forces arrested many Turkmen and expelled others from government offices, claiming they were members of the Ba'ath Party and who had wronged some Kurds before the occupation.

In northern Iraq, Arabs were politicised nationalistically and well-organised partisanly and being prepared to resist any force that would deprive them of the enormous gains granted by the Ba'ath regime. They were also prepared to defend themselves against any potential attack,



especially by Peshmerga fighters, given their role in the Ba'ath Party and the Arabisation of Kurdish, Turkmen, and other minority areas.

As for the Kurds, their parties and armed Peshmerga gained control of northern Iraq, as well as much of the Iraqi political arena and the Iraqi government. They have a strong desire to establish a Kurdish state in northern Iraq—and are prepared to avenge the injustices they suffered at the hands of the Ba'ath regime. They consider most of northern Iraq, especially the Turkmen regions and areas with other minorities, to be historically Kurdish regions. Thus they include these among the disputed territories, registering these in their constitution, and including these on their maps.

The Turkmen and other Iraqi minorities, most of whose territories are located in northern Iraq, were eager to redress the injustices they suffered at the hands of the Ba'ath regime and to obtain their cultural and national rights. They feared the control of the Kurdish parties and the co-optation of their regions. The slightest administrative, political, economic and security measures taken against them or with disadvantageous effects for them became a source of resentment among Sunnis, Turkmen and other minorities toward the state led by Shia and Kurdish parties. Tuz Khurmatu was one of the areas that met all of the afore-mentioned conditions.

The administration

The Ba'ath regime subjected Tuz Khurmatu district to continuous oppression and repression. The district housed the headquarters of political parties and the armed popular army, as well as police and intelligence

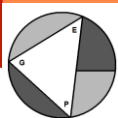


departments, where Arab Ba'athists constituted the majority. The people of Tuz Khurmatu lived in anxiety and suspicion under Ba'ath administration, lacking even the most basic weapons to protect themselves in emergency situations. As was the case throughout Iraq, all state institutions in Tuz Khurmatu were run by Ba'athist cadres with high party ranks.

The decision of making the De-Baathification Commission, issued by the US civil administrator and then-President of Iraq, Paul Bremer, at the insistence of Iraqi political parties, particularly the Shi'ite ones, just days after the fall of the Ba'ath regime on April 16, which took effect on May 16, 2003, played a major role in the disintegration of the Iraqi state. Therefore, it was necessary to form new administrative cadres for the state across all its institutions.

Tuz Khurmatu fell to Peshmerga forces led by American soldiers in April 2003. A few days later, a Kurd was appointed as Tuz Khurmatu's new mayor. Shortly thereafter, American officers met with figures from the district's Turkmen, Kurdish and Arab communities, informing them that a new council would be formed to administer the district, consisting of nine members, three from each community. The Kurd representatives requested four, one more than the other communities, a request rejected by the Turkmen and Arab representatives. At the same time, the Arabs generally were reluctant to participate in the process.

Ultimately, it was agreed that the council would have twenty-one members, seven from each community, despite the Turkmen having a greater claim as the majority in the district and the region being known for its Turkmen identity. This was similar to many Turkmen-majority areas and other regions in northern Iraq where the rights of the Turkmen majority were deliberately downplayed and ignored. This situation was



repeated in the 2005 provincial council elections. Since all Iraqi general and local elections in the Turkmen regions were held under the absolute control of the Kurdish parties and the Peshmerga, and in the absence of security stability, the Kurds achieved results far superior to their actual presence in all areas of northern Iraq (see Table 1 below).

American officers supervised the formation of the new council in the district. It was agreed that the council presidency would be assigned to a Turkmen. The Turkmen Front intervened and imposed its own particular candidate for the presidency. However, the Kurds and Arabs rejected this Turkmen candidate, claiming that he was an active member of the Ba'ath Party, and demanded another candidate. But the Turkmen Front did not withdraw its candidate, and it was decided to hold elections for the council presidency.

The Kurds and Arabs agreed, as some of the council members were Arabs chosen from among those close to the Kurds. They elected an Arab to the presidency, and an American representative attended council meetings. A Kurd from outside the police force was appointed director of the judicial police, and the Kurds took control of all state institutions in Tuz Khurmatu.

Although the directors of some departments were Turkmen, they were under the control of the Kurdish administration. Later, when it was necessary to appoint people to sovereign positions in the judiciary, the Judicial Council would send three names, one from each ethnic group to the relevant ministry, and in most cases, the Kurdish name was approved. This administrative structure remained largely unchanged until the Iraqi army took control of the district in 2017 (Derzsi-Horvath 2017; Note 1).



So immediately after the fall of the Ba'ath regime, the Kurdish parties and the Peshmerga appointed large numbers of Kurds from outside the city to government offices, especially in the health and education directorates, and they became the overwhelming majority in the police department. The Kurdish Security Directorate (*Asayish*) formed the security apparatus consisting almost exclusively of Kurds, and the Peshmerga became the army of the district.

Table 1 Various estimates of the Kurdish population in various areas along the Oblique Turkmen Line after the fall of the Ba'ath regime *

City name		Population	No. of Council Members	No. of Kurds in the Council	Kurdish % in the Council (†)	Kurdish % in the city
Khanaqin	Centre	66,700	20	16	80	70
	Jalawla	60,425	20	8	40	20
Qizil Rabat	Centre	41,115	17	8	47	20
	Balad Ruz	88,225	20	?	?	Very small
Mandali	Centre	23,713	20	10	50	25
	Qazzaniya	15,042	20	2	10	Very little
Kifri	Centre	50,000	10	10	100	75
	Qara Tepe	33,653	20	8	40	10
Tuz Khurmatu District		±150,000	21	7	33	20
Erbil Governorate		±1,000,000	41	38	93	80
Kirkuk Governorate		850,000 (‡)	41	26	63	(*)

* Table 1 intends to illustrate the increase in the number of Kurdish members in municipal councils in those areas relative to the size of the Kurdish population.

(†) Percentage of Kurds in district and subdistrict councils according to appointments under the supervision of the American military, Kurdish political parties, and Kurdish Peshmerga that took place in 2003, and in provincial councils according to the elections that took place in January 2005.

(‡) Population of Kirkuk governorate during fall of the Ba'ath regime in 2003 (International Crisis Group 2006: 2).

(*) There are no reliable statistics or estimates.



Military and security forces in the district from 2003 to 2017

Kurdish Peshmerga

From the first day after the fall of the Ba'ath regime, Kurdish parties controlled the vast majority of northern Iraq and large parts of Diyala and Salah al-Din provinces (Kane 2011: 9, 14-15). The Peshmerga were the sole military force in these vast territories, and the police and security services were subordinate to the Kurdish parties. There were three Peshmerga brigades in the Tuz Khurmatu district, and the Kurdish parties controlled the security and police services.

With the Islamic State of Iraq and Syria (ISIS) (الدولة الإسلامية في العراق والشام) occupation of eastern Tuz Khurmatu in 2014, the Kurdistan regional government deployed an additional fourth brigade of Peshmerga fighters to Tuz Khurmatu, claiming to bolster security in the area. However, just as the other three Peshmerga brigades deployed in the area did not provide protection for the Turkmen, the deployment of the fourth brigade did not.

Federal police

As attacks on Turkmen in the region increased by ISIS, with bombings sometimes reaching as many as 24 per day, the Iraqi government deployed a federal police (الشرطة الاتحادية) regiment in 2011 despite opposition and threats from Kurdish parties and the Peshmerga. The federal police were stationed in the Silo area outside the city, but they were subjected to frequent harassment by the Peshmerga.

The presence of the federal police did not mitigate attacks on the Turkmen; rather, it increased the bombings. When ISIS took control of the



western part of the district, Peshmerga forces attacked the Federal Police headquarters, expelling them from the district and seizing their vehicles and weapons, including tanks. During the same period, the Peshmerga also expelled Baghdad-backed forces in Kirkuk governorate. Under the control of the security apparatuses affiliated with the Kurdish parties and the Kurdish Security Service (Asayish-اسایش), the Kurds rejected the Turkmen parties' persistent requests and strenuous efforts to establish armed Turkmen factions to protect themselves and their areas.

Iraqi and Turkmen Shi'a armed factions

The Kurds continued to refuse the entry of the Iraqi army and any other armed faction into Tuz Khurmatu, despite the genocide being continued committed against the Turkmen by ISIS. The fatwa issued by the Shia religious authority, Ali al-Sistani, in Najaf in mid-2014 calling for the formation of a popular army made the Kurds accept formation of Turkmen Popular Army factions. The siege of Amerli by ISIS, which became an international issue, forced the Kurdish parties to accept the entry of Shiite factions into Tuz Khurmatu. In June 2014, Asaib Ahl al-Haq, Hezbollah, the Badr Organisation, and Saraya al-Salam entered the district.

The new Iraqi army

The Iraqi armed and security forces were largely politicised and partisan under the Ba'athist state, and completely disintegrated with the fall of the regime, leaving the entire Iraqi society in a state of complete insecurity amidst political, sectarian and ethnic instability. Rebuilding the Iraqi army and security services took many years, and these still suffer from a lack of professionalism and administrative and military problems.



As it is mentioned elsewhere, with the advent of the new era, and for years, Kurds played a major role in establishing and filling positions in the new military institutions. For example, starting with assuming the positions of Chief of Staff of the Army and Commander of the Air Force, they also had a significant presence in the new military divisions formed in Mosul, where a large number of unqualified Kurds were appointed as soldiers and commanders, most of whom were Peshmerga (Mahdi 2013). After nearly 14 years, the Iraqi army wrested control of all areas of northern Iraq from the Kurdish parties and the Peshmerga, with the exception of the three Kurdish provinces, in October 2017.

Sectarian and nationalist violence (2003-2017)

After the fall of the Ba'ath regime, all conditions were ripe for sectarian and nationalist violence. The state collapsed administratively, security-wise, and militarily, primarily due to the United States' mismanagement of the overthrow of Saddam Hussein's dictatorship and the subsequent administration of Iraq, the rule of law disappeared, and marginalised Islamist Shiite and Kurdish parties assumed leadership of the government and state. The Ba'athists were numerous and intellectually and militarily armed. They began exploiting nationalist and sectarian sentiments immediately after the fall, having inflamed them to the maximum extent during their rule. Almost all Turkmen areas, including Tuz Khurmatu, had a mixed sectarian and ethnic character.

Sectarian violence began immediately after the fall of the regime. In the first months after the fall of the Ba'ath regime, two incidents in the cities of Tuz Khurmatu and Kirkuk confirmed Turkmen suspicions that the



Kurdish parties intended to control and contain their areas and suppress any attempts to oppose the dominance of the Kurdish parties and the Peshmerga in their areas. These incidents also added momentum to the sectarian and ethnic conflict.

On August 20, 2003, Kurdish Peshmerga gunmen, who controlled the district, blew up the Mursi Ali shrine, a holy site for Shiite Turkmen in Tuz Khurmatu (Mufti 2017). The next day, groups of Turkmen held a peaceful demonstration in the city centre, but Peshmerga forces attacked the demonstration and opened fire, killing five Turkmen and wounding many others. The following day, other peaceful demonstrations took place in Kirkuk in support of the Turkmen of Tuz Khurmatu. Peshmerga forces also attacked them, killing some Turkmen demonstrators and wounding many others.

These two incidents in Tuz Khurmatu and Kirkuk were among the first terrorist bombings against religious shrines and killings of peaceful protestors, igniting sectarian and ethnic strife in Iraq. Sectarian violence quickly spread throughout Iraq, in the absence of law and order and state institutions.

Then came the bombing of the two major Shia shrines in Samarra on February 22, 2006. Violence in Iraq escalated even further. All Turkmen areas, especially the Shia Turkmen areas south of Kirkuk, which also includes the Tuz Khurmatu district, were subjected to the largest and most violent explosions in Iraq. The Kurdish Peshmerga forces were the only force protecting the region, dominating and controlling it completely.

Violence rapidly increased in the Tuz Khurmatu district; the number of explosions was estimated at several per month during the first post-Ba'athist years, including massive explosions in the village of Yengija and the district's city of Amerli. This later increased to several



explosions per week. By the end of the first decade of the twenty-first century, explosions had become daily, sometimes multiple times a day. They increased dramatically with the increase in ISIS activity in the western part of the district and, at the same time. By the beginning of the second decade, the number of daily explosions sometimes reached dozens. The explosions were accompanied by assassinations and kidnappings of Turkmen (see Appendix 3).

The psychological state of the district's Turkmen was in shambles. During one of the sit-ins held by the people of Tuz Khurmatu under the title "Tuz Khurmatu is calling... Is there a helper to help us?" in front of one of the largest religious shrines in the city of Karbala. In an attempt to draw the attention of Shiite religious authorities to their tragedy, one of the sit-in organisers said: "We are holding a sit-in today next to Imam Hussein so that the world may know the extent of our suffering and concerns that have been hidden from public opinion and ignored even by those closest to us for unknown reasons" (Ruwaih 2013).

Appendix II shown further below contains detailed information on some of the hundreds of terrorist attacks targeting Turkmen areas in Tuz Khurmatu district. Appendix III includes the names of a large number of Turkmen who were killed, assassinated, or kidnapped in Tuz Khurmatu between 2003 and 2009 alone, a number that doubled several times between 2010 and 2014. Many of the assassinations occurred in front of their homes or shops, and most of the kidnappings took place outside the city while residents were traveling. Some were aimed at extorting large ransoms from the kidnapped person's family. For example, Turkmen in Kirkuk governorate paid approximately \$50 million to secure their kidnappers' release (SOITM Foundation 2019: 86; Mufti 2015).



The Turkmen Rescue Foundation estimated the losses of the Turkmen of Tuz Khurmatu between 2003 and 2014 at approximately 600 dead, mostly men, 3,600 injured, including women and children, 160 kidnapped and 1,500 families displaced from the district. The number of homes and shops demolished or closed reached 1,200 homes and 200 shops (Note 2). The 2018 report of the Iraqi High Commission for Human Rights estimated the number of Turkmen disabled in the district as a result of bombings at approximately 1,670 people (Iraqi High Commission for Human Rights 2018: 9). An official from the Turkmen Front office in Tuz Khurmatu estimated the number of families displaced from the district to safe areas in 2013 alone at 500, saying “There is no worse place in the world for Turkmens than Tuz” (Zurutuza 2014).

All areas of Tuz Khurmatu district suffered from massive bombings, indicating the systematic targeting of Turkmen areas. The following incidents concern some of the major bombings:

- The Great Mosque explosion in Tuz Khurmatu 2005

The explosion of the Great Mosque in Tuz in September 2005 was one of the major terrorist attacks at the time, killing at least eleven people and wounding twenty-five others (Al-Jazeera 2005). The Euphrates News Agency put the death toll in the Great Mosque explosion at 24 dead and 56 wounded, with the mosque completely destroyed (Buratha News Agency 2013).

- The assault on the village of Yengija in 2006

The village of Yengija, located 10 to 15 kilometres southwest of Tuz Khurmatu, was subjected to constant harassment by the Iraqi National Guard at the time, which was largely composed of Peshmerga forces. On



the evening of March 10, 2006, the National Guard surrounded the village and shelled it indiscriminately with rifles and mortars. By midnight, the village was stormed. Peshmerga forces ordered people via mosque loudspeakers to remain in their homes or they would be shot if they left. The operation lasted approximately 24 hours.

During the indiscriminate shooting of the village, two persons (aged 32 and 26) were killed and nineteen people were injured. The village's water and electricity sources were the first to be attacked. Almost all of the water tanks on the roofs of houses were shot at and punctured. Generators, electricity cables, and poles were destroyed. Two houses were severely damaged, and six others were partially destroyed. Private cars, motorcycles, and tractors belonging to villagers were shot at in front of houses (SOITM 2006).

- Aksu Café bombing in 2006

On June 16, 2006, a suicide bomber detonated an explosive device inside the Aksu Café in the district, killing 25 people, wounding 34 and completely destroying the café (Buratha News Agency 2013).

- Amerli bombing in 2007

In one of the largest terrorist attacks in Iraq's history since 2003, a truck bomb exploded in a popular Bazar in the centre of Amerli sub-district, which was then part of Tuz Khurmatu (now Amerli district), on July 7, 2007, killing approximately 160 people and wounding 240 others (al-Jarida 2007: 18).

- Taza Khurmatu bombing in 2009

Taza Khurmatu is a large Shiite Turkmen village located outside Tuz Khurmatu district, located between it and the city of Kirkuk. It was also



under the 'protection' of the Kurdish Peshmerga. On June 20, 2009, a truck bomb exploded, killing 73 people and wounding 200, including women and children. It also destroyed approximately 30 homes (al-Ansary 2009).

- Husseinayat Sayyid al-Shuhada bombing in 2013

On January 23, 2013, a suicide bomber wearing an explosive belt detonated an explosive device inside the Sayyid al-Shuhada Husseinayat (Mosque) itself, killing 42 people and wounding 45 others.

The period of the Turkmen and Iraqi Shi'a armed factions (2014-2017)

The Turkmen remained disarmed and exposed to daily terror until 2014. In the middle of that year, the Islamic State (ISIS) swept through all the villages and the Sulayman Bek district, south of Tuz Khurmatu. However, it was unable to enter the city of Tuz Khurmatu, besieging Amerli city on June 11, 2014. After fierce and unequal resistance to the attacking force, which possessed various transport vehicles and tanks, the residents of Shi'ite villages, such as Bir Awhili, Qara Naz, and Chardaghli, took refuge in the city of Tuz, and some of them in the city of Kirkuk (Hauslohner 2014); at least twenty-six people were killed, and ISIS forces entered the villages and inflicted great destruction on them.

Despite this, the Kurds continued to refuse to allow the Iraqi army or any other armed group to enter the district to help fight ISIS and protect the Turkmen, until al-Sistani issued a fatwa authorising the formation of the Popular Mobilisation Forces (PMF) (قوات الحشد الشعبي) on June 13, 2014. This time, the Kurdish parties and Peshmerga were unable to



prevent the Turkmen of Tuz Khurmatu from forming armed groups to defend themselves and their region.

The siege of Amerli became an international issue, and international public opinion became more concerned with saving it from falling into the hands of ISIS in the region. At that point, the Kurdish forces were unable to prevent the entry of armed Shi'a factions into the Tuz Khurmatu district. In mid-June 2014, armed factions from *Asaib Ahl al-Haq* (League of the Righteous), *Hezbollah* (Party of God), *Badr* organisation, and *Saraya al-Salam* (Peace Companies) entered the district via the eastern Kifri district, where ISIS militants were targeting the main road between Tuz Khurmatu and Baghdad.

Shi'a party factions arriving in Tuz Khurmatu were able to lift the siege of Amerli, leading to the rapid collapse of ISIS. The western part of the district and its villages were liberated within a few weeks. Turkmen factions, formed in Tuz district based on the *fatwa* of al-Sistani, joined the Shi'a party factions in the fight against ISIS. The security situation required the Turkmen and Shia factions to remain in the district.

ISIS's brutal control of many of the district's villages, and its subsequent defeat, and the sectarian animosity it instigated, had extremely painful consequences for the district. Many people were killed and wounded, and many homes and shops, sometimes entire alleys, were destroyed. The villages had been completely emptied of their Shi'ites when ISIS arrived, and then of their Sunnis when they were liberated by Shi'ite factions. Many villages remained empty for months and years, and a large number of residents have not returned to their villages to this day.



Under the new reality, the security situation in the district has improved, and attacks on Turkmen declined significantly, though some bombings still occurred:

- On August 29, 2014, ISIS shelled the military neighbourhood in Tuz Khurmatu, killing five people and wounding twenty-five others, including five women and six children.
- On July 25, 2015, at least twelve people were killed when two suicide bombers attacked a crowded swimming pool in Tuz Khurmatu.
- On October 22, 2015, a car bomb exploded outside a Shiite Mosque in the city, killing five people and wounding 40 others.
- On December 12, 2017, a mortar attack on the city centre killed civilians in central Tuz Khurmatu.
- On November 21, 2017, at least 23 people were killed and 60 others wounded in a suicide bombing in the city.

Resentment and discontent among the Kurdish parties and the Peshmerga over the presence of Shiite and Turkmen armed factions in the district became a source of ongoing tension, leading to three major clashes between the Peshmerga and Turkmen armed factions between 2014 and 2017.

The first major clash occurred on October 16, 2015, when Kurdish Peshmerga forces opened fire on a group of Turkmen belonging to the armed factions from the village of Chardaghli as they passed through a checkpoint at one of the city's entrances, killing three-five Turkmen. In response, armed Turkmen attacked a Peshmerga detachment, killing several of them.



Clashes spread throughout Tuz Khurmatu, with Kurdish peshmergas burning five to ten Turkmen homes in the Aksu neighbourhood, and Turkmen burning Kurdish shops in several Turkmen neighbourhoods. Peshmerga forces then burned approximately thirty Turkmen homes in the al-Barid neighbourhood. A number of armed Kurds stormed the home of Turkmen writer and politician Cevdet Kadioglu and forcibly took him away in front of his family. His fate remains unknown to this day. The religious authority and Shiite parties then intervened, calming the clashes, which had lasted for two days (Imamli 2015).

The second major clash occurred as a result of the Peshmerga's continued harassment of citizens in Turkmen neighbourhoods, particularly by a well-known gang in the city led by a Kurd named Goran, who extorted money from the city's wealthy Turkmen. At a time when the Kurdish political parties and security forces were still firmly established in the city centre, in the heart of the Turkmen areas, the clashes erupted.

On November 15, 2016, the Peshmerga shelled the headquarters of the Turkmen armed factions, killing eight people. On the same day, the Peshmerga shelled the Shiite endowment with tanks, prompting similar responses from the Turkmen factions. The clashes continued for a day and a half, after which some kind of a reconciliation was reached. However, the situation remained tense between the two sides, marred by minor incidents until coming of the Iraqi army in October 2017.

The third major clash between Turkmen factions and Peshmerga occurred when the Iraqi army entered the city on October 17, 2017. Peshmerga, police, and Kurdish security forces confronted the Iraqi army and attacked Turkmen neighbourhoods at the same time.



According to some witnesses, hundreds of shells fell on Turkmen areas, killing at least five Turkmen and wounding about thirty others. Dozens of Turkmen homes were also burned.

Shi'ite armed factions cooperated with the Iraqi army to secure the central government's control of the district, and the Turkmen burned some Kurdish homes, in addition to about thirty homes belonging to the Goran gang. As it is mentioned elsewhere in this article, all Kurds left the district after entering the Iraqi army in it, and the Kurdish neighbourhoods were emptied. The Iraqi army captured about twenty Peshmerga and handed them over to Kurdish parties.

In October 2017, the Iraqi army entered all of northern Iraq and expelled the Kurdish parties and Peshmerga from them, with the exception of the three governorates within the Kurdish region.

The role of Kurdish parties in the tragedy of the Turkmen of Tuz Khurmatu

Many Turkmen residents, intellectuals, and politicians in Tuz Khurmatu believe that the Kurdish administration played a direct role in this dark period their district experienced between 2003 and 2017. In addition to turning a blind eye to attacks by Sunni extremists and ISIS against Turkmen, there is reasonable speculation that Peshmerga and Kurdish security forces played a direct role in the attacks, assassinations and kidnappings targeting Turkmen in Tuz Khurmatu. As for the plausible reasons for these speculations:

- The Kurds had exclusive control over the district, particularly the city of Tuz Khurmatu, administratively, militarily, and security-wise.



- Three Peshmerga brigades controlled all entrances to the city then the fourth came in 2014.
- The entire security apparatus and police forces in the district were Kurdish and under Kurdish administration.
- These Kurdish forces surrounded the city from all sides, set up checkpoints and monitored all the entrances and exits of the city.
- All explosions occurred in the Turkmen neighbourhoods of the city only.
- The Kurdish politicians and intellectuals have an unbridled desire to establish a Kurdish state in northern Iraq at any cost.
- Kurdish politicians and writers consider most of northern Iraq, including all Turkmen areas, to be historically Kurdish regions and part of their historic homeland, Kurdistan (Kane 2011: 13-14). Kurdish schools have taught this view for many years, even decades now, convincing the Kurdish people of this myth. Western reports, articles and books played an important role in this process. Thus, Kurdish intellectuals and the Kurdish people have grown resentful that Arabs and Turkmen have occupied and still live in their historic homeland.
- Kurdish parties have succeeded in casting doubt on the identity of the Turkmen regions and many other areas in northern Iraq by including them among the disputed territories in the Iraqi constitution, enshrining them in the constitution of so-called Kurdistan, and including them on their own official maps.
- The Kurdish authorities rejected all attempts by Turkmen politicians and parties to involve the Turkmen at checkpoints at the city's entrances and exits. As previously mentioned, they refused formation of



armed Turkmen factions to protect the Turkmen, and they also refused the entry of any Iraqi forces into the district to protect them.

- All Kurds, including the Peshmerga and security forces, Kurdish police, all Kurdish employees, and all Kurdish families, left when the Iraqi army entered the city, and all Kurdish neighbourhoods became empty, fearing reprisals.

True, all these reasons at this stage are speculations, however plausible and credible. These do not (yet) constitute definite proofs that particular Kurdish individuals, units and institutions directly planned, ordered, executed and participated in all these violent incidents against the Turkmen in Tuz Khurmatu and other Turkmen areas, particularly in Kirkuk Governorate. These reasons offer circumstantial evidence at best.

Therefore, additional research needs to be done to identify—and prosecute at local, national or international courts—those truly responsible for these crimes against the Turkmen, irrespective of their Kurdish or any other identity.

Western sources and pro-Kurdish bias

There are several reasons for the West's embrace of the Kurdish cause. These include the West's search for strategic partners in a sensitive region like the Middle East, the Kurds' openness to the West, their status as one of the world's largest ethnic groups without their own (ethno-) nation state, and they were subjected to fierce attacks from the countries in which they revolted and rebelled against the state.



The Kurds' association with the ancient peoples of the Zagros region, their robust nature, the beauty of their lands, and the charm of their terrain, which includes towering mountains and rugged valleys, have attracted many Western travellers over the centuries, who have published their fascinating stories about the Kurdish ethnicity. This has created a bright and dazzling aura around the Kurds in the West, leading to increased media coverage of the Kurds in Western literature and studies.

Decades of Ba'ath rule followed, fostering the development of the Kurdish movement and exposing the Kurds to repression and bloody events. This situation has led to increased interest in the Kurdish issue by Western strategic centres, and numerous reports, articles and studies have been published on the Kurds, their history, geography, suffering, and cause. Because Iraq was not open to field research, most of these publications interpreted, and sometimes distorted, facts to favour the Kurds. In other words, Western interpretations of the region's events, politics, history, and geography were influenced by their focus on the Kurdish issue at the expense of other Iraqi communities, especially the Turkmen, who constitute a vast geographic area and a significant proportion of the population.

The prioritisation of national interests in Western foreign policies, often at the expense of values of justice and human rights established by Western societies, naturally reinforces the conspiracy theory prevalent in non-democratic societies about the treatment and intentions of Western states toward their societies and countries. This is manifested in questioning the intentions and behaviour of all Western governmental and non-governmental institutions in those countries. One reason for this is that state control over all areas of administration and much of social life is normal in non-democratic cultures.



This phenomenon is clearly evident in the West's handling of the Kurdish issue. The majority of peoples suffering from the Kurdish problem, such as Iraqis, Turks and Syrians, believe that Western countries, with all their institutions, are biased toward the Kurds and support them in achieving national strategic gains. These peoples believe that the news, reports and research published by Western media outlets, civil society organisations, and universities are deliberately prepared according to this strategy and represent a Western positive bias in favour of the Kurds.

Addressing these unconstructive perceptions in non-democratic cultures is essential to improving their perceptions of the democratic system and human rights principles. This will undoubtedly contribute to positive interaction between these societies and Western culture and their countries eventually.

Regarding the relevance of this phenomenon to the subject of this study, it is clear that the thousands of reports and studies published by Western media, human rights organisations, and universities on the subject of the study did not reflect even a small part of the reality of the tragedies suffered by the Turkmen in Tuz Khurmatu and Kirkuk too at the hands of Kurdish parties and Peshmergas over the fourteen years covered by this study.

Furthermore, Western communities have been preoccupied with the Kurdish issue for nearly a century, which has been reflected in their policies and treatment in favour of the Kurds, despite the presence of other major communities in Iraq that, like the Kurds, were subjected to the most horrific human rights violations under the Ba'ath regime.



Nor did Western sources ever address the inability of the Peshmerga militias as an unprofessional military force, especially in such circumstances when the central state and all its institutions were absent, given that the Iraqi government had declared its inability to protect the Turkmen for most of the period covered by this study (Minority Rights Group International 2014: 6, 14).

Western studies have not demonstrated the Kurdish parties' unbridled desire to establish a Kurdish state and the permissibility of using all the available means to achieve this. In the photo shown further below (Photo 1), published on a German news website in September 2014, Kurdish Peshmerga forces are shelling the large Turkmen village of Bastamli from an isolated angle, claiming that ISIS is there. Under the prevailing conditions in the region at the time, the Kurdish Peshmerga forces, the only armed force in the district, could not be absolved of the daily artillery shelling that targeted Tuz Khurmatu and dozens of Turkmen villages in the district for years (Bickel 2014).

It is worth noting that the Kurdish parties and Peshmerga forces were Kurdifying Tuz Khurmatu and all areas of northern Iraq, especially those belonging to minorities, without the Iraqi government and coalition forces taking any action to prevent this. A report of the Middle East Centre of London School of Economics and Political Science mentioned the followings "The Kurds, who took advantage of US backing and occupied the buildings of the former Iraqi regime. They held the office of the mayor and other key positions and sought to administratively align the city with Kirkuk over and above Tikrit. Ultimately, they filled the political and governmental vacuum in the district, leaving the large Turkmen and Arab communities of Tuz Khurmatu mostly powerless ...



When the Turkmen and Arabs began to complain about the 'Kurdification' of Tuz Khurmatu in 2004 and 2005, US forces and administrators took limited measures to balance out the local distribution of power" (Skelton 2019: 17).

Regarding the Kurdification of the Turkmen regions, a report of the international Crisis group mentioned the following: "Unwilling, for now, to cross its most reliable Iraqi allies, Washington has largely stood silent in the face of Kirkuk's progressive Kurdification; to lessen tensions created by the flood of displaced Kurds coming to the town, it also has launched wide-scale countryside rehabilitation. Moreover, it provides technical support and indirect funding to the Iraq Property Claims Commission. When accused of aiding Kirkuk's Kurdification, officials reportedly replied that other communities were free to bring their people into the town" (International Crisis Group 2006: 2).

If we take the numbers of Western publications and sources about the Kurdish issue in Iraq, we find that these are hundreds of times greater than the numbers published about other Iraqi minorities, especially the Turkmen, whose suffering was not much less than the suffering of the Kurds, and whose population (9%) was not much less than the population of the Kurds (13%) (Knights 2004: 262; Shah 2003: 4).

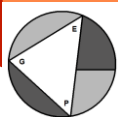


Photo 1 Peshmerga artillery shelling the Turkmen village of Bastamli, south of Tuz Khurmatu District



Source: Markus Bickel, 'Kein Schneller Krieg (No Quick Victory)' *Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung*, 9 May 2014.

It has become clear today that the deliberate dwarfing of the Turkmen population number in Iraq by the British Mandate of Iraq and the Iraqi monarchy when the Iraqi Kingdom was established after World War I was for geopolitical reasons.

The preliminary results of the 1957 census, which many Western authorities considered closer to reality in terms of the size of Iraq's small constituents (minorities), but which the Turkmen rejected, showed that the total Turkmen population in Iraq was 136,806 (Al-Zubaidi 1981: 28). It should be noted that the General Directorate of Population, which conducted the 1957 census, was affiliated with the Ministry of Interior



(General Directorate of Population 1957), and Saeed Qazzaz, a Kurd from Sulaymaniya, was the Minister of Interior (Saleh 2010: 309n16). However, the revised results of the same census, issued in 1958, when the minister had changed, showed that the total Turkmen population in Iraq was 567,000 (Knights 2004: 262; Shah 2003: 4).

According to the General Directorate of Population, the initial results of the same census estimated the Kurdish population in Kirkuk Governorate at 48.3% (General Directorate of Population 1957: 243). The Kurds rely on these results in their claims to ownership of Kirkuk Governorate and its inclusion in the Kurdish region (Kane 2011: 5). However, revised results of the same census, as mentioned above, showed that the Turkmen population in Iraq was approximately four times higher than the initial results. This increase in the Turkmen population did not apply to the city and governorate of Kirkuk, which would undoubtedly have led to a decrease in the proportion of Kurds in both the city and governorate.

It is worth noting that the 1957 census estimated the number of Kurds in Iraq at about 900,000 people (13%) of the total populations of Iraq (Knights 2004: 262; Shah 2003: 4). However, today the Kurds, with all their administrative, political and academic authorities, along with Western sources and references, exaggerate the number of Kurds in Iraq, sometimes to the extent of 25% (Jongerden 2016: 1; Bengio 2017: 15; Lasky 2018: 1), and thus they obtain privileges and gains from the Iraqi state by inflating their percentage of the total population of Iraq.

However, all but two or three Western publications (Knights 2004: 262; Shah 2003: 4) ignore the revised census results and solely cite the preliminary results, which underestimate the size of the Turkmen



population in Iraq by approximately four times. The adjusted results for individual Turkmen regions, particularly Kirkuk, have not been published, as the Kurdish claim to Kirkuk is based primarily on the preliminary erroneous results of the 1957 census, which logically suggests that the Turkmen population in Kirkuk at that time was deliberately dwarfed fourfold.

Any researcher of the geography of northern Iraq can easily notice the widespread presence of Turkmen, whose vast lands extend across all northern governorates, including Salah al-Din, all of Diyala and even Kut governorate. Dozens of Western reports on the massive displacement of people during the rise of ISIS reveal a significant Turkmen presence among displaced families throughout northern Iraq, including Diyala and Salah al-Din provinces (United Nations Development Programme 2018: 33, 66-67, 29-30).

A quick look at Iraq's history, and the sources are multiple, indicates that the mass Kurdish migration from the east to Turkmen regions is not ancient, having increased significantly only since the 1930s. However, most Western reports and other research outputs do not address this issue. Rather, many consider Turkmen regions, such as the Kifri district and the city of Erbil, where the Kurdish population subsequently increased, to be historically Kurdish regions.

In the same context, many Western reports consider Tuz Khurmatu a Kurdish region or mention Kurds first when mentioning its components—even though Turkmen still constitute the majority (65%) in Tuz Khurmatu (Kirkuk Now 2024).



So overall, information can be found distorted in favour of the Kurds in most Western reports. To take just example among numerous, Vice Media misinterpreted the barriers built by the Turkmen to repel attacks as barriers to protect the Kurds from snipers (McDiarmid 2016).

According to a report by the International Crisis Group, “During 2003-2017, the city of Tuz saw frequent clashes between Kurdish parties ... and Turkmen parties Tuz’s Kurdish residents fled, and the Hashd wrought major destruction on Kurdish property. Backed by the Hashd, local government administrators sacked Kurdish public employees who did not return, replacing them with Turkmen” (International Crisis Group 2018: 16, 17).

In reality, the Turkmen were defenceless, exposed to daily terrorist attacks, and unable to confront the three Peshmerga brigades and the exclusively Kurdish security and police forces that controlled the city. Moreover, after the formation of the Turkmen armed factions in 2014, three clashes with the Peshmerga occurred there, up until 2017. This study already has provided details of these clashes elsewhere, and the commentary on the Amnesty International report in the following paragraph provides details of the Kurds’ flight from the city after the arrival of the Iraqi army and the damage inflicted in their areas, and how it was exaggerated.

An Amnesty International report on the Iraqi army’s entry into Tuz Khurmatu in October 2017, which must have been transmitted by the Kurds, clearly distorts the facts in favour of the Kurds. The report states: “It looked like 90% of the buildings in al-Jumhuiriya were burned Those who had returned briefly to the city reported seeing extensive damage to homes in al-Jumhuriya and Hai Jamila, both Kurdish-majority neighbourhoods”. In the article, Amnesty



International published a satellite image of part of Tuz Khurmatu showing some red and black spots to support its claims. It did not give any title for the image other than to indicate some of the black spots, claiming these were smoke rising from burning Kurdish homes. However, the locations of the red and black spots in the image are overwhelmingly in Turkmen areas. The image also shows the al-Jumhuriya neighbourhood mainly populated by Kurds, where there are almost no black or red spots (Amnesty International 2017 (incl. quotes); see Photo 2 further below). As usual, the Kurdish media distorted the facts even further (Rudaw 2017).

As mentioned above, the reliance of Western authorities, including academics, on politicians, intellectuals, Peshmerga fighters, and other Kurdish actors as sources of information about Iraqi minorities, especially the Turkmen, is one of the most important reasons why Western reports and other research outputs present misleading and even false information in favour of the Kurds and their cause at the expense of non-Kurdish Iraqi communities.

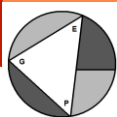
For example, a Western academic resurrected the Turkmen poet Hijri Dede about twenty years after his death in 1952 and appointed him a member of the Turkmen Writers' Union, with the aim of demonstrating the Turkmen's attempts to erase Kirkuk's Kurdish identity and portray prominent Kurdish figures as Turkmen. He also stated that Hijri Dede did not write poetry in Turkmen (Leezenberg 1994: 12). However, the overwhelming majority of Hijri Dede's poems are in Turkmen (Fieldhouse 2002: 176); true he also has poems in Persian—but no poems in Kurdish (Mardan 2010: 12; Kakai 2019: 10).



An *Al-Jazeera* report stated the following: “Beshtowan Kadir, 44, says ... When he is wearing traditional Kurdish clothes, he cannot visit the market. The Shia militia would kill me the minute they see me. Some [Kurds] have lost their lives only because of who they are, and those who are still alive cannot reveal their identity” (Khoder 2016). This information starkly contrasts with the reality of Tuz Khurmatu district between 2003 and 2017, when the Kurds controlled the city with a large number of Peshmerga, and the security and police forces were entirely Kurdish. The Turkmen in the district were in a precarious position, unable even to defend themselves. The Shi’ite factions that entered Tuz in 2014 were affiliated with Shiite parties with close ties to Kurdish parties and thus were careful not to jeopardise their relationship amid the security chaos in Iraq.

One must keep in mind that after the fall of the Ba’ath regime, Iraq opened up to Western media, human rights organisations, and research centres, while vast areas of Iraq were under Kurdish and Peshmerga administration. Later on, a large number of Western correspondents, human rights monitors, and researchers flocked to the region to closely monitor and document the situation, particularly with the rise of ISIS after the fall of Ba’ath regime. The generally tense situation required assistance from the Kurdish parties and administration, particularly Peshmerga fighters, to accompany these outsider analysts to their areas of study or accompany the Peshmerga in their areas of existence and dominance. They also received diverse logistical support from the regional authorities.

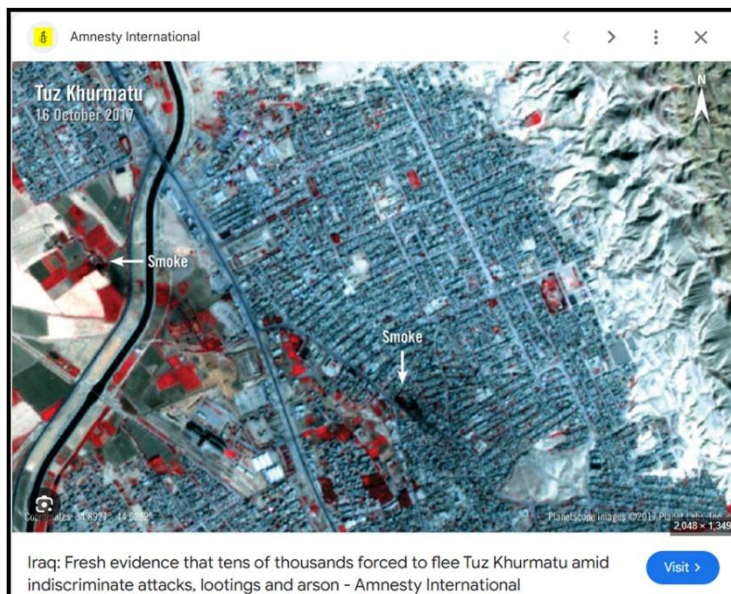
This situation has made Kurdish sources, such as the Peshmerga, Kurdish politicians, administrators, and researchers—who claim ownership of most of northern Iraq and harbour a strong desire to establish a nation-state for the Kurds—the primary source of information for Westerners



about this troubled region, actually home to diverse Iraqi communities and minorities, including Turkmen. On the other hand, the close relationship between Westerners and Kurds sustained the latter as a primary source of information for Westerners about northern Iraq and its communities. Professor Leezenberg's grave error stems from the fact that Kurdish actors and sources were the primary source of his analysis.

Photo 2 A satellite photo of part of Tuz Khurmatu city from a 2017 Amnesty International (AI) article to support its claims

Variant 2.a When AI site and relevant article was visited on February 28, 2025





Variant 2.b When AI site and relevant article was visited on June 13, 2025:
photo reduced in size and the name Tuz Khurmatu removed



Source: Amnesty International, *Iraq: Fresh evidence that tens of thousands forced to flee Tuz Khurmatu amid indiscriminate attacks, looting and arson* Amnesty International, 24 October 2017, pp.16, 17 (see Bibliography for webpage).

NB: Names of the neighbourhoods were written by the author of the article.

The Anfal campaign and the Western approach

The dictionary meaning of the word *al-Anfal* is “(the) spoils”. In Islamic jurisprudence, as a Qur’anic Surah, *al-Anfal* refers to “the wealth of infidel warriors seized by force and coercion during combat”. The Anfal campaign, launched by the Ba’ath regime in 1988, which included the destruction of mainly Kurdish villages in some areas of northern Iraq, has been subject to widespread distortion, to the point that it has



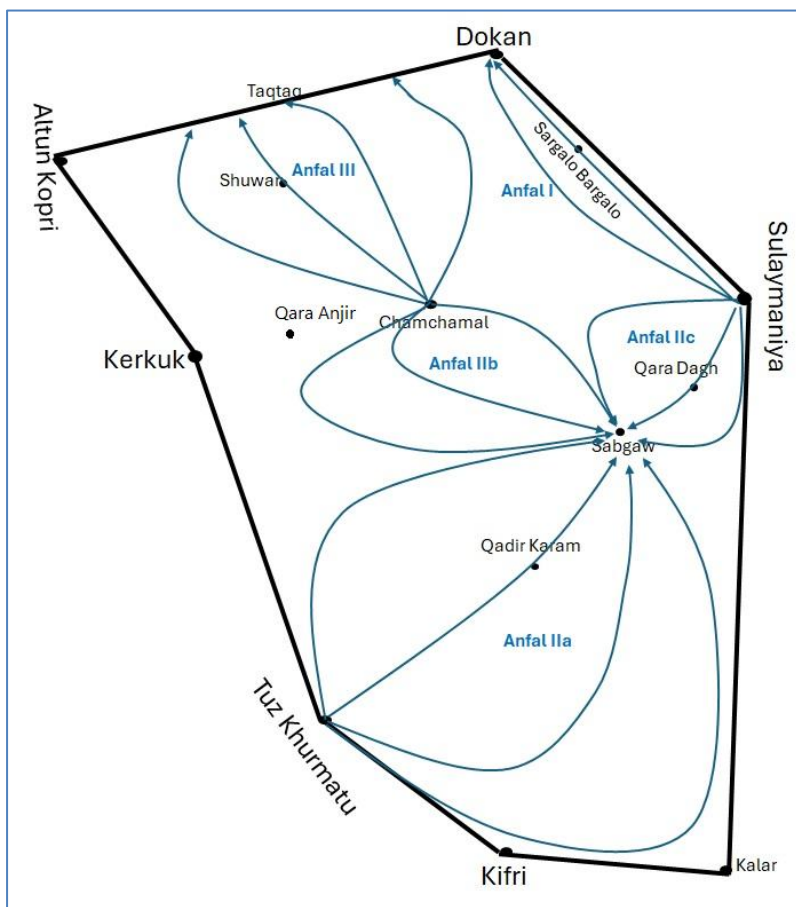
become extremely difficult to find reliable information about it in any publication. Western reports and studies play a major role in exaggerating the campaign's content and results, in terms of its human costs and geopolitical impact.

These reports and studies have overestimated the areas covered by the campaign and contradicted estimates of the number of operations it involved. Some publications refer to six campaigns (Hasan 2021), others to seven (Hiltermann 2008), while others estimate eight (Human Rights Watch 1993: 10). Most of these publications include events within the Anfal operations that actually were not part of these, such as the Iraqi army's April 1987 attacks on the Patriotic Union of Kurdistan (PUK) headquarters in the village of Balisan, which some western sources consider the beginning of the campaign.

Others consider the February 1988 attack on the village of al-Jafati to be the beginning of it, and most Western publications include the chemical attack on Halabja in March 1988 as part of the Anfal operations. There are also differences in the duration of the Anfal operations. Some sources estimate it to have lasted six months in 1988 (Hiltermann 2008; Unrepresented Nations and Peoples Organisation 2013: 2), while others indicate it continued until 1989 (McGregor 2009: 1-2)—or place it between 1987 and 1988 (Bengio 2023). However, there is sometimes an implicit acknowledgment in these publications that the operation began closer to the actual date. For example, although the Human Rights Watch report considers the February 1988 attack on al-Jafati to be the beginning of the Anfal campaign, its table of contents places the beginning of the first Anfal campaign on March 23, 1988 (Human Rights Watch 1993).



Map 2 A sketch of the Anfal operations and their axes (April-May 1988)



NB: sketch developed by the author



The Anfal operations were an official government plan, including specific actions in specific areas, undertaken by the Ba'ath government in 1988. According to Iraqi military personnel involved in the Anfal Campaign, the operation began in Ramadan in April 1988 and consisted of three phases. The second phase was conducted along three axes. The operational axes, participating Iraqi army units, and their commanders were as follows (see Map 2 shown above):

- The first Anfal operation took place along the Sulaymaniya-Sargalu-Bargalu-Dokan axis, with the participation of the First National Army (الجيش الوطني الأول), led by Major General Saad Shams al-Din, and lasted approximately ten days.
- The second Anfal operation began simultaneously along three axes, meeting in the Sangaw area.
 - o The first axis: Sulaymaniya-Qara Dagħ-Sangaw, with the participation of the First National Army, led by Major General Saeed Mohammed Hamdan.
 - o The second axis: Chamchamal-Sangaw, with the participation of the Infantry Division Command (قيادة فرقة المشاة), led by Major General Saad Shams al-Din.
 - o The third axis: Tuz Khurmatu-Qader Karam-Sangaw, with the participation of the Oil Protection Forces Command (قيادة قوات حماية النفط), led by Major General Bariq Haj Hunta.
- The third Anfal operation took place along the Chamchamal-Agjalār-Shwan-Taḡ Taḡ axis, with the participation of some of the forces that participated in the previous operations.

Each phase of these Anfal operations lasted between one to two weeks, meaning the entire operation lasted approximately one month and covered the area between Kirkuk, Tuz Khurmatu, Kalar, Sulaymaniya,



Dokan and Altun Kupri (see Map 2 shown above). The population of villages in most of the Kurdish regions at eastern northern Iraq, including the Anfal operations areas, had already been depleted by pressure from the Peshmerga and years of economic sanctions imposed by Ba'ath regime in response to Peshmerga attacks, and the hostile stance of the Kurdish parties and their collaboration with Iran.

Western reports portray the Anfal campaign as a meticulously planned and carefully executed military operation to exterminate the Kurdish people, exaggerating the size and type of Iraqi forces involved (Hiltermann 2008; Human Rights Watch 1993: 10). However, the Iraqi state was in a state of administrative collapse, with most ministry employees joining the military and budgets sharply reduced. Ministries such as education and health were in a deplorable state, and chaos reigned in the administration of security and police. Militarily, the Iraqi army was depleted by seven years of war with Iran. The Anfal operations came at a time when Iraq was being subjected to devastating attacks by the Iranian army, supported by Kurdish parties and the Peshmerga in northern Iraq, and the Iraqi army, police, and security forces were suffering from a severe shortage of qualified, trained, and experienced personnel and logistical resources.

As for Ali Hassan al-Majid, Saddam Hussein's cousin, whom he granted a number of military and civilian ranks, including that of lieutenant general, and to whom all Western reports attribute personal responsibility for planning and executing these operations, had no advanced military education or experience, having originally been a deputy officer in the Iraqi Air Force in Kirkuk during the Ba'athist coup of 1968.



Western sources also greatly exaggerated the Iraqi army's use of chemical weapons against the Kurds, as if all Kurdish areas had been bombarded with chemical weapons. No conclusive evidence of any use of chemical weapons against the Kurds in northern Iraq has been found, except for what occurred in Halabja. Western correspondents and researchers appear to have accepted as fact everything they were told by Kurdish authorities, political parties and Peshmerga forces, as well as what they read in Kurdish sources, without verifying its authenticity.

It is well known to most members of the Iraqi army, especially officers, that chemical weapons were never used against Kurdish areas except for Halabja. It should be noted that the author of this article was a reserve medical officer on the front lines between 1981 and 1985, moving along the front lines from the most distant battlefield in Gardamand in northern Iraq to the far south in the city of Al-Faw. Before and after that, he worked in hospitals in Mosul and Kirkuk, where wounded soldiers and civilians frequently received treatment.

Regarding the non-use of chemical weapons in the Anfal operations, it was and is well known to the general public, even to non-political and non-nationalist Kurds in and nearby most of the areas of the Anfal operations, as they were adjacent to Tuz Khurmatu, Kirkuk and Altun Kupri, and given that nearly half of the Anfal areas fall within the Kirkuk Governorate. Knowing that Kurdish propaganda, supported by Western sources, is so powerful and influential in those areas that when one asks about what happened in the Anfal operations, one gets the answer that 180,000 Kurds were killed by these operation—but immediately followed with the remark, “But there is no evidence to prove that”.



What is known about the Anfal operations, which can also be noted in some Western reports, is the fact that before these operations began, residents of all relevant villages were informed of the necessity of evacuating the villages and moving to the eastern Kurdish regions, otherwise they would be forcibly transferred to settlements outside the region. Several collective housing complexes were being identified for them in various areas of the governorates of Sulaymaniya, Erbil and Kirkuk, as well as some southern governorates. It is worth noting that residents of Turkmen villages demolished during the same period, such as the village of Bashir, were also rehoused in these complexes in the same region and in southern Iraq.

There was no control over migration from these villages, as the majority of their inhabitants headed to nearby cities such as Tuz Khurmatu and Kirkuk, where the Kurdish Al-Jumhuriya neighbourhood expanded, and the Kurdish Jamila neighbourhood emerged in Tuz Khurmatu. In Kirkuk, the Kurdish neighbourhoods expanded too, and the population of Rahim Awa increased significantly, to the point that it is now the largest neighbourhood in Kirkuk city in terms of population. In 2020, the neighbourhood's population was approximately 95,000 (Al-Jubouri 2021: 665). It is also worth noting that the Rahim Awa neighbourhood is from the relatively recent Kurdish neighbourhoods in Kirkuk, emerging in the second half of the twentieth century (International Crisis Group 2004: 9).

Civil service groups, such as teachers, had been formed in areas adjacent to the Anfal operations' areas to inform villagers of the need to leave. Therefore, when the Anfal campaign began, a large percentage of the population had already left their villages, while those who remained offered almost no resistance or disobedience. For example, in the



eastern Laylan district of Kirkuk Governorate, a small force made up of elements from the Popular Army, a paramilitary organisation composed of Ba'ath Party members, and the regular army, equipped with an armoured vehicle and a cavalry unit, went out to inform villagers of the need to leave. A Peshmerga force clashed with them, specifically in the village of Osman Lak, resulting in the deaths of a police commissioner, two members of the Popular Army, and several Peshmerga.

Notably, in July 1987, approximately several dozen Kurdish civilians, including children and women, and Iraqi soldiers wounded by chemical weapons were transferred from the Penjwen-Sayyid Sadiq Operations field to the Republican Hospital in Kirkuk Governorate. The author of this article was a senior resident physician at the hospital at the time, who learned from his fellow treating physicians that these casualties had been wounded by Iranian shelling.

The question that arises here is: if the Ba'ath government wanted to exterminate the Kurds through the widespread use of chemical weapons, as Western reports and research tend to depict, why did it bring in and treat the wounded from chemical weapons? This was despite the fact that transporting these wounded from the front lines and treating them was a daunting task at a time when fierce fighting was raging in the region and Iraqi military capabilities had been depleted due to the length of the Iraq-Iran war. Information circulated at the time among army personnel about the presence of chemical injuries that were unlike those caused by the chemical weapons possessed by the Iraqi army.

As for the direct causes that exposed the Kurds to the Anfal operations and other operations, particularly during the Iran-Iraq War, almost all Western



publications attribute these solely to the Ba'ath regime's Arabisation policy (Unrepresented Nations and Peoples Organisation 2013: 2) without addressing the direct underlying causes.

The armed Kurdish movement against the Iraqi state had virtually ended after the 1975 Algiers Agreement between Baghdad and Tehran, which forced Iran to cease its military and logistical support for the Kurdish movement. Iranian artillery, anti-aircraft weapons, and a wireless communications station had provided direct support to the Kurdish movement at the time.

The Kurdish movement re-emerged in the 1980s thanks to its support and active participation in Iranian military attacks on the Iraqi army, even planning and carrying out joint attacks with the Iranian army (Hiltermann 2008). They also served as guides for the Iranian army inside Iraq. In return, the Kurdish movement received all forms of financial and military support from the Iranian state. The Peshmerga militias assisted Iranian forces in penetrating deep into Iraqi territory, sometimes bombing vital targets, such as the oil facilities in the city of Kirkuk.

The Iraq-Iran War not only revived the Kurdish armed movement, but also created a vast battlefield for it and expanded the scope of Kurdish party attacks to encompass vast areas. They controlled only a relatively narrow strip of Iraqi territory along the Iranian border, such as the Penjwen and Haji Omran areas, and then some rugged valleys between the towering mountains inside Iraq such as the Sargalo-Bargalo and Balisan areas, where the headquarters of the Patriotic Union of Kurdistan (الاتحاد الوطني الكردستاني) were located, as well as in the village



of Gali Zewa in Dohuk Governorate, where the headquarters of the Kurdistan Democratic Party (الحزب الديمقراطي الكردستاني) was located.

The Iraqi state also lost almost complete control over the eastern half of northern Iraq as a result of the continuous attacks launched by the Peshmerga militias on government departments and facilities, employees and civilian and military traffic in 1980s. This was also due to the Iraqi army's preoccupation with combat operations on the front lines along the Iraq-Iran border, which is nearly 1,000 kilometres long.

Under these difficult circumstances and facing almost daily attacks by Kurdish militias on the external roads even at the level of villages, soldiers, senior officers and larger units of the Iraqi army were constantly moving to supply and maintain front-line military units with equipment and provisions along the Iraq-Iran border throughout the eight years of the Iran-Iraq War (1980-1988). Army personnel would pass through these roads to enjoy their monthly vacations.

These movements were most intense during Iranian offensives, which sometimes lasted for months, as regiments, brigades and even entire divisions of the Iraqi army moved toward the front lines to support combat units and repel Iranian attacks. For example, the Iranian offensive on Mount Mawat lasted nearly a year, from April 1987 to the first months of 1988. The losses during these attacks were heavy, with thousands killed; military hospitals in many provinces were often overwhelmed with seriously wounded, requiring the additional use of civilian hospitals.

The Peshmerga launched continuous attacks on vehicle and road traffic, particularly against Iraqi army personnel, vehicles, institutions, and



units, generally launched from Kurdish villages. In response the state had banned intercity traffic after 4 p.m. and until the following morning on roads across a vast area that encompassed roughly the eastern half of northern Iraq. These measures had been in place for long periods, even before the Iraq-Iran War.

These military convoys were subjected to continuous attacks by Kurdish militias, resulting each time in dozens of deaths and injuries before they reached the front. The cousin of the author of this article, Mazhar Ahmed, a 33-year-old man with three children and a wife, was killed in 1986 during Peshmerga attacks on a Special Forces brigade on the Kirkuk-Sulaymaniya Road. The brigade was on its way to the front to support army units repelling a major Iranian attack at the time.

As for the chemical attack on Halabja on March 16, 1988, it occurred after Iranian forces, alongside Peshmerga, surprised Iraqi army units and annihilated two brigades. One brigade was on the front lines, while the 68th Special Forces Brigade came to support the repelling of the Iranian-Kurdish attack. The Anfal operations may to a large extent have been a sadly vengeful response of the Ba'ath regime to the Iranian-Kurdish attack on Halabja, as the official starting date for the Anfal operations was in the second half of April 1988.

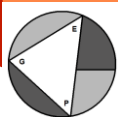
Western reports and research have greatly exaggerated the number of casualties by the Anfal operations. Some Western studies estimated the number of Kurdish fatalities at fifty thousand (Human Rights Watch 1993), while other Western reports put the number at one hundred thousand killed. Some reports even estimated the number of Kurdish deaths during the campaign at two hundred thousand (Newton 2007:



1530). These figures were echoed in countless subsequent Western reports and studies. Undoubtedly, these exaggerations of the death toll played a significant role in inflaming the sentiments of the international community, especially in the West, generating overwhelming feelings of sympathy and attracting significant support for the Kurdish cause. This excessive exaggeration of the Kurds' suffering, which has brought them immense international sympathy and support, can be considered as one of the reasons behind the neglect of the suffering of other Iraqi communities by international community, the Kurds' push to claim the lands of other Iraqi communities, and Kurdish attempts to partition Iraq.

Although the Kurdish parties and Peshmerga forces, with full support from the US-led coalition, gained near-total control over the Iraqi state administration for several years after the fall of the Ba'ath regime in 2003, and although Kurdish influence in Iraq has remained strong since then, they have been unable to find or provide the slightest tangible evidence of such a massive death toll, not even the bodies of the few thousand Kurds killed during the Anfal campaigns.

If the Iraqi army used chemical weapons against the Kurds extensively and in numerous areas, according to Western reports and research, and if every Anfal operations was preceded by chemical bombing, and that the Anfal operation took place in eight stages covering most of the Kurdish regions, it is likely that the killed victims of the chemical bombing remained in the Kurdish areas—or at least half of the 50 to 200 thousand fatalities, according to Western research. The questions which arise here, are: where are the bodies of at least 100,000 Kurds? Is it conceivable that the Iraqi army would have been able at the time to gather all those bodies contaminated with chemical weapons and hide them during this critical



period without anyone seeing them? How was this enormous number of bodies hidden? How many tons of chemical weapons were used to kill this massive number of people, and how much did these operations cost, given the depletion of the Iraqi economy? How did the Iraqi Air Force engage in this massive operation, while it was embroiled in a fierce war that threatened to cost Iraqi territory?

However, as mentioned earlier in this article, a Dutch court ruled in 2007 that the Anfal operations did not constitute a wholesale massacre (Heller 2007), as so often claimed by western sources which largely means that chemical weapons were not used during the operations.

Some participants of the Iraqi army in the Anfal operations estimate that approximately 300 villages were evacuated during the entire operation, and several thousand villagers were displaced. Some also point to the execution of many villagers proven to have committed acts against the state and to be members of the Peshmerga.

Discussion and Conclusion

The Iraqi High Commission for Human Rights' report submitted to the United Nations Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination in 2018 states the following:

Regarding the violations committed against the Turkmen community in the Tuz Khurmatu district, the Commission notes that the Turkmen in this district have been subjected to systematic targeting by terrorists and groups associated with them for 15 years,

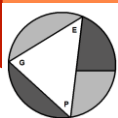


without the presence of a local or central force to protect them (Iraqi High Commission for Human Rights 2018: 9).

The report's failure to openly address the culpability or even participation of the Kurdish parties and the Peshmerga in the daily attacks against the Turkmen for fifteen years, despite the fact that the Kurdish parties, the Peshmerga and the Kurdish security services were the only forces responsible for protecting Turkmen and Turkmen areas, is clearly due to the fact that attacking the ruling powers in undemocratic cultures is taboo and entails significant risks.

As with the tragedies experienced by the Iraqi Turkmen from the establishment of the Iraqi state, this long period of tragedy experienced by the Turkmen in Tuz Khurmatu has also been inadequately documented to this day—and is unknown to most Iraqis, regionally, and internationally.

This is primarily due to the marginalisation and oppression suffered by the Iraqi Turkmen at the hands of the Ba'ath regime for more than thirty years. It is also due to the Turkish state's control over the Turkmen's political will since the 1990s, and its dominance over their political institutions and civil society. For the same reasons, the Turkmen have failed to establish their own professional civil society organisations and strategic and political institutions capable of confronting major challenges. This Turkish dominance over the Turkmen political system has also led to their general marginalisation, especially after the fall of the Ba'ath regime, as a result of strained Turkish-American relations due to Turkey's refusal to cooperate with the United States in overthrowing the Ba'ath government (Jerjis 2020; SOITM Foundation 2019).



As is the case with the Turkmen of Tuz Khurmatu, it is quite abnormal for the majority of a region's population to be subjected to horrific human rights violations for more than a decade without attracting the attention or intervention of national, regional, or international powers. Not to mention that Iraq has been the focus of the world's attention' for numerous years now, with correspondents from major Western media outlets and representatives of international human rights organisations being constantly present in the region.

This means, at the same time, that the Turkmen presence in Iraq is unknown nationally, regionally, and internationally, and that their large population size and vast territory are virtually unknown. One of the most important reasons for this neglect is that the Turkmen presence in Iraq was a factor in Turkey's efforts to gain control of the Ottoman province of Mosul, an issue discussed at the Lausanne and League of Nations conferences for eight years from 1918 to 1926 (Fieldhouse 2002: 107; Yildirim 2018: 169-186).

Both the British Mandate and the Kingdom of Iraq deliberately underestimated the Turkmen population as a result, falsely estimating it at around a mere 2%, a figure repeated by successive Iraqi governments amid growing Arab nationalist sentiments until the fall of the Ba'ath regime in 2003, details of which have been given elsewhere in this study.

The absence of a functioning state, the extreme lack of security, and the sectarian war that followed the fall of the Ba'ath regime played a role in obscuring the repression suffered by the Turkmen and other Iraqi communities under Kurdish protection. Moreover, the new Iraqi administration and the international community were shocked by the



emergence and rapid development of Sunni extremism and were primarily preoccupied with sectarian fighting in Baghdad and central Iraq, which diminished their focus on what was happening to Arabs, Turkmen, and other Iraqi minorities under the control of Kurdish tribal parties and unprofessional Peshmerga forces (Fadel 2008; Smith 2017; Bali 2008; Amnesty International 2016; Human Rights Watch 2004).

Other reasons for not revealing the true nature of the suffering and challenges faced by the Turkmen in general, and the people of Tuz Khurmatu between 2003 and 2017 in particular, is the lack of experience in managing state affairs among all the political cadres in the Iraqi parties that assumed power after the fall of the Ba'ath regime (Note 3). This is with the exception of the Kurdish parties, which gained some experience in managing the Kurdish areas in the de facto Safe Haven between 1991 and 2003.

Moreover, the Kurdish parties, with their modest experience in state administration and unprofessional Peshmerga forces, controlled nearly half of Iraq's territory until 2017, where the population is currently estimated at 20 million and where virtually all of Iraq's minorities and millions of Arabs live. The insistence of the Kurdish parties and Peshmerga on establishing a Kurdish state at any cost, along with the reliance of Western media, academic and strategic institutions on Kurdish politicians and Peshmerga, played a prominent role in this regard.

This article also concludes that the Western approach, through its policies, media, civil society organisations and research centres, toward events in northern Iraq that affect all Iraqi communities, including the Tuz Khurmatu issue, is unfair and biased in favour of the Kurds. The manuscript also



indicates that the vast number of narratives they promoted about the Anfal operations are based on their personal imaginations, woven by their Kurdish sources, including Kurdish officials, politicians, writers and informants, which were prepared for them.

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** Sheth Jerjis, President of the Iraqi Turkmen Human Rights Research Foundation, based in the Netherlands (www.turkmen.nl).

Notes

1. Information for this study on events in the region after the fall of the regime in 2003 was obtained from Turkmen politicians in the administration of Tuz Khurmatu district, members of the Tuz Khurmatu District Council, which was dissolved in 2019, and eyewitnesses. Their identities have been in this study concealed for their safety.
2. The information was obtained by telephone contact with the administration of the Iraqi Turkmen Rescue Foundation.



3. The founding principles of the Arab Socialist Ba'ath Party were the establishment of Arab unity and liberation from colonialism through a socialist system, and it raised the slogans of unity, freedom and socialism. The party adopted a revolutionary approach and did not restrict itself to any means in achieving its goals. Over time, Saddam Hussein in Iraq and Hafez al-Assad in Syria gained control of the party, and their ideas and behaviour became the identity of the Ba'ath Party. The main differences between the Iraqi and Syrian Ba'ath parties are that the former adopted more moderate socialist policies, perhaps due to Iraq's vast oil wealth, and an extreme nationalist approach to the multi-ethnic Iraqi society, which had been subjected to oppression. In Syria, the party adopted more strident socialist policies, perhaps due to the country's lack of natural resources, and an extreme religious policy that suppressed religious sects, particularly Sunnis, due to the Alawite leadership and the widespread presence of the Muslim Brotherhood in Syria.



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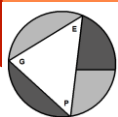
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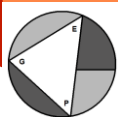
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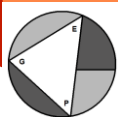
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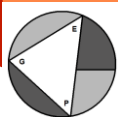
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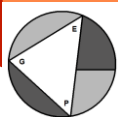
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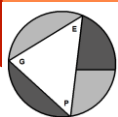
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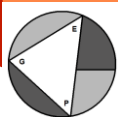
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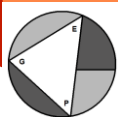
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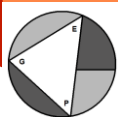
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Appendix 1 **Decision of the Revolutionary Command Council in its session held on March 31, 1975, regarding expropriation of lands in Kirkuk Governorate**

رقم ٣٦٩	
١ - استنادا إلى أحكام الفقرة (٢) من المادة الثانية والأربعين من الدستور المؤقت، وبمبدأ من مقتضى الصلحة العامة، ولتوسيع الأراضي الجبلية الواقعة في القائمة المرفقة بهذا القرار بالقرى من حصص الشركة العراقية لتعليمات النفطية والنفثات العسكرية.	
تقرر مجلس قيادة الثورة بجلسته العظمى بتاريخ ١٩٧٥-٣-٢١ المأمور :-	
١ - لتسليم الأراضي الجبلية الواقعة في القائمة المرفقة بهذا القرار لقاء مبلغ تقدي مقداره (٢/٥) دينار وحساباته على التدرج الواحد، وذلك استثناء من أحكام قانون الاستغلال، وتسجيل الأراضي المستقلة باسم الإدارة المحلية لمحافظة كركوك.	
٢ - تشكل لجنة برئاسة رشدي أكا - فاعلمنا قضاء مركز كركوك - ومقرها كركوك -	
أ - فاود سليمان - مدير وأرشدات محافظة كركوك -	
ب - طهية شنداح - ممثل المنطقة العراقية في كركوك -	
ج - سعدون مصطفى - رئيس اتحاد الجمعيات الفلاحية في كركوك -	
تتولى توزيع مبالغ الاستغلال على مستحقين من أصحاب الأراضي المشار إليها في (١) أعلاه.	
٣ - تقوم وزارة المالية برصد المبالغ المتضمنة لتغطية مبالغ الاستغلال المتضمنة بموجب هذا القرار.	
٤ - يتولى الوزراء المختصون تنفيذ هذا القرار.	
احمد حسن البكر رئيس مجلس قيادة الثورة	
قائمة الأراضي المستقلة في محافظة كركوك	
اسم المقاطعة	المساحة المستقلة
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٨٤/ قضاء ديس	٢٢٢٢
٨٥/ قضاء ديس	٢٢٢٢
٨٦/ قضاء ديس	٢٢٢٢
٨٧/ قضاء ديس	٢٢٢٢
٨٨/ قضاء ديس	٢٢٢٢
٨٩/ قضاء ديس	٢٢٢٢
٩٠/ قضاء ديس	٢٢٢٢
٩١/ قضاء ديس	٢٢٢٢
٩٢/ قضاء ديس	٢٢٢٢
٩٣/ قضاء ديس	٢٢٢٢
٩٤/ قضاء ديس	٢٢٢٢
٩٥/ قضاء ديس	٢٢٢٢
٩٦/ قضاء ديس	٢٢٢٢
٩٧/ قضاء ديس	٢٢٢٢
٩٨/ قضاء ديس	٢٢٢٢
٩٩/ قضاء ديس	٢٢٢٢
١٠٠/ قضاء ديس	٢٢٢٢
١٠١/ قضاء ديس	٢٢٢٢
١٠٢/ قضاء ديس	٢٢٢٢
١٠٣/ قضاء ديس	٢٢٢٢
١٠٤/ قضاء ديس	٢٢٢٢
١٠٥/ قضاء ديس	٢٢٢٢
١٠٦/ قضاء ديس	٢٢٢٢
١٠٧/ قضاء ديس	٢٢٢٢
١٠٨/ قضاء ديس	٢٢٢٢



Appendix 2 A list of some of the thousands of terrorist attacks against Turkmen in the city of Tuz Khurmatu, targeting Turkmen neighbourhoods, during the period from August 22, 2003 to June 30, 2013

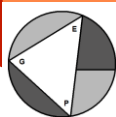
Date	Location of the incident	type of incident or explosion	number of killed	number of wounded	Damage to buildings
25/06/2013	Near Aqsu Bridge,	EP a suicide bombing	12	30	
23/06/2013	Mullah Safar and Chakala N.	Two car bombs	2	27	10
10/06/2013	Aqsu N.	Car bomb	3	26	
21/05/2013	Mustafa Agha N.	Two car bombs	3	30	7
09/05/2013	Near a Popular Cafe	Bike bomb & EP		16	
15/04/2013	Al-Mahta & Imam Ahmed Street	Two car bombs	3	67	
15/04/2013	Center of Bir Awchili Village	Truck bomb	1	32	120
23/01/2013	Husseinayat Sayyid al-Shuhada	Suicide bomber	26	127	
17/12/2012	Chakala N.	Two car bombs	5	25	
27/11/2012	Orta N.	Car bomb			4
27/10/2012	Mullah Safar N.	Car bomb		6	14
10/10/2012	on Tuz stadium	Katyusha		3	
09/09/2012	Al-Askari N.	Car bomb		13	
09/09/2012	Aqsu N.	Car bomb	3	28	
16/08/2012	Imam Ahmed N.	Explosive package	1	4	
02/07/2012	Mullah Safar N.	Two car bombs		29	50
20/03/2012	Al-Sinai N. Road	EP	2		
31/11/2012	Imam Ahmed N.	EP	1	5	
16/05/2011	Kuchuk Bazaar	Adhesive package	16		33
17/07/2010	Jamila N.	Adhesive package	2	3	
08/09/2010	Abdullah al-Tayyar Shrine	EP		5	1
16/11/2010	Imam Hussein MP	EP	11	tens	
26/12/2009	Imam Hussein MP	EP	1	7	
27/12/2009	Imam Hussein MP	EP	5	15	
18/04/2008	Center of the Grand Market	EP		10	
15/04/2008	Near Imam Ahmed Shrine	EP		6	
07/07/2007	Amerli District	Truck bomb	128	425	270
16/07/2007	Public Square	EP	14	28	
16/07/2006	Aqsu Cafe	A suicide bombing	25	34	1
16/09/2005	H. Al-Rasul al-Aazam	A suicide bombing	24	56	1
06/06/2004	Inside the City	EP	2		
22/08/2003	Mursi Ali Shrine	EP	5	27	

EP = Explosive package

N = Neighbourhoods

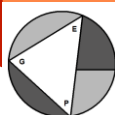
MP = Mourning Procession

H= Husseinayat

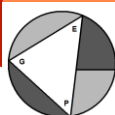


Appendix 3 List of documented killings, kidnappings, and assassinations of Turkmen citizens in Tuz Khurmatu District 2003 to 2009 (also undocumented cases)

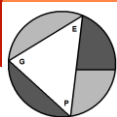
Names of the victims	Details	Year
Muayyad Fuad Sadiq	Kidnapped and killed by terrorists	2003
Ashraf Mazhar Qasim	Killed in the bombing of the Murtada Ali Shrine	2003
Ahmed Hussein Ali	Killed in the bombing of the Murtada Ali Shrine	2003
Muhammad Hashim Askar	Killed in the bombing of the Murtada Ali Shrine	2003
Cetin Zain Al-Abidin	Killed in the bombing of the Murtada Ali Shrine	2003
Ahmed Ramzi Abdul Rahman	Killed in the bombing of the Murtada Ali Shrine	2003
Ali Kazim Barbar	Killed in the bombing of the Murtada Ali Shrine	2005
Adnan Juma (Mukhtar Yengaja)	Killed in the bombing of the Murtada Ali Shrine	2005
Talal Mustafa Fadil	Killed in the bombing of the Murtada Ali Shrine	2005
Shihab Ahmed Agha	Killed in the bombing of the Murtada Ali Shrine	2005
Ibrahim Ismail Tawfiq	Killed then escaped from the hands of terrorists	2005
Amjad Hashim Nouri	Killed and released after paying the ransom	2005
Burhan Muhammad Ezzat	Killed and released after paying the ransom	2005
Ihsan Muhammad Ezzat	Killed by terrorists	2005
Alamdari Ihsan Muhammad Ezzat	Assassinated in Kirkuk	2005
Abbas Saeed Shanaw	Killed and released after paying the ransom	2005
Muhammad Latif	Killed in the mosque bombing ... Tikrit-Tuwaz Road	2005
Muhammad Mahdi Abbas	Kidnapped and released after paying the ransom	2005
Murtaza Abbas	Kidnapped and released after paying the ransom	2005
Muhammad Sayed Ibrahim	Kidnapped and released after paying the ransom	2005
Muhammad Zain Al-Abidin Baghwan	Kidnapped and released after paying the ransom	2005
Muhammad Musa Namiq Al-Qassab	Kidnapped and released after paying the ransom	2005
Nihad Abdul Rahman Jayar	Kidnapped and released after paying the ransom	2005
Ihsan Wali Mustafa	Kidnapped and released after paying the ransom	2005
Murad Tahseen Wali	Not released yet	2005
Ali Musa Ismail	Not released yet	2005
Tahseen Wali Mustafa	Not released yet	2005
Qadir Muhammad Aryan	Kidnapped and released after paying the ransom	2005
Sulaiman Akbar	Kidnapped and released without paying the ransom	2005
Mahdi Zain Al-Abidin Taqi	Kidnapped and released after paying the ransom	2007
Sarmad Shaker	Kidnapped and escaped from the hands of the kidnappers	2007
Sister of the Minister of Construction (Jassim Muhammad Tuzlu)	Kidnapped and released after paying the ransom by terrorists... in front of his house	2007
Hassan Ali Graves	Killed in front of his house by terrorists	2007
Ali Hashim Mukhtar Oglu	Killed in front of his house by terrorists	2007
Imad Reda Hassan	Kidnapped and killed by terrorists	2007
Muhammad Haidar Samin	Killed in front of his house by terrorists	2007
Amer Muhammad Samin	Kidnapped and released after paying ransom	2007
Aziz Khader Mali	Kidnapped and not released yet	2007
Muhammad Hassan Ibrahim	Kidnapped and not released yet	2007
Sulayman Majeed	Kidnapped in Aksu Casino	2007
Muhammad Saheb Joqa	Killed in Aksu Casino	2007
Ali Akbar Zain al-Abidin Jayar	Killed in Aksu Casino	2007
Muhammad Saadoun Saleh	Killed in Aksu Casino	2007
Hussein Adnan Kara Nazli	Killed in Aksu Casino	2007
Fadel Tawfiq al-Bayati	Killed in Aksu Casino	2007
Ali Shahin Muhammad Nouri Askar	Killed while paying ransom to kidnapped Qasim Mohammed Bayram	2007
Shahin Muhammad Nouri Askar	Killed while paying ransom to kidnapped Qasim Mohammed Bayram	2007
Mazhar Qasim Kanna	Killed while paying ransom to kidnapped Qasim Mohammed Bayram	2007
Husein Mahdi Najjar	Killed while paying ransom to kidnapped Qasim Mohammed Bayram	2007
Artan Mahdi Zain al-Abidin Najjar	Killed while paying ransom to kidnapped Qasim Mohammed Bayram	2007
Habib Muhammad Ali Karim	Killed while paying ransom to kidnapped Qasim Mohammed Bayram	2007
Muhammad Hashim Ali Shahbaz	Killed and not released yet	2007
Ihsan Mahdi Agha	Killed and not released yet	2007
Muhammad Yahya Maruf	Killed and killed	2007
Muhyiddin Rashid Bayatli	Killed and killed	2007
Fakhruddin Mohsen	Killed and killed	2007



Hashim Abbas	Killed and paid ransom	2007
Dilshad Qasim Zain al-Abidin	Killed and paid ransom	2007
Muayyad Shawkat Kawthar	Killed and paid ransom	2007
Safaa Younis Muhammad	Killed and released after paying ransom	2007
Hussein Younis Muhammad	Killed in Tikrit	2007
Ali Jamil Bashiri	Killed and released after paying ransom	2007
Amir Muhammad Samin	Wounded	2007
Nur al-Din Bayram	Killed on the Tikrit road	2007
Muhammad Bayram		
Talat Husayn Shanaw	Killed and paid ransom	2007
Muhammad Salih Hasan	Killed from the Al-Azim area and released after paying ransom	2007
	Assassinated in front of his home in Baql al-Akrad	
Rajih Hadi Abbas	Assassinated on the Tikrit-Tuz road	2007
Fadel Alamdar Yusuf	Assassinated on the Tikrit-Tuz road	2007
Awni Ali Samad	Kidnapped and released after a ransom was paid	2007
Zain Al-Abidin Husayn Hasan	Killed during an explosion in al-Qaysariyah	2007
Yashar Safar Yunus	Kidnapped on the Tikrit-Tuz road	2007
Imad Taqi Barbar	Killed in an explosion in the Grand Market	2007
Muhammad Ahmad Rashid	Kidnapped and released for a ransom	2007
Muhammad Haydar Jaafar	Seriously injured during his kidnapping on the Tikrit road	2007
Abbas Saeed Ahmad	Kidnapped and assassinated	2007
Abdul Amir Mahdi Sadiq	Kidnapped on the Tikrit-Tuz Road	2007
Ali Muhammad Reda	Kidnapped on the Tikrit-Tuz Road	2007
Qasim Askar Amin	Kidnapped on the Tikrit-Tuz Road and released without a ransom	2007
Salah Kazim Shukor	Kidnapped on the Baghdad-Tuz Road (Habhab)	2007
Farouk Tawfiq	Kidnapped on the Tikrit-Tuz Road	2007
Reza Karim Jayer	Assassination	2007
Erdal Ismail Ali	Kidnapped on the Baghdad-Tuz Road	2007
Ahmad Abbas Bayatli	Kidnapped on the Baghdad-Tuz Road	2007
Fakhraddin Qadir Fayzullah	Kidnapped and killed	2007
Mustafa Rashid Muhammad	Kidnapped	2007
Asi Khazal Musab	Kidnapped on the Arbaeen occasion	2007
Amid Assi Khazal	Kidnapped on the Arbaeen occasion Kidnapped and paid ransom	2007
Akbar Muhammad Bayram	Kidnapped and released	2007
Muhammad Talal Jihad	Kidnapped and released	2007
Ali Askar Effendi	Kidnapped and released	2007
Mujahid Ismail	Kidnapped and not released	2007
Hani Naqi	Kidnapped and not released	2007
Nabil Ahmad Ghaidan	Kidnapped and not released	2007
Husayn Askar Ahmad	Kidnapped and not released	2007
Adel Radwan Shukor	Kidnapped and not released	2007
Dhia Nouri Ahmad	Kidnapped and not released	2007
Zulfiqar Abdulhusayn Askar	Kidnapped and killed on the Baghdad-Tuz Road	2007
Mohammed Zain Al-Abidin Askar		
Abbas Shaker	Killed on the Baghdad-Tuz Road	2007
Adel Hussein Khalil	Kidnapped and killed in Tuz	2007
Mohammed Qasim	Kidnapped on the Baghdad-Tuz Road	2007
Ali Allah Wardi	Kidnapped in the Eid bombing	2007
Jalabi Mohammed Jadou	Kidnapped in the Eid bombing	2007
Qais Allah Wardi	Kidnapped on the Baghdad-Amerli Road and killed	2007
Hussein Amerli	Kidnapped on the Hlewa-Yengija road	2007
Sarmed Abdul-Amir Musa Al-Qassab	Kidnapped on the Hlewa-Yengija road	2007
Hassan Ali Tawfiq	Kidnapped on his way home	2007
Shaheen Taha	Kidnapped and released	2007
Rida Amerli - Police		2007
Ahmed Mohammed Baba	Kidnapped and killed	2007
Jawdat Jassim Wali	Kidnapped and killed	2007
Shaheen Hassan Deh Marji	Kidnapped and killed	2007
Salah Madad	Kidnapped and released	2007
Qasim Madad	Kidnapped in his home / in Yankija	2007



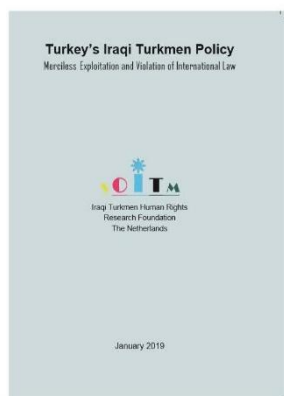
Falah Madad	Kidnapped and released after paying ransom	2007
Mahdi Akram	Kidnapped and released after paying ransom	2007
Ardam Kamal	Seriously injured in the playground in Yankija He was kidnapped on the Baghdad-Amerli Road, beheaded, and thrown on the highway.	2007
Jaafar Ahmed	He was kidnapped on the Baghdad-Amerli Road, beheaded, and thrown on the highway.	2007
Ali Salah Qara Nazli	He was kidnapped on the Baghdad-Amerli Road, beheaded, and thrown on the highway.	2007
Manar Haider Jaafar	He was assassinated by an unknown party.	2007
Sarmed Jalil Amerli	He was kidnapped.	2007
Hamada Amerli	He was kidnapped.	2007
Abdul Hadi Taha	He was released after a ransom was paid.	2007
Hashem Khorshid Khattat	He was assassinated in front of his house when he arrived home.	2007
Abbas Qahtan Juma	Kidnapped and killed by terrorists	2007
Haider Hassan Panjarji	Killed in the bombing of the Murtada Ali Shrine	2007
Ahmed Hussein Kahya	Killed in the bombing of the Murtada Ali Shrine	2007
Nazim Ali Najris (Bastamleh village)	Killed in the bombing of the Murtada Ali Shrine	2007
Janan Jamal	Killed in the bombing of the Murtada Ali Shrine	2007
Sabah Juma	Killed in the bombing of the Murtada Ali Shrine	2007
Akram Issa Hassan	Killed in the bombing of the Murtada Ali Shrine	2007
Rajab Issa Hassan	Killed in the bombing of the Murtada Ali Shrine	2007
Nafi Nazim Abbas Asghar	Killed in the bombing of the Murtada Ali Shrine	2007
Rifaat Akram Mohsen	Killed in the bombing of the Murtada Ali Shrine	2007
Haider Adnan Musa	Killed then escaped from the hands of terrorists	2007
Hussein Abbas Jakul	Killed and released after paying the ransom	2007
Hussein Hadi	Killed and released after paying the ransom	2007
Adel Ali Hussein	Killed by terrorists	2007
Adel Hussein	Assassinated in Kirkuk	2007
Shaker Hamad	Killed and released after paying the ransom	2007
Nazim Abbas	Killed in the mosque bombing ... Tikrit-Tuwaz Road	2007
Qasim Khalil	Kidnapped and released after paying the ransom	2007
Kamal Mustafa	Kidnapped and released after paying the ransom	2007
Reza Ahmed	Kidnapped and released after paying the ransom	2007
Haider Ali Asghar	Kidnapped and released after paying the ransom	2007
Hussein Samin	Kidnapped and released after paying the ransom	2007
Mohammed Qasim Kinda	Kidnapped and released after paying the ransom	2007
Juma Abbas Ali	Kidnapped and released after paying the ransom	2007
Najm Khalil Ibrahim	Not released yet	2007
Qasim Nazim Kazim	Not released yet	2007
Mahmoud Ali Mohammed	Not released yet	2008
Fuad Rahmatullah Abbas	Kidnapped and released after paying the ransom	2008
Ammar Nour El-Din	Kidnapped and released without paying the ransom	2008
Amer Ahmed Agha	Kidnapped and released after paying the ransom	2008
Hussam Farhan	Kidnapped and escaped from the hands of the kidnappers	2008
Mustafa Yawar	Kidnapped and released after paying the ransom ... In front of his house by terrorists	2008
Hussein Karim Ragheb	Killed in front of his house by terrorists	2008
Zulficar Sayed Hilmi	Killed in front of his house by terrorists	2008
Abdulkhalil Tahseen	Kidnapped and killed by terrorists	2008
Dawoud Suleiman Shenaw	Killed in front of his house by terrorists	2008
Akram Asghar Shenaw	Kidnapped and released after paying ransom	2008
Hamdi Shaker	Kidnapped and not released yet	2008
Muhammad Juma Abbas	Kidnapped and not released yet	2008
Sabah Fadil Abbas	Kidnapped in Aksu Casino	2008
Reza Hussein Reza	Killed in Aksu Casino	2008
Hassan Shurteh	Killed in Aksu Casino	2008
Ali Qasim Mohammed	Killed in Aksu Casino	2008
Ibn Asil Fahih	Killed in Aksu Casino	2008
Ahmed Khalil Quli	Killed in Aksu Casino	2009
Alaa Saber Majeed	Killed while paying ransom to kidnapped Qasim Mohammed Bayram	2009



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By Iraqi Turkmen Human Rights Research Foundation (SOITM Foundation)



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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.