

UNAMI Reports Turn a Blind Eye to Iraqi Turkmen

Date: August 13, 2011
No.: Rep.2-H1311

Believing in the rules of democracy and considering it the only way to establish social justice, the Turkmen of Iraq have always refused to resort to armed struggle as a means of obtaining cultural and human rights. Despite this, they continue to be exposed to harsh policies of marginalization and assimilation.

The participation of the United Nations was welcomed in rebuilding Iraq after the fall of the Ba'ath regime. Yet despite the establishment of the United Nations Assistance Mission in Iraq (UNAMI), the human rights situation for Turkmen continues to deteriorate and they are almost completely ignored in the organization's reports.

Since the occupation of Iraq, Iraqi Turkmen are exposed to intimidation, killings, assassinations and kidnappings. They are marginalized both in their regional administrations and in the Iraqi government. Most of the Turkmen regions are controlled by Kurdish Peshmergas and the demography of the regions have been altered but almost all the reports of UNAMI fail to mention these violations of Turkmen human rights. Furthermore, the report considers the Turkmen a minority even though they are one of Iraq's basic ethnic groups and constitute a large part of the Iraqi community.

As with earlier reports, we believe that the report of UNAMI for 2010 is written in a non-professional way and that it is biased in denying the severe violation of human rights to which the Turkmen of Iraq are frequently exposed. It appears that the UNAMI sources of information are unreliable.

UNAMI report of 2010 excludes:

- Kidnappings of Turkmen in the Kerkuk region, which was also reported by the Kerkuk police in a press conference a few months ago. As a result, many of Turkmen families either flee to other Iraqi province or to out of country.
- Assassination of Turkmen in Tuz Khurmatu region.
- Assassination of Turkmen in Nineveh province, particularly in the eastern part of Mosul city.
- Attacks on Turkmen journalists, particularly those employed by Turkmeneli television.
- The marginalization of Turkmen in administration in Kerkuk, Kifri and Khanqin regions.
- The education of Turkmen being ignored by the Ministry of Education.
- Suppression of activities by Turkmen civil society organizations and prevention of Turkmen political activities by the Kurdish authorities in Erbil.
- Marginalization of Turkmen in the higher posts of central government such as ministries and embassies.
- The demographic changes in Kerkuk region, the continued illegal settlement of Kurds in the province.
- Delay in solving an estimated 40,000 property claims in Kerkuk province, most related to Turkmen.

In the last several years, SOITM regularly submits reports about violation of Turkmen human rights to the UNAMI. Unfortunately, it seems that all have been ignored by the human rights bureau of UNAMI.

We urge the United Nations Assistance Mission in Iraq to:

- Review its policy in writing human rights reports
- Discuss our concerns with its human rights office
- Publish a supplementary report about the human rights situation of the Turkmen of Iraq

The report prepared by Ahmed al-Hurmuzi, legal advisor of SOITM