

The Turkmen Reality in Iraq "Kerkuk is not a Kurdish City"

Abstract

One of the unfair aspects of the Iraqi dilemma, which unfortunately hasn't attracted the attention of the international community in the last few decades, is the neglect of the Turkmen population who are the third largest ethnic community of Iraq, numbering over 2 million (12%) people, according to their sources. Ignoring this reality leads to the systematic violation of their human rights and the application of the wildest methods to assimilate and deport them by successive Iraqi governments, reaching its peak during last 2 decades. During this repressive period, the Kurdish regional government started to deny the Turkmen reality. Simultaneously, the Kurdish writers started campaigns to underestimate the Turkmen population and to deny the history of Turkmen in Iraq which dates back to more than one thousand years. The large Turkmen inhabited areas were described as a "Kurdish lands", particularly their symbol: the oil-rich Kerkuk city.

Discussion

The article of Habib Hurmuzlu: "Conversation between the seriousness and the fun The Turkmen of Iraq and the hungers after the Black Yogurt", which was published in Arabic in Kardashlik Journal¹, presents important data about Kerkuk city and the Turkmen of Iraq. Hurmuzlu used an imaginary conversation approach to discuss indirectly the attempts of the Kurdish writers and politicians to minimize the importance of Turkmen.

Many articles and dozens of books which contain distorted data over the population size and the cities of the Turkmen have been published in different languages by the Kurds. The Kurds took advantage of the compassion which the Western powers showed to them since the beginning of the 1900's to exaggerate their sufferings and to mislead the international community about the Turkmen reality in Iraq. Western media, international reports and many encyclopedias (based on the unreliable official Iraqi statistics and the Kurdish claims without questioning them) are showing the Turkmen of Iraq as a 'small' community and 'new-comers'. This distortion of the reality exposed the Turkmen to brutalities inside Iraq and to unfair handlings internationally. As a result, the Turkmen were considered as a 'small minority' (1%) by the USA State Secretary reports and were banned to take part in the Iraqi opposition conferences and congresses.

The conversation takes place between the writer who is called Yavuz and his imaginary Kurdish friend Abdullah. He makes use of the demographic, historical, social and administrative features of Kerkuk city to reply to the Kurdish writers, particularly Mr. N. Talabani who twisted all the facts to give a false Kurdish image to Kerkuk city in his book "Iraq's Policy of Ethnic Cleansing: Onslaught to change national / demographic characteristics of the Kirkuk Region".²

The article starts with a description of the relation between Yavuz and Abdullah or between the Turkmen and the Kurds. The writer considers them as two close friends and neighbors who from time to time joke with each other. Sometimes, their discussions are very hard and look like a quarrel. The writer concentrates on their close friendship in many occasions and considers that they value each other.

After a description of the birthplaces of each of them, Yavuz asks Abdullah: "why do you claim that the Turkmen lands are your heart and the heart of your people".

Abdullah replies: "These lands are really my heart and the heart of my people. All my neighbors and my relatives have lived here for thousands of years, while you and your people are temporary travelers. My roots are strongly fixed in these lands, while you and your people came to these lands at a time when we had no choice and had to accept you".

"These are not your own words, dear Abdullah. You make use of the speech of Hulagu Baghdad!" Hurmuzlu means here that the successive Iraqi governments, particularly the former Iraqi regime used to make up these calumnies.

He continues to ask Abdullah: "Did you read, dear Abdullah, a little over the recent and the ancient history of the region to be so sure of your knowledge? If you did, you have surely read about the empires and dynasties, which my ancestors established and which ruled over our country³ for hundreds of years. My dear friend, do you want me to talk about these empires and dynasties?"

He refers to the Turkmen states which were founded in Iraq before the establishment of the Ottoman empire in 1516 AC:

Seljuk Empire (1118 - 1194)

Dynasty of Mosul Atabekians (1127 - 1233)

Dynasty of Erbil Atabekians (1144 - 1209)

Turkmen Dynasty in Kerkuk (1230)

State of Qara Qoyunlu (1411 - 1470)

State of Aq Qoyunlu (1470 - 1508).

Then he asks Abdullah to mention the names of Kurdish neighborhoods in Kerkuk city.

"Of course, I am going to mention some of them replies Abdullah: Imam Kasim, Shorje, Rahim Ava, Azadi, Kirmizi Kilse and Iskan."

"It is not right to say "some of them" dear Abdullah. "This will mislead the readers. You cannot add any other name to the names, which you have already mentioned. The neighborhoods, which you talked about, were founded recently due to the extensive Kurdish emigration, which took place mainly after the huge growth of the Kerkuk economy in 1927 and after the Kurdish uprising in the 1960s. I, however, can state for you the neighborhoods of my relatives and ancestors who lived there hundreds of years ago and you will see that the number of the Turkmen in each of these neighborhoods is equal to the number of the Kurds who live in all the neighborhoods which you have just mentioned." "Here are the Neighborhoods of my relatives and ancestors: Bekler, Sari Kehya, Shaturlu, Cirit Meydani, Imam Abbas, Gavur Bagi, Misalla, Cukur, Egi Huseyin, Piryadi, Cay, Kasab Hane, Yedi Kizlar, Hamam, Agalik, Meydan, Altuncilar, Neftciler, Avci, Yeni Tisin, Hamzeliiler, Hasa, Mahatta yolu, Baghdad yolu, Ciniciler, Almaz, Bulak ve Halveciler".

Yavuz continues: "Do you observe that all these neighborhoods's names are in my language and that of my ancestors? 'Shorje' and 'Kirmizi Kilse' are also words which belong to my language (Turkmen), 'Shorje' means 'salty' and 'Kirmizi Kilse' means the 'Red Church'".

Then Hurmuzlu challenges him over the large families of Kerkuk City, which have inhabited each neighborhood for hundreds of years. He reports the following Turkmen family names and is certain that Abdullah knows or has heard about these families: "El-Neftaci, Yakobi, Gedik, Hurmuzlu, Awci,

Salihi, Celali, Kirdar, Kasablar, Beyrakdar, Alemdar, Pasvan, Kulemen, Terzi Basi, Beyatli, Kocak, Tikretli, Bezirgan, Saatci, Kuzeci, Naib, Kazi, Sari Kehya, Sabunci, Keyaci, Ak Koynlu, Kopurli, Odushli, Demirci, Samanci, Ketene, Celebi, Bal yemez, Dizdar and Yuzulmez".

The writer presents another demographic character of the area, which can clearly explain the nature of the population of any city. He talks about the graveyards of Kerkuk City. He says that there are two large graveyards in Kerkuk city; each of them being located on either side of the city. They are well known Turkmen graveyards and hundreds of thousands of Turkmen bodies have been buried there for hundreds of years. The 'Musalla Graveyard' is located on the Musalla (Citadel) side of the city and the 'Ahmet Aga Graveyard', which later was called 'Martyrs Graveyard', is located on the side of Ahmed Aga (Korya side). He then speaks about the origin of these two words, saying that 'Musalla' took its name after the oldest and the largest neighborhoods of the city.

He continues: "Ahmet Aga was from the brave cognates who resisted the occupation of Iraq after the First World War, he was the owner of a well-known Café called by his name, which is located in the center of the Korya side of the city. Several hundred meters away from Ahmet Aga Graveyard lies another small graveyard, which is called: 'the graveyard of Abdi Beg'. Toward the end of the 1940s, he built this graveyard for his son who died at an early age. He also opened streets and bordered them with different sorts of trees and built a mosque.

Hurmuzlu reminds Abdulla of the Kerkuk massacre in 1959, which was committed by the Kurds who cooperated with the communists.⁴ The martyrs of that massacre were buried in Ahmet Aga Graveyard and therefore, this graveyard was renamed: 'Martyrs Graveyard'.

Hurmuzlu did not comment on the recently founded Kurdish graveyard in Imam Kasim neighborhood.

in his book²Talabani claims that almost all the mayors of Kerkuk city were Kurds and he concludes that the people of Kerkuk city should be Kurdish: by saying "the Ottomans did not expel the Kurds from Kerkuk city. They usually awarded the sensitive position of Mayor to a member of the majority group"..... "the Ottomans did not deny the ethnic make-up of Kerkuk city as being one in which a Kurdish majority co-existed with Turkmen and other ethnic groups. Therefore, they usually appointed a Kurd or a Turkmen on the sensitive position of Mayor". He refers to his article, which was published in al-Manar Newspaper in 1994.⁵ As evidence to his claims, Talabani points out the names of only two Kurdish and two Turkmen mayors of Kerkuk city, thereby trying to give a false impression to the reader.

Hurmuzlu ratifies the first paragraph of Talabani, but opposes the second and considers it contradictive to the historical records.

Hurmuzlu asserts that Abdulla cannot add any other name to the Kurdish mayors. He may consider the third Kurdish mayor of Kerkuk city Maruf al-Berzenci, who remained only for a period of 6 months as a mayor, illegal. Al-Berzenci was appointed as a mayor of Kerkuk City by the coup of July 1958, who was considered to be one of the head planners of the notorious Kerkuk massacre in 1959⁴ who was sentenced to death and hanged in 1963.

In the above mentioned massacre, many of the most active Turkmen politicians and intellectuals were killed with using very brutal and savage methods. Many of them were been pulled behind cars in the major streets of Kerkuk City until they died . Others were hanged alive from the electric cables along the streets.

Hurmuzlu starts to report the names of all Kerkuk city mayors from 1920 until 1980s:
1920s: Fattah Aga, Mecid Yakubi and Sadik Sarraf.
1930s: Abdurrahman Bakir and Baki Aga Gedik.
1940s: Habib Talabani.
1950s: Shamil Yakubi, Nureddin al-Waid, Fazil Talabani and Maruf Al-Berzenci.

1960s and 1970s: Hisameddin Salihi, Mazhar Tikriti, Nazim Salihi and Ibrahim Ahmet.

It is worth mentioning here that the position of mayor in Kerkuk city was acquired by election until the second half of the 1930s. Habib Talabani, who was the first Kurdish mayor of Kerkuk City, was appointed in the late 1930s centrally without election and remained in post for more than 10 years. The other two Kurdish mayors of Kerkuk City were Fazil Talabani, who remained in post for a few years until the coup of 1958 and the above-mentioned Maruf al-Berzenci. From the aforesaid data, it can be said that Talabani had distorted the historical facts.

To break apart the Turkmen concentration and to change the demography of these regions, the forced settlement of Southern Arabs in the Turkmen areas and the forced expulsion of the Turkmen started openly and intensively in the late 1970s.⁶ After this period, the Iraqi government did not allow Turkmen or Kurds to be appointed as mayors of Kerkuk city.

In the next paragraph Hurmuzlu challenges the Kurdish writers from the press in Kerkuk city. He considers the publications as a mirror of the nature of the population of any region. He asserts that the publications have to be written by the language of population.

The only first edition of the newspaper al-Necme, which was published after the First World War directly by English administration, was written in Arabic. From the second edition it started to be published in Turkmen language. The name of this newspaper changed to Kerkuk and the municipality obtained the ownership of this newspaper which was published until the 1970s.

If Kerkuk were a Kurdish city as the Kurdish politicians and writers claim, then how could the official newspaper of the municipality have been published in Turkmen even during the long period in which the Kurdish mayor Habib Talabani was the mayor of the City? The other Turkmen publications were: Hawadis (1913), Maarif (1913), Kevkeb Al-Maarif (1916), Necme (1918), Teceddud (1920), Kerkuk (1926), Ileri (1935), Al-Afak (1954) and Al-Beshir (1958).

Yavuz asks Abdullah: "Do you remember any publication which was published in your language in my city?" In reality, no Kurdish journals or newspapers have ever been published in Kerkuk city.

Hurmuzlu touches another important field of the community and starts to

comment on the music of Kerkuk City, saying that songs and music express the feelings of the people and that it should therefore be sung in the language of the people. He says that there are tens of Turkmen singers: Osman Tabla Bas, Reshid Kule Riza, Mustaffa Kalayi, Mulla Wel, Shiltag, Micala, Malullah, Mulla Taha, Sherif Mahhaw, Salih Havala, Mehmet Gulboy, Ali Merdan, Sidik Bende Gafur, Abdul Wahid Kuzeci, Abdurrahman Kizilay, Izzeddin Nimet, Kerim Kolemen, Kerkuk Kizi, Fahreddin Ergec, Ekrem Tuzlu, Faik Neccar, Sima Berber, Ali Kalali, Tasin Kerkukoglu and Sami Celali and many others. He wonders if there are Kurdish singers who were born in Kerkuk city, who settled there and gave concerts in the City, especially before the 1980s.

Hurmuzlu confronts the Kurds with another subject and mentions that the Kurds have not inhabited the area for thousands of years as they claim. He mentions that the biggest Kurdish city, Suleymaniyya, was founded by Ibrahim Pasha Baban in the Ottoman era about 200 years ago and was made the center of the sanjak (sub-district) Baban and named after the governor Great Suleyman Pasha who appointed Ibrahim Pasha as a head of the sanjak.

According to C. J. Rich who visited the area in 1820, the Southern boundary of the imaginary Kurdistan district was set in the area above Derbent town, which is located in the Southern part of the present Suleymaniyya governorate. He described the Kara Hasan district comprehensively, to the West of the Suleymaniyya governorate, as 'Turkmen lands' 7. W. R. Hay mentioned that Kurdish tribes colonized the plains between the two Zab Rivers in the 19th century. Rich wondered whether the Kurds are the original inhabitants of the pretended Iraqi Kurdistan 8. This view has still its adherents today according H. Batatu 9. This explains the massive Kurdish immigration to the Turkmen lands in the not too distant past, as Batatu acknowledged.

The other field, which Hurmuzlu mentions, is the literature of Kerkuk city. He starts with the only Kurdish poet of Kerkuk City, Sheyh Riza (Hijra. 1254 - 1328), he says that this great poet has written more poetry in Turkmen than in Kurdish and he doubts if there is another Kurdish literary man who was born in Kerkuk during the 20th century. The Poet Sheyh Riza has a collection of 236 poems in Persian, Turkmen and Kurdish. Sixty of these poems were written in Turkmen 10. Hurmuzlu names some of the numerous great Turkmen poets and literary men of Kerkuk governorate: Dede Hicri, Mehmet Sadik, Ahmet Medeni, Osman Mazlum, Reshid Akif, Mehmet Rasih, Hasan gorem, Reshid Ali Tavukli, Sadullah Muftu, Esad Naiboglu, Celal Riza Tisinli, Omer Aga Tercilli, Hidir Lutfi, Ali Marufoglu, Izzeddin Abdi Beyatli, Nazim Refik Kocak, Mehmet Izzet Hattat, Mustafa Gokkaya, Nasih Bezirgan and Salah Nevres.

After pointing out the following old features of Kerkuk City, Hurmuzlu asks why these monuments were named in Turkmen and not in Kurdish:

- The Stony bridge over the Hasa Su River, which was destroyed during the first year of the foundation of the Iraqi Republic.
- 'Cinema Gazi', which was one of the first cinemas in Iraq.
- The Tomb of Prophet Daniel, 'Top Kapi' and thousands of historical houses in the Historical Kerkuk Citadel, which were demolished by the former Iraqi regime in 1998.
- The 'Aslan Kaplan' Gardens.

- 'Babagurgur', which is a huge flame of burning natural gas of Kerkuk petroleum and which has been burning for thousands of years.

Mills were considered one of the vital sectors of the human community in the past. With the industrialization and instrumentation of the human community, mills are now regarded from the historical aspects of the countries. Some countries have taken it as a national symbol, such as the Netherlands. Hurmuzlu states that all the mills of Kerkuk city were built by Turkmen and given Turkmen names (not Kurdish names). He lists the Mills of Kerkuk City: Buyuk Karabash, Kucuk Karabas, Kirmizi Degirman, Cinler Degirman, Cennet, Cukur, Sebil Suyu, Kiravli, Tukat, Almaz, Eshkili, zeytunli, ShiShci, Shihoglu, Ulular, Begler, Neftchi zade, Buyuk Mulla Kasim, Silav, Orta, Tendurlu, and Mikailoglu.

The next fields to which Hurmuzlu refers, are the historical documents which were presented by independent sources. He points to the speech of Mr. Curzen, who was representing the United Kingdom in the Lausanne negotiations: "The Turkmen are populating particularly the cities of Erbil, Altun Kopri, Kerkuk and Kifri. They cannot be considered as Ottomans Turks. They are the generations of the Turkic tribes, who settled in Iraq before the Ottomans and the Seljuk's. They have special Turkic dialects".¹¹

Although the Iraqi Turkmen dialect which belongs to the 'Turkic' family of languages is similar to the Turkish dialect ¹², the English administration made great efforts to present the Turkmen as a separate nation from the Turks and considered it to be an important factor/pretext to detach the oil-rich Mosul Wilayet (Province) from the Ottomans Empire in order to and grant it to the newly founded Iraqi Kingdom in 1920.

The other proof which the writer presents, is the notification of the prime minister of the Iraqi government Nuri Al-Said. This notification was given to members of the League of Nations on 30th May 1932. Copies can be founded at the Secrétariat of the League of Nations and the archives of the State's Secretary of the United Kingdom under reference number "127 Middle East". The notification states: "The official language in the district Kifri of the Kerkuk governorate and central district Kerkuk, which are populated with Turkmen majority, should be in Turkmen in addition to the official country language Arabic" ¹³. "The personnel of the governmental related offices should be selected from the inhabitants who can talk Turkmen". It is worth noting that the teaching language in the primary school in Kirkuk City and Kifri district was officially in Turkmen until 1937. ^{14, 15} Despite the government annulations, the class presentation remained in Turkmen for many decades. Professor EY Odisho, who belongs to the Christian community of Kerkuk City mentions in his article: "City of Kerkuk": 'No historical authenticity without multiethnicity': "on different occasions in the elementary school, class presentations were conducted in Turkmen".

According to McDowall, the Turkmen were not only predominating the Kerkuk city in the 1950s but they also outnumbered other communities in the governorate as a whole. ¹⁶ EY Odisho writes: "The Turkmen as a large native community in Kerkuk City", "the largest Turkmen population concentration is in the city of Kirkuk whose linguistics, cultural and ethnic identity is distinctly coloured by their presence". ¹⁷ M. Farouk affirmed, when he

described the Kerkuk Massacre of July 1959; "The original population of Kerkuk City were Turkmen and the Kurds were more recent incomers. The Turkmen had always dominated the socio-economic and political life of Kerkuk city." 18 C. J. Edmonds, who lived in Iraq for a few decades and who studied the Suleymaniyya and Kerkuk region in depth, reports in his book: "Kurds, Turks and Arabs", chapter XVIII under the title "Kirkuk": "The population at the time which I am writing numbered perhaps about 25,000 of whom the great majority were Turkmen and about one-quarter Kurds, with smaller colonies of Arab, Christians and Jews.

Other subject which Hurmuzlu presents is in the field of the cultural rights which were given to the Turkmen on 24th January 1970, according to this legislation, Turkmen intellectuals founded many official Turkmen directorates and non-official organizations. For example: Directorate for the Turkmen education, Directorate of Turkmen Culture, Union of Turkmen literary men, National Turkmen artistic team, Great Voice music team and different artistic departments of the Revolutionary Club. One hundred and two of the 110 primary schools in Kerkuk governorate were started to educate in the Turkmen language and they were given Turkmen names, for example: Yildiz, Babagurgur, Aydinlik, Chalishgan, Barish, Genclik, Oguz, Aktash, Tash kopri, Yedi Kizlar, Almaz, Avchi, Sona Goli, Hasa Su, Agalik, Shaturlu, Kavur Bagi, Sari Kehya, Cirit Meydani, Talim Tepe and Top Kapi. How can the Turkmen be a minority in Kerkuk city if the lessons in more than 90% of the schools were given in Turkmen?

Democratic regulations were applied partialy in Iraq during two periods: firstly, in the first decades after the first war world when the English troops occupied Iraq, secondly, during the first years of the foundation of the Republic in 1958. The Turkmen had won overwhelmingly in all the regional voting in the Kerkuk governorate which took place between 1958 and 1959. Furthermore, the Kurds, according to Hanna Batatu, held all the legal and political machinery in Kerkuk City in that period.¹⁹ The following are the voting results from the different community sections:

The Chamber of Lawyers in September 1958: Turkmen list won overwhelmingly.

The Student Union at 22 November 1958:²⁰ Turkmen lists won overwhelmingly in all the schools of the governorate.

The administrative committee of the Al-Thawra Club in November 1959: Turkmen won all votes. 21

The Teachers Syndicate at 23 January 1959: 22 Turkmen list won 604 out of 900 votes.

The administrative committee of the Children protection Association in January 1959: Turkmen won 9 out of 11 votes. The other two were the chief of Health directorate of the governorate and a Christian doctor.

The administrative committee of the Teachers Club in January 1959: Turkmen won all 9 votes.

The administrative committee of the Red Crescent at 13 February 1959: Turkmen won all votes.

Yavuz reminds Abdullah of the days of the 1957 census and says that tens of thousands of communiqués, which were distributed in Kerkuk state to encourage the people to participate in the census, were written in Turkmen. He presents the content of one of those communiqués:

Irak Devleti - Shuun Igtimaiyye Wizareti - Nufus Umum Mudurlugu
1957 senesi umumi nufus sayimi

"Sayin watandash. Tescil ishine ishtirak etmek yeni ve mesud bir hayatin
tesisinde temel sayilir."

"Dear Citizens, your participation in the census will confirm a new happy
living for you."

The Ministry of the Iraqi social State
Directorate of the the population
Census 1957

Hurmuzlu addresses to the Kurdish politicians and writers: It is inconcievable that the government would have printed tens of thousands of communiqés - which were distributed by hand and by cars and dropped from airplanes - for a minute section of the community only.

Hurmuzlu describes the present tragic situation of the Iraqi Turkmen as a person who sits on a carpet between two powers, both of them pulling in opposite directions to throw the owner off in order to get the carpet. He names one of these powers as a 'Hulagu Baghdad' and the other 'Abdullah and his relatives' and describes both of them as the Greedy People of the Black Yogurt, meaning the economic wealth of the Turkmen regions.

By the Black Yogurt, Hurmuzlu means the following characteristics of Kerkuk City:

Kerkuk is a trade and export centre for the surrounding area's agricultural products, sheep, wool, cheese 23 and cattle. Textiles are manufactured there. After discovery of the oil fields in 1927, it became the major center of Iraq's petroleum. Before the Economic Embargo in 1990, Kerkuk accounted for 70 per cent of the states total oil out put 24, 25 and 2.2% of world oil 26 were produced in Kerkuk city. The oil of Kerkuk city is well known for its good quality and the shallowness of the wells, the petrol layers lie 840-1260 meter under the surface of the earth 27. The underground of the city contains a substantial amount of natural gas 28, which is unfortunately wasted by burning, and sulphur 29, which has been exploited since the 1970s. A huge petrol refinery 29, 30 is present in the North of the city.

The Kurdish Local Government in the Kurdish-controlled areas banned the participation of Turkmen parties in both the general and municipal elections which took place in the 1990s. Thousands of Turkmen who were deported from Kerkuk City to Erbil by the Iraqi regime are treated as foreigners. Turkmen, who were holding administrative posts at most of the government offices before 1991, were gradually dismissed and replaced by Kurds. The appointments of Turkmen are hampered. The Turkmen population and organizations are constantly exposed to series of discomfort. Their offices were bombed in Erbil in 1998, 1999 and 2002. Turkmen neighborhoods are do not benefit from municipal services. The education in all Turkmen schools has been put under strict regulations and the teachers and families of the students were fought economically and threatened. On many occasions these schools were forced to teach in the Kurdish language.

Hurmuzlu considers the aim of 'Abdulla & associates' not different from that of 'Hulagu Baghdad' who was irrationally afraid to lose the oil-rich Turkmen areas and who applied the most brutal assimilation methods and expulsion policies with regard to the Turkmen and brought tens of thousands of Arabs to Northern Iraq to settle in the Turkmen regions.

He continues saying that the Kurdish policies to appropriate the Black Yogurt at the present time are less brutal than that of Hulagu Baghdad, but he doubts if they will not do what Hulagu Baghdad did when they rule independently over the region.

Hurmuzlu replies to the logical offer of Abdulla to cooperate to fight the Hulagu Baghdad by saying: "we should work together to resist the dictatorship, oppression and the assimilation policies. We should fight for the democratic rights for all the Iraqi people and lend a hand to any power that hopes the good for the Iraqi people. This will depend on the intentions of each of us, dear Abdullah. I would remind you, that the Kurdish policy has started to be more hostile and endangered the existence of the Turkmen after the development of the Safe Haven, unfortunately."

With the progressing of the discussion, the writer presents Abdulla as he understands the situation of the Iraqi Turkmen and accepts the Turkmen reality in Iraq. In fact, this can be right if we talk about some sections of the Kurdish community.

Conclusion

We concluded that at the time in which the Turkmen of Iraq are intensively suffering from the assimilation campaigns which became the official policy of the Iraqi regime for the last few decades, the Kurds consider them as new-comers and they try to usurp their cities. They get benefit from the exaggerated empathy which the Western politicians give them. The inattentiveness toward the Turkmen issue have further encouraged the Kurds not to hesitate to violate the Turkmen human rights.

We Iraqis are all friends and brothers who have lived side by side for many centuries. The time has come for us all to put an end to our disagreements through constructive discussions. We should be tolerant with one another in order to preserve the unity of our country for the benefit of all.

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