



Iraqi Turkmen Human Rights Organizations Assembly - Europe

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Meeting of the Turkmen members in the Governorate Council with the representatives of the American administration and the American forces in Kerkuk

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In the name of God, the most Gracious, the most Compassionate

Venue of the meeting: the offices of the Governorate offices

The Date: 14 June 2005

Present in the meeting: members of the Turkmen in the council, namely

1. Mr. Hasan Turan – Designate Head of the Council
2. Mr. Ali Mahdi
3. Mr. Muhamad Mahdi al-Bayati
4. Mr. Majeed Izzat
5. Mrs. Jala Naftachi
6. Mr. Kasim al-Bayati

From the American side:

1. Lt col Wakeham – Security and administrative officer
2. Mr. Hagerman – Deputy to the security officer
3. Mrs. Meg White – Representative of the American consulate
4. The coordinator of civil affairs

Mr. Ali Mahdi welcomed the attendees and started the meeting saying;

The Turkmen have never had any hard feelings against any human being at any time in the past and specially in the recent period unless they are harmed and we have no great sensitivity to particular situations and we thank you for your efforts so far and wish that more is done to serve all the people of Kerkuk without prejudice, and what we aim for in this meeting is to state the facts which have been made to Kerkuk's various responsible authorities present and past.

The report attached to the minutes of this meeting briefly shows, in form of itemised points, the purpose of the American liberation of Iraq, the concluded results as well as the reasons pertaining to the aggravation of the situation in Kerkuk including the main and only solution to the grave situation, which would be graver should no

actions be taken by making the Kerkuk a special canton within unified nation and areas of Iraq and with direct line of management to Baghdad in issues of sovereignty. Thereafter, the content of the attached report were read and the issue of substantiating documents was referred to indicating that the Turkmen members in the present and previous councils is following up events and is relaying such findings to the American authorities (American consulate, American forces, CPA, RTI and others).

Mr. Ali enquired; by asking Mr. Wakeham and Mrs. Meg, whether they were completely satisfied with the report or whether they thought it was fictitious and mere propaganda.

Mr. Wakeham answered as follows;

I agree with you on some of the issues and do not agree on others, specially those relating to the balance in numbers in the police and army as there are Turkmen directors in the government offices, but there is a grave case of administrative corruption as result of not forming the Kerkuk government until now and the Turkmen should participate in the process to obtain the balance they wish.

Mr. Ali replied by saying, you are the cause of the present situation particularly on the subject of forming the present government despite your knowledge of the real issues, the events leading to the delay in forming it [the government] and the main reasons behind it.

Mr. Wakeham;

You heard the news an hour ago that the government will be formed next week (Tuesday) during which the voting for the posts will take place and it is necessary that you be there to decide with the other members about the formation.

Mr. Ali;

Has the meeting been declared legitimate with only 16 members from one register being present and without having met the requirement for minimum number for a formal meeting as they declare every time. They can not form a government based only on their register and they could not do so since the elections now more than five months ago.

Mr. Wakeham;

It was an invitation for all parties to attend next week (Tuesday) and you should attend to achieve the required objectives of the meeting.

Mr. Ali;

Yes, I understand that, but today's meeting issued decisions and recommendations about the distribution of posts and invitations.

Mr. Wakeham;

Those attending the meeting have agreed that the meeting is not legitimate due to the absence of a large number of members.

Mr. Majeed;

We are still of our original agreement that if it is agreed that the distribution of posts is by consensus then we will attend the meeting to elect the administrative leadership, otherwise attending the meeting next week as is, would give the legitimacy to their meeting, their vote and distribution of posts as they want since they are the majority. Our attendance will be taken as such.

Mr. Wakeham;

Their number warrants declaring a legitimate meeting and if you attend or do not attend the meeting they can elect the posts.

Mr. Ali;

We would like to refer to the contents of our report. Before the Americans entered Iraq, the sectarian and ethnic problems in its present clear form did not exist. I wonder whether your presence has helped its manifestation; knowing that we sunni and shia Turkmen, Arabs and kurds lived in this city amicably and without such problems.

Mrs. Meg;

Can not imagine the situation before liberation of Iraq because circumstances were certainly different from what it is now.

Mr. Ali;

I would like to tell you about the ethnic mix of the Turkmen group namely those who are present here, Mr. Muhamed Mahdi and Mr. Kasim and Mr. Majeed and myself are from the shia sect Mrs. Jala and Mr. Hassan are Sunnis, we have lived in harmony and had good relationship with each other and now we strongly reject [sectarian and ethnic] segregation but the trend in all Iraq is going in this dangerous direction.

Mrs. Meg;

It is better to look for the future without going back to the past to build a new Iraq away from problems (I think she answered the question in a diplomatic way without having to indulge in this subject, it's a very sensitive subject or because she did not have sufficient knowledge).

Mr. Ali;

The bare-facts of the current situation as we have it now is as follows; the appearance of sectarian and ethnic tension is due to your weakness in controlling the city; we would like the American government to understand this.

Mrs. Meg;

I am happy to see you from the various sects gathered together now and we have friends from all nationalities and ethnicities we can work with you for the future.

Mr. Hassan;

We should look for the future and forget about the past, but we must learn from the mistakes made and I would like to clarify how the American administration made the same mistakes in forming the first government and the old council in Kerkuk. Because there was no election it was requested from the various ethnicities to propose their representatives and in equal numbers, but after that was done the American commander at the time added five Kurdish members and one from the Christian minority with no justified reason thus tipping the balance, on purpose, in favour of the kurds. We at the time raised the subject and made our opinions clear about what this would lead to and complained to the American forces at the time and your answer at the time was that this mistake will be corrected during the elections but what happened was that the same scenario was repeated, this time by allowing 150,000 kurds, who were not originally from Kerkuk to settle in a chaotic and illegal way [in and around Kerkuk], which caused an imbalance we now have in the governorate council which in turn could not form the Kerkuk government until now and what we are afraid of is that the same thing will happen again. We therefore demand that the elections in Kerkuk be under international monitoring.

Mr. Ali introduced Mr. abu Ayuub as a member of the council and responsible for the Bader brigades northern axis as this was his first meeting with Mrs. Meg and the others except for Mr. Wakeham.

Mr. Muhamed al-Bayati;

Referred to the subjects of the report stating that; I do not 100% put the blame on the American forces for all that happened during the past two years, but events can be categorized as follows:

1. They were an auxiliary factor in some events
2. They were the main factor since they own the sovereignty in Iraq (as recognised internationally).

A factual and non-fictional example is that we told the Americans that we lost the elections (which took place on January 30) because of the large numbers of kurds who migrated to Kerkuk to ensure that they [the kurds] win the elections and the results speak for themselves. At the time the American commander said "do not worry, we have put strict measures to ensure that it is a fair success", but what happened was a calamity, as check points were lifted and cars transported large numbers [of kurds] from Erbil and Sulymaniya to tip the balance in their [kurds] favour and that was achieved. There are other documented (live) examples. What is happening in Kerkuk, I believe, is not the forming of a local government or the sorting of disagreements between the Arabs, Turkmen and kurds about the distribution of posts, but there is a bigger plan and objective that the Kurdish parties have worked on for the past ten years planning and organising to seize Kerkuk and to include into Kurdistan and the changes which have happened on the street and within government levels in Kerkuk are manifestations of this (old / new) plan. When this problem is tackled (the issue of the kurds insistence on Kerkuk's annexation [Anschluss] to Kurdistan) by not allowing Kerkuk to be part of Kurdistan but allowing it [Kerkuk] to develop as a special canton then all other problems that appear from time to time between the various ethnicities will disappear if this [Anschluss] does not take place. However, we now find that 70% of this plan has been deployed and they [the kurds] declare that openly and that the power in all areas from Tel-aafer to Mendili has been divided between the two Kurdish parties covering all domains of security and administrative offices, one director from one Kurdish party with a deputy from the other party and so on.

We the ethnic Turkmen are against this plan and conspiracy which is targeted against Kerkuk and our sole demand is clear and well known to you and shall not allow that Kerkuk be a battle ground between the various sects and ethnicities and we do not want anybody to interfere with Kerkuk's issues apart from its indigenous people and likewise to the others in their own cantons. We believe the Arabs in Kerkuk think the same.

What I have just said can be substantiated by evidence. Should the numbers be left unchanged and without restoring to its original state [demographic distribution in Kerkuk] then this will lead to terrorism and an increase to armed operations due to the peoples hatred of this provocative action by the kurds, hatred gives cause for extreme violence which brings harm to all parties. The American forces should encourage the climate of friendship and harmony. Slogans like (Kerkuk is Kurdistan's Jerusalem) must be banned from the Kurdish banners because I am afraid that Kerkuk will be more than Falluja.

Mr. Wakeham;

The terrorist's aims are clear, they attack innocent civilians and the Turkmen should fight them.

Mr. Mohamed al-Bayati;

With what do you propose we fight, we have no one [Turkmen] in the police forces, national guards nor do we have Turkmen militias and our people have no weapons. The cause of the defect in the present security situation is those people who are responsible for the security apparatus. We henceforth confirm that a consensus is required in forming the Kerkuk government such that it shares the responsibility and national fervour and not be based on the number of seats and the register which has won [the elections]. The national assembly was not formed on the basis of number of seats nor did the [national] government; they were formed on the basis of a consensus and the participation of all components of the people.... Should the government in Kerkuk on Tuesday not be formed on a consensus basis then they will bear the responsibility of this defect in the future and we have no part in that. Their decision at today's meeting to elect and form a new government next Tuesday will be one sided and is a wrong solution based on a wrong decision. If this happens then they could have formed the government five months ago so we ask you (and them) why it has been delayed.

Mr. Wakeham;

The government must be formed as soon as possible and you should work with what is available today.

Mr. Muhamed al-Bayati;

In their decision [to delay], they have solved their problem with the other parties under the "Kerkuk brotherhood List". There is no problem between the Turkmen and the Arabs since our demands were made clear from day one based on the consensus and the participation of all groups.

Mr. Ali;

We have informed you about the imprisonment of a Turkmen yesterday and it has been confirmed that he was taken to Sulymaniya. His name, if I remember well is, engineer Ali Jawad Karim, studying for PHD in engineering, any feedback?

Mr. Wakeham;

He is in Kerkuk.

Mr. Ali;

Where in Kerkuk?

Mr. Wakeham;

In [the custody of the] directorate for emergency police

Mr. Ali contacted the director of the emergency police Brigadier Khatab who informed him that no such person exists in his custody. [he asked Mr. Wakeham] if this is sufficient evidence .. This is one of many other examples.

Mr. Wakeham;

We shall investigate again about the place of this person's custody.

Mr. Ali;

In the course of today's meeting, the Kerkuk register invited the Kurdistan parliament to attend next Tuesday's meeting... If they attend then we will not attend even if the Turkmen are given all the three posts. Kerkuk is not part of Kurdistan and is not linked to it. Furthermore, why did they not invite representative from the national assembly which includes all ethnicities?

Mr. Wakeham;

The Americans say that Kerkuk is not part of Kurdistan and after the Kurdish militias entered Kerkuk with the American forces during the liberation of Kerkuk we told them to go back to their areas.

Mr. Muhamed al-Bayati;

They entered the police and national guards forces, now they get paid keeping the old connections, the difference is that they are now wearing official and military uniforms.

Mr. Ali;

Have you seen the Kurdish flags and the portraits in the governorate building yesterday? Is this not an offence? And why would such flags be hoisted in official buildings in Kerkuk, have they been reprimanded?

Mr. Wakeham;

Our job is not to reprimand offenders or violators, but we have asked the governor to remove the flags and portraits.

Mr. Ali;

In a move to do the same we would have hoisted Turkmen flags if the Kurdish flags were not removed today. This move by the kurds was provocative and aimed at inciting strife and civil war.

Mr. Wakeham;

There are now no provocative actions and we feel that, everybody should be keen to ensure participation in the development and building of Kerkuk is the responsibility of all.

Mr. Muhamed al-Bayati;

How can we participate if the government is going to be formed by them without consensus? This is the most serious state of affairs that can happen in a democracy (unilateral control in the name of democracy).

Mr. Wakeham;

Have you asked general Turhan and others for help in providing protection and security?

Mr. Ali;

Do these people have any authority? Even the governor has no authority it is all in the hands of the Kurdish parties.

Mr. Majeed;

We and our ancestors before us were born and raised in this city, but our rights have been confiscated. The Turkmen people have been oppressed under Saddam who confiscated our lands and belongs and after the entry of the American forces we are being oppressed again, while others have not just got their rights but have increased them by confiscating our lands. It can be proven by authenticated official documents that 90% of the land in Kerkuk belongs to the Turkmen. The Americans treat the kurds as allies and the Saddamists cordially for reasons well known to them, all to the detriment of our [Turkmen] interests, we have suffered twice. Our land has been given to Saddams' henchmen and we have not got it back yet and you have not helped us.

Mr. Wakeham;

Solving of problems and conflicts of property rights are the responsibility and under the investigation of the complaints committee. Solving of such complaints in Taza will be delayed as a result of the attempted assassination of the person responsible for solving these conflicts, but we ask the responsible persons to sidestep such problems.

Mr. Ali;

How can we help, all be it we always want to help you; our meeting today is proof so that you are always in the picture.

Mr. Muhamed al-Bayati;

We asked you to be neutral in dealing with everybody.

Mr. Wakeham;

We hope that the issue of the Kurdish flags will not intimidate you.

Mr. Muhamed al-Bayati;

If the issue of the flags is a problem then it a simple one, we need you to deal with the bigger issues.

Mr. Wakeham;

We support you for the sake of Kerkuk and its situation.

Mr. Ali;

These are our problems which we have now informed [made clear to] all Iraqi and American parties. No response has yet been received but we are not giving up tabling our problems to you daily. This is our duty and service to our nation.

Mr. Wakeham;

We solve the problems as much as we possibly can and share your problems and support you.

Mr. Ali;

The main problems which you are aware of must be solved before the next election.

Mr. Wakeham; requested the clarification of two issues – this was outside the meeting and we shall take care of these issues. Mr. Wakeham; concluded by saying that we all work together for Kerkuk. Mr. Ali said this is our wish.. The American party was bid goodbye.

And we shall pull all stops for Kerkuk....

End

The report presented by the Turkmen members in Kerkuk Council

In the name of God, the most Gracious, the most Compassionate

The annual report of the general situation in Kerkuk from the point of view of the Turkmen members in the Kerkuk Governorate Council;

This report sheds the light upon the security situation and the running of the general affairs during the past period following the fall of the old regime on 9 April 2003. The issues mentioned are substantiated by daily events and the dispatches issued by them and the daily witnessing of events. The following parties and forces which have been involved in administrating Kerkuk (coordination and follow up) have been informed in writing and verbally via the daily or weekly meetings;

1. The American forces
2. The American Congress
3. The American consulate
4. CPA
5. RTI
6. Others

The aims of liberating Iraq and the ousting of the dictator regime by the American forces were as following:

1. Dismantling of weapons of mass destruction
2. Reinstatement of human rights and civil liberties
3. Establishment of security stability and fighting of terrorism and eradication of armed militias that try to destabilise and threaten peoples lives
4. Reconstructing the infrastructure and assisting in development in investment (electricity, water, general services, housing, commerce, food etc)
5. The relationship with the neighbouring countries and the rest of the world

Concluded results

1. The appearance of sectarianism, racism and ethnic strife
2. Terrorism is more intensified and assassinations have increased
3. The appearance of the unnatural armed phenomena due to the imbalance in arms
4. Complete and obvious bias towards a particular entity
5. The reappearance of the secret despotic security apparatus under another name and with increased number to replace Saddam's security forces
6. Increase in the number of arrests, raids and kidnapping operations
7. Weakness in the executive and legislative and the marginalisation of the decisions taken by the central government and the committees of the Governorate Council
8. Despite the clear knowledge of the reasons, the Kerkuk government has not been established
9. The wide administrative corruption in government offices and the embezzlement practices are left unpunished

10. There exists no real reconstruction or development in the city.. However there are nearly fictitious or useless project

We have concluded following reasons which are attributed to the above mentioned administrative, security and general situation defects;

1. There is no balance in the forming of the government on 23 May 2003
2. There is no balance in forming the security offices in the governorate (police and Iraqi army)
3. The appointment and secondment of director generals and large numbers of new or transferred civil servants from the northern governorates
4. The number of the displaced (the indigenous and the unlawful)
5. The encroachment upon public and private properties and the destruction and the damage done to peoples official documents
6. The rigged elections and it effects

The only solution to all problems;

Kerkuk must be made an independent canton directly linked to the central government within a unified (land, people and flag) and demographic Iraq.