



Iraqi Turkmen Human Rights Research Foundation

The Netherlands

Tel: 0031 (0)---

Email: soitm@chello.nl

Report

Our reference: G/28-04/R/6

Subject: **Disregard of the Turkmen may distort the reality in the upcoming
Iraqi census**

July 30th, 2004

We often read and hear in the Western media that the Turkmen in Iraq are a small minority and only represent 2% of the total Iraqi population. This assessment is completely false, it is based on yet another British intelligence distortion of facts and realities (of the 1920s) in Iraq which misled world opinion about the number of Turkmen in the north of Iraq in order to gain and exploit the oil fields of Mosul province at the end of World War I. (1)

This figure of 2% had been arbitrarily fixed by British policy makers in order to minimize the importance of the Turkmen population in northern Iraq at the time when intense struggles and negotiations were taking place between Great Britain and the Republic of Turkey in Lausanne and at the League of Nations to determine the ownership of Mosul province (actual north of Iraq). The struggle ended when Britain gained the huge oil fields in the Mosul province. The population of Turkmen was one of the major factors for Turkey to win the province. For any specialist in the Iraqi case who studied the Iraqi population, this should be enough to be suspicious of this 2% figure. In actual fact, at that time Turkmen represented 12 to 15% of the Iraqi population, as they do to-day.

It is a well known fact that at the end of World War I, Kirkuk and Erbil cities were almost entirely inhabited by Turkmen. Besides, there were several districts of these two cities which were inhabited by Turkmen only (Bashir, Leylan, Taza Khurmatu, Tavuk, Tuz Khurmatu, Altun Kopri, Kifri, etc). There were also many Turkmen living in and around Mosul and Diyala cities (i.e. Tala'afer, Rashidiyya, Selamiyya, Mahallabiyya, Nabi Yunis, Khalis, Makdadiyya etc).

After the revolution of 1958 Britain's influence in Iraq was reduced, but the situation for the Turkmen did not improve, on the contrary and especially after the return of Mustafa Barazani from exile (1958) the Kurds' pretensions to the oil wealth of Kirkuk started and this gave place to the arrival and settlement of many Kurds from outside Kirkuk city and even from outside Kirkuk province.

It is a well known fact that the first Kurdish settlement in the suburbs of Kirkuk started in the 1930s in Imam Kasim region and in the 1950s in Shorjia. It amplified after the 1958 revolution when Mustafa Barazani wanted to materialize his ambition to Kirkuk's oil wealth.

Despite the alteration of Kirkuk's population, first by successive Iraqi Governments and later by the Kurds, the 1957 census has shown that the Turkmen still represented the majority in Kirkuk.

The following are two logical analyses which prove that the assertion that the Turkmen only represent 2% of the Iraqi population is false:

1 - According to the 1947 census the total Iraqi population was 3,468,000. This means (according to the advocates of the 2% figure) that the Turkmen in Iraq were less than 70,000! The same census established that the Turkmen living in Tala'afar (one of the Turkmen districts of Mosul) were 46,000, where 20,400 inhabitants were counted in town and 25,600 in the rural areas. D. Oates (3) confirms the Turkmen ethnicity of the Tala'afar district.

Accordingly, the Turkmen of Tala'afar alone would have made up 1.3% of the total Iraqi population and 67% of all Turkmen living in Iraq, this would mean that 2/3 of Turkmen of Iraq were living in Tala'afar and only 1/3 of them were living elsewhere in important Turkmen centres and cities in Iraq, such as: Kirkuk, Erbil, Diyala etc. This is ridiculous and absurd.

For the records, many other sub-districts and a lot of villages in Mosul are inhabited by Turkmen, i.e. Rashidiyya, Selamiyya and Mahallabiyya. The Turkmen neighbourhood called Nabi Yunis is considered as the oldest of the city, its population was 10,000 in the 1980s.

2 - In the 1950s the Turkmen outnumbered other nationalities in Kirkuk province as a whole according to McDowall (2), when the population of Kirkuk province was 388,939 of about 6 million of the total Iraqi population.

Since the population of Arabs and Christians did not exceed 20-30 thousand in Kirkuk province, there should have been at least 180,000 Turkmen in Kirkuk province alone, making up 2.9% of the total Iraqi population, not taking into account other Turkmen living in Erbil, Mosul, Diyala etc.

Pursuing the marginalization policy of successive Iraqi governments Turkmen populated districts of Tuz Khurmatu and Kifri were detached from Kirkuk province in 1976 by the Ba'athist regime in order to reduce the number and the importance of the Turkmen population in Kirkuk province.

According to H. Batatu (4) the population of Kirkuk city was 120,000 and according to McDowall (2, 5) it was 150,000, where Turkmen were estimated to be just above half and the Kurds rather less than half by both authors. As a result, the number of Turkmen in Kirkuk city centre alone made up 60,000 (circa 1%) to 75,000 (circa 1,25%) of the total Iraqi population of about 6 million. In fact, the percentage of Turkmen in Kirkuk city centre was much higher than what both writers mentioned. Besides Kirkuk city there were Turkmen living in two densely populated districts of Kirkuk, namely Tuz Khurmatu and Kifri where the Turkmen were as numerous as in Kirkuk city, H. Batatu and D. McDowell did not take these populations into account. This means that the Turkmen population in Kirkuk province alone would have made between 120,000 to 150,000 of about 6 million Iraqis, which alone is more than the 2% generally allocated to them. Of course this did not take into account other Turkmen living in Mosul, Erbil, Diyala and Baghdad provinces:

- Erbil city which was described by the British resident W.R. Hay in 1920 as almost completely Turkmen (6).
- Large districts, many sub-districts and tens of villages in the Diyala province were and are still today inhabited by Turkmen.
- According to H. Batatu the Al-Meydan quarter of Baghdad was inhabited by Turkmen militaries and Hayderkhana was inhabited by Turkmen aristocratic families and upper officials (7).
- The estimated number of Turkmen in Baghdad according to the Turkmen resources is about 300,000 or 50,000 families (8). They are living in Raghiba Khatun, Hayderkhana, Fadhl, Hassan Pasha, Bab Al-Sheyh, Adhamiyya and Qaaghulli.

These two assessments and facts prove sufficiently that the 2% figure of Turkmen in Iraq was and still is completely false. Distortions are hard to be straightened, especially Machiavelian intelligence distortions of British origin, from which Turkmen of Iraq have suffered and are still suffering.

In Iraq of after-Saddam, the American officials, Kurds and the Transitional Iraqi Government have continued the unjust policy of marginalization of Turkmen in Iraq by disregarding their true numbers and their representation. If such policies continue, the results of the upcoming census will be manipulated and will not reflect the reality.

We, Iraqi Turkmen, call on all international institutions and human rights organizations to get involved and supervise the upcoming census and elections in Iraq to ensure fair and democratic elections in order to safeguard Turkmen's rights.

References:

1. David McDowall, "*A Modern History of the Kurds*", (I.B.Tauris & Co Ltd Publishers, London & New York 1996), Page 335:
"For both parties (Arabs and Kurds) its (Kirkuk) value had been greatly enhanced by the nationalization of the oil industry. At the beginning of 1974 oil revenue was expected to be ten times higher than in 1972. A huge resource was now at stake. Kerkuk accounted for 70 per cent of the state's total oil output and Mulla Mustafa felt bound to claim both the town itself and a proportion of its oil revenue."
2. David McDowall, "*A Modern History of the Kurds*", (I.B.Tauris & Co Ltd Publishers, London & New York 1996), Page 329:
"In mid July 1959, another serious disturbance occurred, this time in Kirkuk, a town waiting to explode, once again, the spark was a rally by leftists. It will be recalled that the IPC in the north preponderantly Kurdish. Tension had been growing for some time between Turkomans, the originally predominant element, and Kurds who had settled during the 1930s and 1940s, driven from the land by landlord rapacity and drawn by the chance for employment in the burgeoning oil industry. By 1959 half the population of 150,000 were Turkoman, rather less than half were Kurds and the balance Arabs, Assyrians and Armenians."
3. David Oates, *Studies in the Ancient History of Northern Iraq*, Oxford University Press 1968, p. 16:
4. Hanna Batatu, "*The old social classes and the Revolutionary Movements of Iraq*", (Princeton University Press, New Jersey 1978), p. 913.

5. David McDowall, “*A Modern History of the Kurds*”, (I.B.Tauris & Co Ltd Publishers, London & New York 1996), Page 3:
“But would still claim (the Kurds) the city of Kirkuk, even though it had a larger Turkmen population as recently as 1958”
6. William R. Hay, “Two Years in Kurdistan 1918 – 1920”, (William Clowes and Sons, Limited, London and Beccles 1921), p. 81.
7. Hanna Batatu, “*The old social classes and the Revolutionary Movements of Iraq*”, p. 18.
8. Subhi Saatci, “*Tarihi Gelisme icinde Irak Turkleri*”, (Kirkuk Vakfi publication, Istanbul 1996), p. 32.

Dr. Sheth JERJIS

Chairman of SOITM
Nijmegen, The Netherlands

Dr. Ayoub BAZZAZ

The deputy Chairman of Iraqi Turkmen
Rights Advocating Committee (ITRAC) –
London, UK

Dr. Hassan AYDENLY

President of CDITR
Committee for the Defence of the
Iraqi Turkmen Rights, Belgium

Engineer Salman MOFAK

Chairman of Turkmen National Action
Front Ireland

Merry FITZGERALD

Human Rights Activist
Committee for the Defence of the
Iraqi Turkmen Rights, Belgium.

Engineer Orhan KETENE

Iraqi Turkmen Front U.S. Representative
Washington D.C., USA