



SITUATION OF THE TURKMENS IN THE 62ND ANNIVERSARY OF THE KIRKUK MASSACRE

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INTRODUCTION

Many massacres were committed against the Turkmens, the third largest segment of the society in the Kingdom of Iraq that was established in 1921 by the British. In order to fight against the British occupation during the period of kingdom, anti-British groups were formed

around Kirkuk and operated against the British army, resulting in the implementation of an exclusion policy targeting the Turkmens by the British.

On 14 July 1959, the massacre of Kirkuk took place, which targeted the Turkmen presence in Kirkuk and its vicinity, and constituted one of the biggest tragedies for the

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Iraqi Turkmens. Before the massacre against the Turkmens in Kirkuk in 1959, the British forces had been massacring the Turkmens of Tel Afar, who ignited the Iraqi revolt of 1920. The first attempt at massacre in Kirkuk against the Turkmens who resisted the British occupation forces took place on 4 May 1924. There were efforts to portray the event, where 56 Muslims and several Christians lost their lives while 110 people were injured, as a Christian-Muslim conflict.¹ The situation further deteriorated in 1946 when workers, who were working under harsh conditions in oil companies in Kirkuk, started a strike that resulted in most of them to be arrested. Around 20 people, mostly Turkmens, lost their lives when the security forces opened fire.²

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Assoc. Prof. Necdet Koçak, Colonel Abdullah Abdurrahman, Dr. Rıza Demirci and Adil Şerif. Later in the same year, approximately 70 Turkmen intellectuals shared the same fate. In the following years, during the Baath regime, more than 100 Turkmens were killed and their leaders were hanged during the massacre of Altun Kupri in 1991, which is the second biggest trauma for the Turkmen people. While hundreds of executions and assassinations were committed against the Turkmen society in different regions during the Baath regime, the Turkmens have been faced with serious human rights violations after 2003 by terrorist organizations such as al-Qaeda, ISIS, PKK as well as by different armed groups.

The 1959 Kirkuk Massacre, which holds a critical importance in the memory of the Turkmen society, is also considered a turning point for Iraq. The 1959 Kirkuk Massacre stands out as an important development that led to the overthrow of the socialists, who increased their influence in Iraq with the November coup. As a matter of fact, after the Kirkuk Massacre, the Iraqi

¹ Azizi Kadir Samancı, *Tarih el-Siyasi li-Turkman el-Irak*, Darul Saki, Beyrut 1999, pp. 124

² Mahir Nakip, *Kerkük ve Haviyatuha el-Kavmiye*, (Çev: Habib Hürmüzlü), Kerkük Vakfı, 2008, pp. 123.



Turkmens commemorate the victims of the 14 July Massacre.

public started to turn against the socialists; and the massacre, which was welcomed by the nationalists, marked the beginning of the end for socialist influence in the country. Despite the strong reaction to the massacre, no step seems to have been taken in the politics against the victimization and exclusion of Turkmens in Iraq, which has undergone rapid and radical changes since 1959.

One could argue that the seeds of hostility between ethnic and religious groups living in Kirkuk were sown with the Kirkuk massacre. This article thus presents suggestions and ideas lest similar events take place between the Turkmens and other groups living in Kirkuk and other regions.

1. THE SITUATION OF TURKMENS DURING THE PERIOD OF KINGDOM

Turkmens, who had the right to choose to settle in Turkey according to the Articles 30-36 of the Treaty of Lausanne of 24 July 1923, did not abandon their homeland and chose to stay in Iraq.³ Like other communities in Iraq, the Turkmens fought against the British for the establishment of a national government in Iraq, alongside other resistance movements in the north and south of the country. After the British gained full control over Iraq in 1918, the resistance of the Turkmens against the British occupation continued. During the Iraqi rebellion that started in 1920, the Turkmens showed signif-

³ Şakir Sabir el-Zabit, *Mucez Tarih el-Turkman Fil Irak*, Marif Basımı, 2007 Bağdat, p. 68.

icant resistance against the British in Kirkuk, Tal Afar, Tuz Khourmatu and the surrounding villages of Bayat, Khaneqin and Mandali. The "Kaçakaç" incidents that started in Tal Afar are one of the important factors that triggered the 1920 Iraqi Revolt.⁴

Turkmens in Iraq stood against the imposition of the kingdom regime on the people by the British. Due to their anti-British stance, they were prohibited from publishing newspapers in Turkmen (Turkish) language, despite the freedom of expression guaranteed by the 1925 Iraqi Qanun al-Asasi (the first constitution of modern Iraq).⁵ In addition, Turkmens were not allowed to participate in political parties and were deprived of their political rights. Despite the Article 16 of the Qanun al-Asasi, which provided that all ethnic groups can open schools in order to receive education in their own language, schools providing education in Turkmen were banned.

After 1931, courses in Turkmen in Arbil and other Turkmen regions outside Kirkuk were cancelled. This decision of the Iraqi government was in violation of the provisions of the Local Languages Law No. 74 of 1931, according to which the language of education in primary schools in Duhok and Sheikhan districts in Mosul province, Arbil and Makhmur districts in Arbil province, and Kirkuk and Qifri districts in Kirkuk province shall be in the mother language of the majority of the students. Iraqi Prime Minister Nuri Said stated to the League of Nations in 1932 that the ethnic groups in Iraq had the

right to education in their own language. However, despite these binding legal provisions, the Turkmen language was taught as a foreign language in Kirkuk for a few hours a week from 1931 to 1937, when the courses were completely cancelled.⁶

As the educational and cultural rights of the Turkmens were snatched away by the state, the teachers in the Turkmen regions were sent to other regions in Iraq. In addition, the attacks by the Levi forces against Turkmens in the Kirkuk Citadel in 1924, and the 1946 Gavurbağı incidents reveal the oppression against the Turkmens by the British-backed governments. Turkmens, who were excluded from politics, were kept as workers and lower-class employees in oil companies in Kirkuk. The systematic exclusion policies of the British against the Turkmens excluded them from decision mechanisms.

The Turkmen officers in the Iraqi Army during the monarchy period were also known to be against the occupation at that time. For example, Ömer Ali Bayraktar played an important role in the 1948 Israeli-Arab war and inflicted great defeats on the Israeli forces by acting against the instructions of the British to Nuri Said. The representation of Turkmens in the Iraqi government was limited during the monarchy period. In the government established in 1925 under the presidency of Abdurrahman Nakip, Izzet Pasha, who was of Turkmen origin, temporarily served as the Minister of Education, then as the Minister of Health and the Minister of Labor and

⁴ Cafer Telaferlı, *Mucaz Tarih Telafer*, 2012, p. 79.

⁵ Habib Hürmüzlü, *Meczeret Kerkuk Temmuz 1959*, Fuzuli Basım ve Yayım Evi, Kerkük 2020, p. 17.

⁶ Habib Hürmüzlü, "Tarih el-Talim fil Irak ve Abaduha el-Kanuniye", *ORSAM*, (E.T. 04.06.2021), <https://www.orsam.org.tr/ar/history-and-legal-dimension-of-turkish-education-in-iraq/>

Transport, before submitting his resignation in the following period.⁷ The representation of the Turkmens in the Iraqi government was weak, and many Turkmen leaders and intellectuals were exiled.

2. IMPORTANT EVENTS BEFORE THE 1959 KIRKUK MASSACRE

Turkmens, who were excluded by the British during the monarchy period, pinned hope on the reforms to be brought by the republic established by Qasim in 1958. However, this hope proved to be short-lived as the 1958 Constitution and the practices introduced by the new administration ignored the Turkmens. Turkmens were excluded in the new constitution enacted after the coup of Abd al-Karim Qasim, in which it was emphasized that Iraq was established as a result of the cooperation between Arabs and Kurds and that it was a part of the Arab world. As this situation restricted the life of the Turkmens in Iraq, the pressure on the Turkmen regions began to increase, and the socialist Kurdish groups, especially those supported by Abd al-Karim

Qasim, increased their activities in the Turkmen regions, particularly in Kirkuk. Even in the first months of the 1958 revolution, tensions increased and small-scale clashes took place between the Turkmens and socialist radical Kurdish groups, which were appeased before further escalation.⁸

In 1958, a rift emerged between Abd al-Karim Qasim and the military junta that overthrew the kingdom. A disagreement arose between Prime Minister Abd al-Karim Qasim, and Abd al-Selam Arif, who wanted to join the United Arab Republic. Since all nationalist movements were against him, Qasim relied on the Iraqi Socialist Party to balance the Arab nationalists. Increasing its influence on the police and the army, the Iraqi Socialist Party established organizations such as "Peace Supporters", "People's Resistance" and "Democracy Youth".

The Turkmens, who were the majority in Kirkuk until the 1958 coup (excluding the attempt by Kurdish groups to register some Turkmen families as Kurdish in the 1957 census) led a quiet life at peace with other ethnic groups.⁹

Socialist Kurdish groups, accusing the Turkmens of working for Turkey by claiming that they had pictures of the Ottoman Sultans and Mustafa Kemal Atatürk at their homes and cafes, aimed to provoke the people of Kirkuk.

⁷ Habib Hürmüzlü, *Meczeret Kerkuk Temmuz 1959*, pp. 17.

⁸ Bilgay Duman, "14 Temmuz 1959 Kerkük Katliamı ve Türkmenlerin Bugünü", (E.T. 03.06.2021), <https://orsam.org.tr/tr/14-temmuz-1959-kerkuk-katliami-ve-turkmenlerin-bugunu/>

⁹ Hürmüzlü, *Meczeret Kerkuk Temmuz 1959*, pp. 19.

A few months prior to the 1958 coup, Mayor Fadhil Talabani of Kirkuk wanted to name a newly-built hotel in Mecidiye Street in Kirkuk (with Turkmen majority) as "Sirvan Hotel". Giving the name of a river in Halabja district to an important hotel in Kirkuk was met with reactions by the Turkmens. Later, the hotel was named as Kirkuk Hotel. In addition, another action that provoked the Turkmens was the printing of an Eid greeting card in Kirkuk, which showed a Kurdish soldier and a map of Kurdistan that included Kirkuk. This card, printed before the Eid shortly after the proclamation of the republic, was perceived by the Turkmens as a sign that their region would be taken over by military force. This action caused anger among the Turkmens and the issue reached as far as Abd al-Karim Qasim. After the proclamation of the republic, radical socialist Kurdish groups made propaganda about the expulsion of the Turkmens from Kirkuk. Socialist Kurdish groups, accusing the Turkmens of working for Turkey by claiming that they had pictures of the Ottoman Sultans and Mustafa Kemal Atatürk at their homes and cafes, aimed to provoke the people of Kirkuk.¹⁰

After 1958, socialists who wanted to be active in Kirkuk dismissed the Turkmen officials from the army and police forces in Kirkuk, and many of them were transferred from Kirkuk to other provinces. In addition, due to the allegations that the Turkmens had participated in the coup attempt of Abd al-Wahhab al-Shawaf, their houses were constantly searched for weapons. Even though the Kirkuk Turkmens returned to their homes after the decline of the socialist

movement in Iraq, they became the target of various negative practices. While expecting the turning of a new page, the Turkmens were faced with the July 1959 Massacre. The Socialist Party of Iraq, allied with radical Kurdish groups, wanted to reduce the Turkmen influence in Kirkuk who were against socialist ideas. Although the actions taken in this direction caused disturbance among the Turkmens, they did not resort to violence.

3. THE MASSACRE OF KIRKUK

Between March and June 1958, Turkmen were removed from state institutions and trade unions and were replaced by figures of Kurdish origin from the Socialist Party of Iraq.¹¹ Turkmens, especially in Kirkuk, were dismissed from their local government posts and those who lacked adequate management and administrative qualifications were assigned to their place. Turkmens' centuries old rule in the states they built (emirates and principalities) in Iraq and later in the Ottoman period naturally provided them strong administrative capabilities. For this reason, even during the British colonial period, figures of Turkmen origin played an important role in the administration, especially in Kirkuk.¹² Socialists, who were disturbed by the fact that the Turkmens held administrative positions in government institutions in Kirkuk, sent reports to Qasim in which they accused Turkmens of working for Turkey. Different political parties sought to control Kirkuk during the period when the 1959 Kirkuk Massacre took place, as a significant portion of Iraqi oil was exported from this region.¹³

¹⁰ Samancı, *Tarih el-Siyasi li-Turkman el-İrak*, pp. 141.

¹¹ Nuri Talabani, *Mantikat Kerkuk ve Muhavalat Tagyir Vakiha el-Kavmi*, 1999, pp. 60.

¹² Samancı, *Tarih el-Siyasi li-Turkman el-İrak*, pp. 17.

¹³ Talabani, *Mantikat Kerkuk ve Muhavalat Tagyir Vakiha el-Kavmi*, pp. 51.



Kirkuk Kayseri Bazaar restored by TIKA

After the proclamation of the Iraqi Republic, Commander Nazim Tabakcali of the Second Company of the Iraqi Army, who chaired the National Cooperation Commission established to prevent the escalation of tensions between ethnic and religious groups living in Kirkuk province, maintained good relations with the Turkmens. It is also stated that Tabakcali's wife is a Turkmen. However, before the massacre took place, Tabakcali was accused of participating in the Shawaf coup attempt and was expelled from Kirkuk. It was claimed that Turkmens were also involved in the coup attempt carried out by the Arab nationalists based in Mosul. Tabakcali, who is known to be an Arab nationalist, was replaced by Davoud al-Janabi, who was

close to socialists.¹⁴ However, as the socialists gradually increased their activities and influence in the armed forces, especially in the "People's Resistance" force, the violations they committed throughout Iraq made Qasim give up his policy of relying on the socialists. On 11 June 1958, Qasim released all political prisoners and allowed the expelled Turkmen civil servants to return to Kirkuk. In mid-June 1958, Qasim met with Turkmen leaders at the Iraqi Ministry of Defense. As part of Qasim's change of policy, Commander Davoud al-Janabi of the Second Company of the Iraqi army in Kirkuk, who was known for his socialist views, was replaced by an Arab nationalist commander. Thus, the commanders who supported the socialists

¹⁴ Talabani, *Tarih el-Siyasi li-Turkman el-Irak*, pp. 59.

The 1959 Kirkuk massacre, which directly targeted the Turkmen identity in Kirkuk, sought to spread terror among the Turkmens in order to make them leave Kirkuk. Therefore, the mobs behind the killings tortured the dead bodies of some Turkmen leaders and committed the murders by shouting slogans against the Turkmens.

and Kurds were replaced with commanders who preferred Turkmens. Therefore, political tensions mounted in Kirkuk. The socialists were disturbed by the release of the Turkmen leaders and the return of the Turkmen civil servants who had been expelled due to Turkmen identity.¹⁵

Before the massacre took place, political polarization between the nationalists (Arabs and Turkmens) and the socialists (Iraqi Socialist Party and Kurdish groups) in Kirkuk, had had grave consequences for the Turkmens. Socialists back by radical Kurdish groups who wanted to take Kirkuk into their sphere of influence took a stance against the Turkmens, who controlled the trade unions in Kirkuk. The return of the prominent Turkmens to the province with the amnesty decision of the Iraqi prime minister in 1959, pushed these groups to plan attacks against the Turkmens. With the brutal massacre, it was planned to create fear among the Turkmens and break their influence in Kirkuk.

Turkmens, who were excluded from politics during the monarchy, showed a desire to actively participate in politics

in the first year of the Republic with their Turkmen identity as a result of the competition in Kirkuk. After Qasim's amnesty decision in June 1959, Turkmen leaders hoped that a new era would begin for the Turkmen society. On the other hand, with the rapprochement of the Turkmens with Baghdad, the socialists made contacts with the Turkmen leader Ata Hayrullah to draw the Turkmens on their side. However, the socialists' efforts to increase their activities among the Turkmens were unsuccessful because the Turkmens had not adopted socialist views. For this reason, the political parties, who falsely accused the Turkmens of establishing secret groups that embraced "Turanism", "Turkism" and "Turkmanism", played an active role in the massacre. During the visit of Mullah Mustafa Barzani to Kirkuk in October 1958 upon the amnesty decision of Qasim, crowds provoked the Turkmens by chanting slogans such as "Down with Turanists, Turkish agents and reactionaries".¹⁶

The Turkmen and Arab commanders in Kirkuk were accused by the powerful socialists and Kurds among the army forces in Kirkuk of sup-

¹⁵ Hürmüzlü, *Meczeret Kerkuk Temmuz 1959*, pp. 33, 34.

¹⁶ Samancı, *Tarih el-Siyasi li-Turkman el-Irak*, pp. 144.



porting the Abd al-Wahab al-Shawaf movement. The Turkmen, who wanted celebrate the first anniversary of the Republic separately from the socialists and who did not want to give the impression that they were under the control of the socialists, started the preparations for the celebration early. For this reason, the "People's Resistance Forces" were deployed in Kirkuk to suppress the celebration activities of the Turkmen and claimed that Turkmen were engaging in activities related to "Turanism".¹⁷

The "People's Resistance Forces" carried out a massacre in Kirkuk on 14 July 1958 against the Turkmen who were celebrating the first anniversary of the Republic and the return of the released Turkmen leaders.

Since the Iraqi government did not intervene to prevent the incidents targeting the Turkmen, the massacre lasted for three days. This massacre perpetrated against the Turkmen was the beginning of the initiatives targeting the existence of the Turkmen in Kirkuk. Hundreds of Turkmen-owned businesses were looted during the Kirkuk massacre. The feature that distinguishes the Kirkuk massacre from previous events is that it was a systematic and planned massacre that targeted the presence of the Turkmen in Kirkuk. In addition, the fact that the massacre took place as an attack against predetermined leaders rather than as a sudden development, reveals that it was carried out within the scope of an intimidation policy against the Turkmen living in Kirkuk for

¹⁷ Samancı, *Tarih el-Siyasi li-Türkman el-İrak*, pp. 144.

centuries. After the predetermined Turkmen leaders and intellectuals were killed, they were buried by the perpetrators in an area along the Kirkuk-Suleymaniya road. It is also known that Turkmen leaders were tortured in the streets during the massacre. The Citadel of Kirkuk, the symbol of the province and a historical heritage, was attacked and the Turkmens living there had to abandon their homes.¹⁸ The 1959 Kirkuk massacre, which directly targeted the Turkmen identity in Kirkuk, sought to spread terror among the Turkmens in order to make them leave Kirkuk. Therefore, the mobs behind the killings tortured the dead bodies of some Turkmen leaders and committed the murders by shouting slogans against the Turkmens. The dead bodies of the Turkmens killed in the Kirkuk massacre were hung from electric poles and trees.¹⁹ In the Kirkuk massacre, 27 people lost their lives²⁰, 137 people (all Turkmen except 6) were injured, and the workplaces and homes of 324 people (all Turkmen except two Arabs, 11 Christians, 3 Kurds) received financial damage through looting²¹.

Names of the Turkmens who were killed in the massacre:

- Ata Hayrullah / Commander, Major
- İhsan Hayrullah / Captain, Doctor
- Seyit Nakip
- Selahaddin Avcı / Owner of Alemeyin Movie Theater
- Muhammet Avcu / Owner of Alemeyin Movie Theater
- Cahit Fahrettin / Official at the Electricity Department
- Nuraddin Aziz / Pharmacist
- Zuheyir İzzet / Tea Seller in the neighborhood of Şaturlu
- Osman Hızır / Owner of the 14 Temmuz Tea Shop
- Hasib Ali
- Enver Abbas
- Kazım Pektaş
- Cuma Kamber
- Fatih Yunus
- Abdulhalik İsmail
- Abdullah Ahmet
- Şakir Zeynel
- Kasım Neftçi
- İbrahim Ramazan
- Adil Abdulhamit
- Kemal Abdulsamet
- Haç Necim Abdullah
- Cihat Fuat
- Nihat Fuat
- Emel Fuat
- Ali Ahmet Neftçi
- Sadık Rıza Salih

¹⁸ Hürmüzlü, *Meczeret Kerkuk Temmuz 1959*, pp. 39.

¹⁹ Nakip, *Kerkük ve Haviyatuhu el-Kavmiye*, pp. 165.

²⁰ Hürmüzlü, *Meczeret Kerkuk Temmuz 1959*, pp. 53

²¹ Hürmüzlü, *Meczeret Kerkuk Temmuz 1959*, pp. 50.

4. THE QASIM GOVERNMENT'S APPROACH TOWARD THE MASSACRE

Military support arrived in Kirkuk from Baghdad on 15 July 1959 to stop the Kirkuk massacre incidents. Following the massacre, the Iraqi government took certain measures. In the meantime, some forces affiliated with the Iraqi army had been deployed to the southern provinces of Iraq and did not intervene in order to stop the massacre. Later, a committee was established to investigate the Kirkuk massacre under the chairmanship of a commander of Turkmen origin, Abdullah Abdurahman. The death penalty was imposed on 28 people related to the incident, who were executed after the 1963 coup attempt.²²

On the other hand, Iraqi, Arab and Turkish media condemned the massacre and brought it to the agenda during the period of Abd al-Qasim Qasim. Speaking at the Mar Yusuf Church in Baghdad on 19 July 1959, Qasim blamed the leftists in Iraq for the Kirkuk massacre. In his speech, Qasim called socialists "anarchists". However, Qasim's condemnation of the socialists by showing the journalists the photos of brutally murdered Turkmen leaders, was interpreted as a result of Turkey's sensitivity toward Turkmen.²³

5. TURKMENS' PROBLEMS AFTER THE 14 JULY PROCESS AND THE SOLUTION PROPOSALS

Kirkuk Massacre on 14 July 1959 was neither the first, nor the last. Most of the massa-

cles against Turkmen targeted their presence in Iraq, especially in Kirkuk. Later on, Turkmen became subject to demographic changes in different periods. The Arabization policies targeting the presence of Turkmen in Kirkuk were intensified during the Baath regime. Therefore, the demographic balance in Kirkuk turned against the Turkmen. After 2003, the Kurdish political parties relied on their power acquired in the north of Iraq and implemented a policy of intimidation against non-Kurdish elements until October 2017. Eliminating the impact of demographic changes that caused the death of hundreds of people in Kirkuk, especially the Kirkuk massacre, is important for harmony among different groups. Otherwise, the bitter memories between different communities living together will make it difficult to achieve peace and unity. It is reported that 300 voters were added to the Kirkuk electoral registry by the Kurdish political parties for demographic change.²⁴ Unless the exclusion policies implemented by the Arabs after October 2017 are abandoned, the distrust among the constituent communities of Kirkuk will continue. The implementation of the policies aimed at demographic change in Kirkuk can be described as the continuation of the Kirkuk massacre targeting the Turkmen identity.

Turkmen political parties should bring the incidents such as the Kirkuk Massacre and the abduction of Turkmen women and children by ISIS in Tal Afar in 2014 to the attention of international platforms and the families of the victims should be provided

²² Nuri Talibani, s. 63. Ayrıca bkz. Nakip, *Kerkük ve Haviyatuha el-Kavmiye*, pp. 163.

²³ Nakip, *Kerkük ve Haviyatuha el-Kavmiye*, pp. 151.

²⁴ "Bayati: Kanunun İntihabat el-Cedid Seynhi, Ağlabiyet el-Kurd fi Kerkuk", (E.T. 05.06.2021), <https://www.facebook.com/jaasimjaffar/posts/1298854360276576>

with necessary compensation and rights. Turkmen political parties and non-governmental organizations may engage in activities for the recognition of the Kirkuk Massacre as "genocide" by international organizations, since it was the beginning of the systematic assimilation and annihilation of the Iraqi Turkmens. In this context, the massacres since 1959 may be lodged with the UN and the European Court of Human Rights through the cooperation of Turkmen lawyers and political parties.

When the Iraqi Parliament adopted the Martyrs Institution Law No. 2 of 2016 on 3 January 2016, it limited the definition of martyr to "those who were executed by the Baath regime and lost their lives in the fight against ISIS after 2014", thereby largely preventing the Turkmens from seeking justice in the face of the injustice brought about by the massacres. Because of this definition, Turkmens, who lost their lives in the Kirkuk Massacre before the Baath regime, were not given the status of martyr. On the other hand, while the Anfal events were recognized as genocide by the Iraqi High Criminal Court on 3 May 2011, the government adopted a passive attitude toward the massacres against the Turkmens, which shows that justice is not distributed equally in Iraq. However, Article 132 of the Constitution states that the government is responsible for taking care of the families of martyrs. Although the gov-

ernment agreed to pay salaries to the Shiite Arabs exiled by the Baath regime in line with the Rafha Law adopted in 2006, it did not provide material and moral compensation for the massacres committed against the Turkmens before 2003. Such inequality may negatively affect the national consciousness of the Turkmens toward the Iraqi State. In order to overcome the injustices against the Turkmens, the Turkmen deputies can propose laws to the Iraqi parliament to provide the necessary material and moral compensation to the families of Turkmens who were massacred before and after 2003. In fact, despite the abduction of 500 to 600 Turkmens from Tal Afar in 2014 and the massacres in Bashir village in Kirkuk by both the Baath regime and ISIS, Turkmens did not receive the necessary compensation.

The chemical weapons attacks by ISIS in 2014 to the town of Taze Khurmatou, and the 86-day siege of Amirli by ISIS, where mainly the Turkmens from the province of Salahuddin live, did not receive the due attention by international organizations. In order to reduce the impact of the atrocities suffered by the Turkmens and to provide material and moral compensation to the families of the victims, bills similar to the draft law prepared by the parliament regarding the compensation to the Yezidis who escaped from ISIS can be submitted to the Speaker of the Assembly by the Turkmen deputies.

CONCLUSION

The Kirkuk massacre, which was the greatest historical trauma for Iraqi Turkmen in the first year of the republic in Iraq, had a significant impact on the future of Turkmen. Indeed, the dates between 14-16 July are commemorated as the Iraqi Turkmen Martyrs' Week. Turkmen groups, which can more easily come together and act jointly after 2003 compared to the past, can engage in serious efforts to prevent terrible events such as the 14 July Kirkuk Massacre from reoccurring. In fact, there are numerous powers vying for the control of Turkmen regions. The incident shows that the presence of Turkmen in Iraq has been on the crosshairs since 1959. That is because of the strategic importance and natural wealth of the regions mostly inhabited by Turkmen. The powers that want to take advantage of the separation and weak organization of the Turkmen can capture regions such as Kirkuk at a time when the Turkmen are most vulnerable. For this reason, in terms of their presence in Iraq, it is of vital importance for the Turkmen political parties to come together and strengthen their representation in the government. For this, it is necessary to go beyond personal and party interests. The Turkmen political parties need to sensitize the Turkmen people and then the interna-

tional community toward the events such as the Kirkuk massacre. Shared historical tragedies or incidents bind people together. Hasan Turan, President of the Iraqi Turkmen Front (ITF) decided on 28 March 2021 that the portrait of the Turkmen leader Ata Hayrullah, who was killed in the Kirkuk Massacre, should be hung on the walls of the ITF offices instead of the portrait of the ITF President. Turan's decision proves to be an important step in terms of demonstrating unity through embracing the common Turkmen values as the elections, which are critical for the fate of Iraq, are approaching.

Since 2003, the representation of the Turkmen people in both local and central government has been gradually decreasing. It is important for the Turkmen to act in unity and integrity in order to acquire important and effective positions at the ministerial level. In order to increase the representation of the Turkmen in the central and local governments and thus enable the Turkmen to obtain their necessary rights, the Turkmen should also participate in the democratization process of Iraq, even though there are frauds and irregularities in the elections. Otherwise, there is a risk that the injustice and unlawfulness faced by the Turkmen throughout the history of Iraq will continue.

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