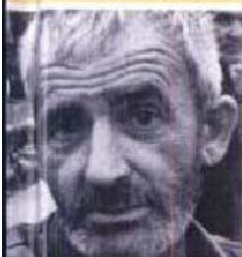
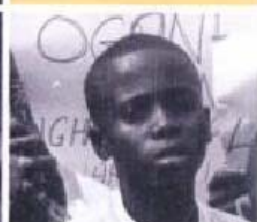


Yearbook 1995



Unrepresented Nations and Peoples Organization



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Unrepresented Nations And Peoples Organization Yearbook: 1995

edited by M K Simmons



Published for the first time, the "UNPO Yearbook" provides extensive information about the nations, peoples and minorities who are members of the Unrepresented Nations and Peoples Organization (UNPO). The UNPO was founded...

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IRAQI TURKOMAN

The Turkoman are the third largest ethnic group in Iraq, after the Kurds and the Arabs. The Turkoman are descendants of the Turkik-speaking Oguz tribes who came from Central Asia in 650 AD. to what is now Iraq. The majority of the Muslim Turkoman are concentrated in the north and central parts of Iraq in the provinces of Mosul, Erbil, Kirkuk and Deyalah, in a series of cities, towns and villages along a wide strip of Iraqi territory. Historically, the Turkoman formed a cultural buffer zone between the Arabs in the south and the Kurds in the north.

Many Turkoman are farmers and traders. Over the years, a large number of Turkoman living in the cities have been transferred or forcibly resettled by consecutive Iraqi governments. The government policy of assimilation and resettlement makes it difficult to give the exact number of Turkoman living in

Iraq. It is nevertheless estimated that the Turkoman population in Iraq exceeds two million.

Despite the fact that the Turkoman constitute the third largest ethnic group in Iraq, with a historical presence of over one thousand years, the distinct identity Iraqi Turkoman is still not officially recognized. Consequently, the Turkoman do not figure in national censuses and linguistic rights are denied even in places where they form the majority of the population. Since 1972, the government of Iraq prohibited the study in the Turkish language and banned the Turkish media in Iraq. In the 1980's, the Baath regime prohibited the public use of the Turkish language.

In the 1973 Interim Constitution and the 1990 Constitution no reference is made to the Turkoman population in Iraq. The constitution only states that "Iraqi people consist of Arabs and Kurds".⁸⁵ This had not always been the case. Under the 1925 Constitution, the Kurds and the Turkoman had the right to use their own languages in schools, government offices and to have their own language press.

The Turkoman have suffered from both intellectual and social persecution under the various Iraqi regimes. Many Turkoman died in massacres that took place in 1924, 1937, 1946 and 1959. Numerous villages in Turkoman regions were eradicated and their inhabitants expelled or forcefully transferred to remote areas in southern Iraq. Saddam Hussein resettled these Turkoman villages with Arabs.

In 1994, a report was published by the United Nations Special Rapporteur on Iraq, accusing the Iraqi authorities of gross human rights violations. In his report, the Special Rapporteur referred to violations affecting specific ethnic and religious communities of Iraq, including the Iraqi Turkoman.⁸⁵ Although repression seems to have been directed at all opposition to Saddam Hussain's government, distinctive ethnic and religious minorities were especially targeted. The violations affecting the Turkoman include restrictions on their linguistic, cultural and property rights.

After the Gulf War of 1991, the United Nations created a protected zone north of the 36th parallel, in an area where the majority of the population consists of Kurds. In its effort to protect the Kurdish civilian population and to provide humanitarian assistance, the United Nations did not take the two million Turkoman into account. The creation of the safe area left the Turkoman popula-

⁸⁵ Max van der Stoep, *Violations of Human Rights in Iraq*, Publications of Iraqi National Turkoman Party Information Office no. 5, 1995, p. 5.

⁸⁶ U.N. Special Rapporteur on Iraq, *Human Rights Violations in Iraq*, E/CN.4/1994/58.

tion divided into two separate communities: in the Kurdish autonomous area, the armed rivalry between the two largest Kurdish parties has left a power vacuum. The resulting insecurity has especially affected the Turkoman in this predominantly Kurdish area. In the area under Saddam Hussein's administration, the Turkoman are not recognized nor represented.

In August 1991, the Iraqi Turkoman became a Member of UNPO, represented by the Iraqi National Turkman Party. The Party strives for the respect for all nationalities, ethnic groups and religions, and for a peaceful resolution of the conflicts within Iraq through the political participation of all ethnic groups in that country, whose territorial integrity should be maintained.