

Altunköprü the ancient name of Türkmen Township

By Mofak Salman Kerkuklu



Figure (1) scenery Altunköprü

Altunköprü is a small Türkmen [1] sub district located 40km north of Kerkuk and the city lies to the north-west of Kerkuk. It is a 50km away from Erbil. [2] Altunköprü means 'Golden Bridge' in the Turkish language.

The history of the city of Altunköprü dates back to 228Bc. The indigenous inhabitants of Altunköprü are Türkmens, but in the mid of fifties and also in the recent years a large number of Kurds and Arabs migrated to this town seeking work as economical migrants especially after the Kurdish rebels in 1975 were quelled by the Iraqi Ba'ath regime.

Altunköprü is a Türkmen authentic and it is one of the many Türkmen ancient sub district. [3] [4] Altunköprü is approximately located between Erbil and Kerkuk. It is situated on the bank of Azab Alsfel (Little Zab) River.

¹ The Iraqi Türkmen live in an area that they call "Türkmenia" in Latin or "Türkmeneli" which means, "Land of the Türkmen". It was referred to as "Turcomania" by the British geographer William Guthrie in 1785. The Türkmen are Turkic groups that have a unique heritage and culture as well as linguistic, historical and cultural links with the surrounding Turkic groups such as those in Turkey and Azerbaijan. Their spoken language is closer to Azeri but their official written language is like the Turkish spoken in present-day Turkey. Their real population has always being suppressed by the authorities in Iraq for political reasons and estimated at 2%, whereas in reality their numbers are more realistically between 2.5 to 3 million, i. e. 12% of the Iraqi population.

² Turkmenelinden Notlar, Year 1 Issue 2 June 1999, Altunköprü Katliami Page. 2.

³ The Turkmen and Kerkuk, by Yucel Guclu, ISBN 978-1-4257-1853-4, Page 26.

⁴ The Turkmen and Kerkuk, by Yucel Guclu, ISBN 978-1-4257-1853-4, Page 58

The Little Zab River, the **Little Zab** (*al-Zāb al-Asfal*) Arabic: (*Kucik Zab*) Turkmen, (*Zē'i Koya*), Syriac.

The historian indicated that the that Zab River was known as Altun Su (Golden Water), after building the two bridges over Altun Su, the name of sub-district was changed to Altun Su Kopru (golden water bridge), and with time, the word of Su was omitted, the name became Altun Kopru.

The Altun Su (**Little Zab**) divides the city into three main sections.

- Buyuk Yakha (Salahiya Neighbourhood)
- Orta Yakha
- Kucik Köprü Mahaelis and Kucik Yakha

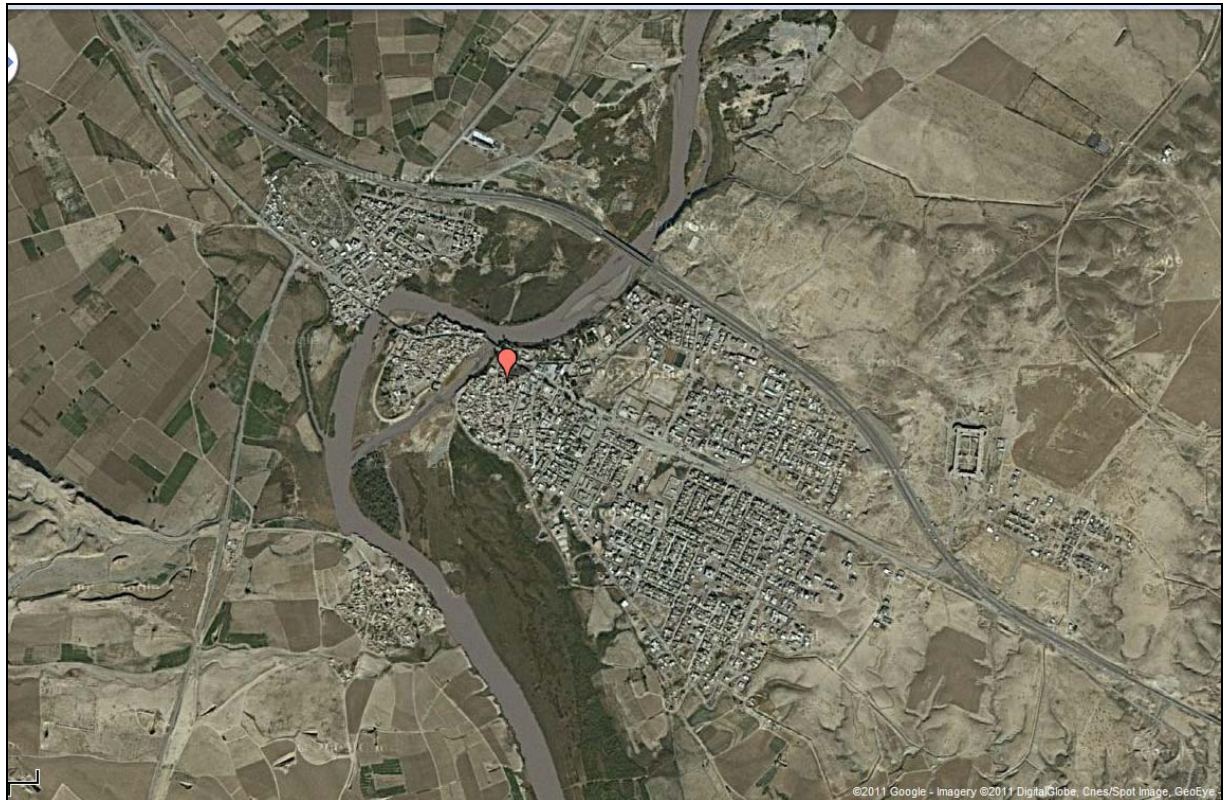


Figure (2) Satellite map showing the location of Altunköprü in northern of Iraq

The economical location of Altunköprü as a geographical link and interception point between Erbil and Kerkuk, Baghdad and Mosul provinces. According to the historian the sub district was named Altunköprü due to a verity of interpretation including:-

- At the start of the construction the bridge of Altunköprü in the sub district a gold ring was suspended on the bridge which has a long length 116m. A silver ring was suspended on the shorter bridge which was 54meters long.
- The other historian states that the name of Altunköprü is derived from that the people of the city of Altunköprü have collected pieces of gold from the inhabitants of the sub district prior to building of this bridge.
- Some historian states that because of the fertility of the territories and, agricultural land and its wide range of its agricultural products which was the equivalent value of the gold.

- It is likely the name of Altunköprü derived from the Sultan Murat IV. As he passes from Altunköprü during his visit to Baghdad in 1683 had he ordered the establishment of the two bridges to carry commercial and military equipment and the historian also reveals that Sultan Murat IV had donated two pieces of gold that hung above each bridge.
- The name of Altunköprü is derived from two Turkish words, Altunköprü and Köprü meaning bridge in the Turkish language. Köprü means a bridge, thus the name of Altunköprü stands for golden bridge in the Türkmen language. [5]



Figure (3) Altunköprü Bridge, photo by Ali Kassap

⁵ Felah Yazeroglu, Bizturkmeniz Website, 2011, *Min Diyar Al_Turkmen, Madinet Turkmaniya Thata Jemal Ve Tabiaa Khalaba*, <http://www.bizturkmeniz.com/ar/showArticle.asp?id=20461>



Figure (4) Altunköprü Bridge, photo by Ali Kassap

The Türkmen clans and families that are inhabited in Altunköprü are considered as indigenous people of the city. The root of the people is derived from Turkish Oguz clans who originally migrated from central Asia and settled at various parts of Iraq and this settlement was after the Someriyoön settlement in Iraq.



Figure (5) Sunrise over the Little Zab River photo by panoramio.com

POPULATION

The population of the city according to the census that was carried out in 1957 with a Türkmen majority. But prior to the fall of the Saddam Hussein regime the populations of the city were 11.560.00



Figure (6) Turkmen is wearing Burk and Jamadani is hanged on his shoulder

The Turkmen men in Altunköprü wear traditional clothes called Zubun Jacket that consist of a jacket and long dress often made of the same material and colour. They also wear a scarf which is known among the public as Jamadani and on the head, a hat which is known by the Turkmen as Burk and is often made of wool or cotton as shown in figure (6).

The people also wear special shoes known as Kilash which consist of leather soul and knitted top using wool or cotton.



Figure (7) Turkmen from Altunköprü with traditional dress Jamadani and Zubun Jacket



Figure (8) Turkmen from Altunköprü with traditional dress Jamadani and Zubun Jacket

The houses in Altunköprü are often made of mud and mixed with hay. The logs from trees are used for selling. However, the overwhelming majority of the houses in Altunköprü are made of from bricks with a flat roof using concrete or mud mixed with hay. During the hot summer time the people of the sub district sleep on the roof of the houses to avoid the extreme summer heat.

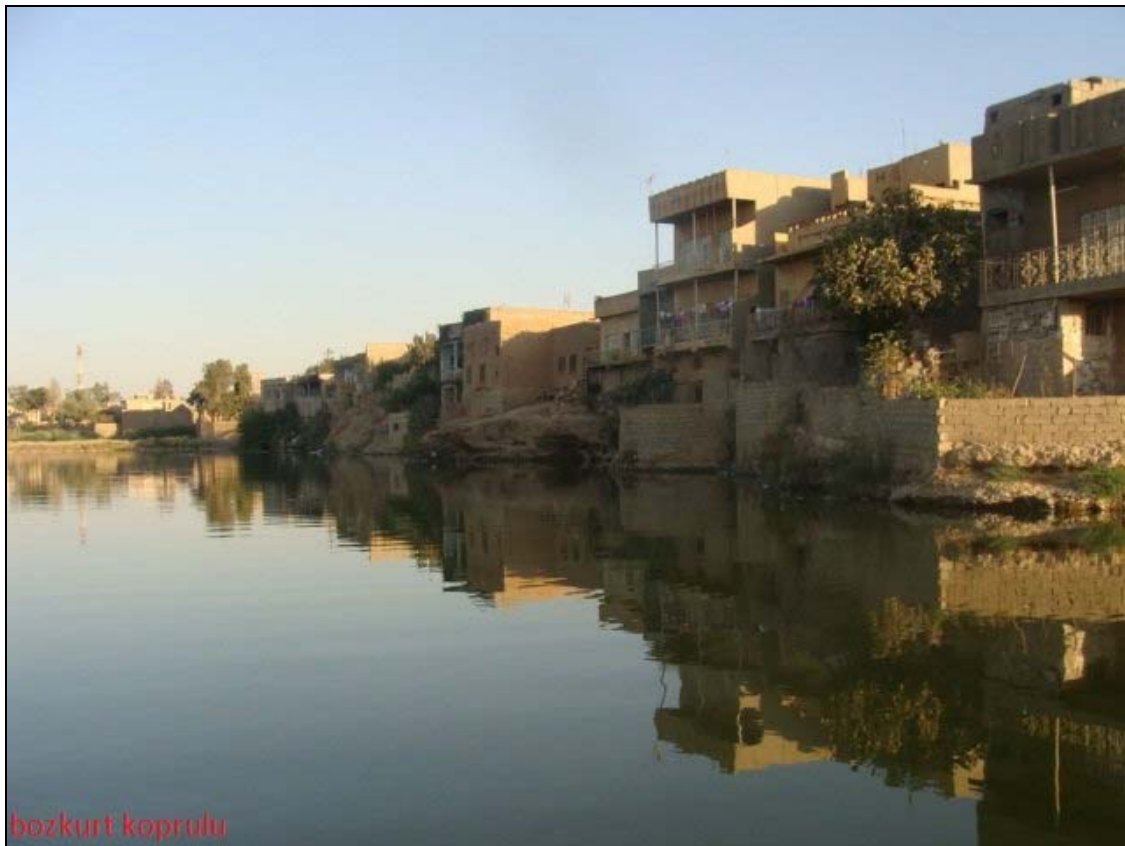


Figure (9) houses along the Zap River

LANGUAGE OF THE TURKMEN ALTUNKOPRU

The language that is currently used in the city consists of Turkmen, Kurdish and Arabic. However the Turkmen language is the most dominant language in the sub district. Still the overwhelming majority of Altunköprü is Türkmens.

The most common and out spoken language in Turkmeneli [6] is Turkish dialect. This is part of the Western Turkish language group that also includes the Turkish spoken in Turkey, Cyprus, the Balkans, Iranian Azerbaijan (South) and Republic of Azerbaijan (North), Northern Syria, Turkmenistan and Southern Turkistan and the Türkmens of Afghanistan.

The Turkmen language, with various accents, is closer to the Turkish spoken language in both Azerbaijan (Republic of Azerbaijan, Azerbaijan of Iran) and Urfa in Southeastern Turkey rather than the Turkmen language in the Republic of Turkmenistan (central Asia).

The Iraqi Turkmen language is drawn from two major sources. The first and foremost is the spoken language and local dialect spoken in Altunköprü, Tuz Khormatu, Telafer Erbil, Kerkuk and other main Turkish areas.

In general, these belong to Azeri Turkish. Although local Turkish dialects show degrees of similarities, differences are found in local dialects spoken in different cities, towns, villages and, even, neighbourhoods. This can be attributed to the fact that different Turkish clans settling in Iraq from the 11th Century and onwards have slightly different dialects.

Spoken language is the foundation of Iraqi Turkmen culture, folk literature, group identity, ethnic consciousness and world outlook. The spoken mother tongue is naturally passed on to new generations and this, naturally, creates a strong bond uniting the Turkish-speaking people of Iraq.

The majority of inhabitants in Turkmeneli and especially in Altunköprü speak Turkmen language and , a dialect of Turkish is used nearly universally throughout the city.[7][8] Even people and tribes who claim to be of an Arabic origin due to the Arabization policies implemented by the Iraqi state from 1970s onwards forcing the Turkmen population to speak Arabic. Since the Arabization policy that was introduced by the Saddam Hussein to Arabize the Turkmen populated area and dilute the Turkmen into the Arabic society, consequently Arabic language was forced on the Turkmen as an official language in Iraq. The Turkmen in Turkmeneli were prevented from utilization their own language as a mean of education.

⁶ *Türkmeneli* is a diagonal strip of land stretching from the Syrian and Turkish border areas from around Telafer in the north of Iraq, reaching down to the town of Mandeli on the Iranian border in Central Iraq. The Türkmens of Iraq settled in Türkmeneli in three successive and constant migrations from Central Asia, which increased their numbers and enabled them to establish six states in Iraq.

⁷ Mr. Ersed Hermuzli, *Kardeslik, (Alakhe) Brotherhood magazine, Page 16, issue (7), October, year 1961.*

⁸ <http://www.middleeastexplorer.com/Turkey/Tal-Afar>

A Turkmen dialect is nearly used throughout the Turkmeneli but unfortunately, compulsory education in Arabic has led to the weakening and deterioration of the spoken Turkmen language from generation to generation. In fact, the older generation with no formal education speaks relatively purer and more correct Turkmen than the young generation those who were educated during the Saddam Hussein regime.

The formal written Turkish is the second major source of the Turkish language in Iraq. Local dialects have not found their place in written literature. Turkmen have adopted formal Anatolian Turkish for written language. Up until the 16th Century, the literary works of Turkmen were in an Azeri dialect and this can, perhaps, be named old Anatolian Turkish; but from the second half of that century and onwards, the written literature of the Turkmen has come under the influence of the rising Ottoman language, a western Turkish dialect. After the separation of the Turkmen lands from the mainland, Turkey as a result of the defeat of the Ottoman Empire by the British forces in the First World War.

The Turkmen have continued with their preference for Anatolian Turkish by using Arabic characters in their education and literature. Turkmen writers have followed the simplification movement in Turkish literature. Although it was already lagging behind, it came to a halt in 1975 when the Iraqi government banned all publications, even newspapers and magazines, from Turkey. This forced Turkmen writers to work self-sufficiently, relying solely on Turkish radio broadcasts.

After the fall of Saddam Hussein regime the Turkmen culture and languages started to revive and on the 19th of August 2003 Turkmen broadcasting started and in the year 2004 a first newspaper published under the name of Al_Huda, Turkmeneli, Al_Qala_Kerkuk, Somer, Isek, Kardeslik, Safak and so on, gradually hundreds of books were published in the writing world especially in the Turkish language and which of all of these started to appear on the internet, all these have played tremendous roles in reviving and promoting the Türkmen language and literature.

However, broadcasting the Turkmen language by Turkmeneli Television, training the Turkmen teachers and educating the Turkmen Students in the Turkish Universities this had helped tremendously to revive the Turkmen culture, education and language again after being subjected to neglect by the Saddam Hussein regime for 35 years.

RELIGION OF THE TURKMEN

The old religion of the Turkmen was Al_Shamaniya, Judaism, Buddhism and Zaradishet but the Turkmen converted to Islam after Islamic forces conquered central Asia. The majority of Turkmen are Muslims. The Muslim Turkmen are divided into two Muslim faiths: Shiite and Sunni. The Sunni Turkmen are divided into Hanafi and Shafei. The Turkmen religion in Turkmeneli structure Sunnis and Shiites. They are in close contact with each other and intermarriages are usually between two sects.

In the city of Altunköprü, the Turkmen are Sunni, the Turkmen in Turkmeneli have never being considered themselves as Sunni or Shi'aa but they have considered themselves as a Turkmen first. After the occupation of Iraq in 2003 by the Americans, British and Kurdish militia, the sectarian identity started occurring amongst the Iraqi people. This was a policy of the occupation forced to be divided and easy to rule. They have tried several times to divide the Turkmen and to fight each other and especially in the Turkmen district of Telafer but this would not work.

THE WEATHER IN ALTUNKOPRU

The weather in the Altunköprü can be divided into four seasons; winter, spring summer and autumn. It is cold in the winter and hot in the summer. Average temperatures follow a similar gradient, with the mountain valleys generally experiencing colder winters than the foothill zone, while summers in the latter are hotter. During the summer time a large number of families from Kerkuk would head to Altunköprü for picnics and to avoid the extreme summer heat since Altunköprü is covered with tress along its river. The luck of organisation and life guards a number of people drown in the river each year.



Figure (10) Scenery from Altunköprü photos by Ali Kassap



Figure (11) picnic in Altunköprü

The little Zab passes through of Altunköprü and two dams have been constructed on the Little Zab; and are the Dukan Dam and the Dibis Dam. The Dukan Dam was constructed between 1957 and 1961 and its functions are to regulate the flow of the Little Zab, to store water for irrigation in its reservoir called Lake Dukan and to provide hydroelectric power.



Figure (12) Dibilis Dam photo by panoramio.com



Figure (13) Dibilis Dam photo by panoramio.com. The dam is located directly north of the district of Dibilis (Numera Sekiz) in Kirkuk. The main-purpose of the Dibilis Dam is to divert water from the little Zab River into the Kirkuk Irrigation project.

The Dibilis Dam is located approximately 130 kilometres upstream from the confluence with the Tigris. The Dibilis Dam was constructed between 1960 and 1965.

The dam provides water for the Kerkuk Irrigation Project for the irrigation of land. The dam has a capacity of 4,000 cms through the spillway and 278 cms through the head regulator (diversion to the Kirkuk Irrigation Project). Inflow is from Dukan Dam, approximately 140 km upstream.

The Little Zab River passes Altunköprü and the source of the Little Zab originates in Islamic Republic of Iran and joins the Tigris River in northern of Iraq. The river is approximately 400km long. The river is fed by rainfall and snowmelt, resulting in a peak discharge in spring and low water in summer and early fall.

The Little Zab rises in the Zagros Mountains in Iran. In its upper reaches, the course of the Little Zab is determined by the alignment of the major mountain chains that make up the Zagros. Thus, the river flows through valleys that are predominantly aligned along a Northwest-Southeast axis, parallel to the major mountain chains of the Zagros, only to change its direction abruptly where it cuts through these chains in narrow gorges. The Little Zab enters south of Dukan, where it first assumes a roughly westward course before turning to the southwest upstream from the town of Altunköprü and uniting with the Tigris River near the town of Shaykh. Most tributaries join the Little Zab upstream from Dukan. A number of smaller streams joined the Little Zab in the Ranya Plain.

Different estimates have been given for the length of the Little Zab. The Little Zab forms the border between Iran and Iraq, along its lower course it also constitutes the border between Erbil governorate which is controlled by KD leader Mustafa Barzani and Sulymaniya governorate which is controlled by the KDP leader Jalal Talabani.

The river is fed by snowmelt and rainfall, resulting in a peak discharge in the period February to May, whereas low water levels are recorded for the period July to October. On the north, it is bordered by the Great Zab basin while on the south it is adjoined by the basins of the Al_uthaim and Diyala rivers. The parallel mountain ranges of the Zagros consist of limestone folds rising to elevations over 3,000 metres. Water erosion has filled the Little Zab valley and the foothill zone south-west of the Zagros with layers of gravel, conglomerate, and sandstone. The Ranya Plain is the largest valley in the Little Zab drainage basin, and the second-largest in the Iraqi Zagros behind the Sanjak of Mosul Vilayet. The Little Zab crosses very diverse climatic and ecological zones. Annual precipitation along the course of the river diminishes from over 1,000 millimetres in the Iranian Zagros to less than 200 millimetres at the confluence with the Tigris River. The river valleys are characterized by water-loving plants, although the foothill zone especially the plain of Erbil is heavily cultivated, patches of natural vegetation. [9]

ADMINISTRATION

Administratively, Altunköprü was a part of Kerkuk but after the formation of the district of Dibis (Numera Sekiz) by the Baath Regime had made the sub district as a part of the newly established district of Dibis.

⁹http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Little_Zab#cite_note-IraqiMinistries2006a64-1#cite_note-IraqiMinistries2006a64-1

In Altunköprü, there are five primary schools, one secondary school, one high school and one main hospital. At the present Altunköprü is a sub district linked to province of Kerkuk.



Figure (14) scenery from Altunköprü



Figure (15) scenery from Altunköprü

ART AND CRAFT

The city of Altunköprü is extremely famous for its agriculture products, beekeeping, and fishing. The people in district are heavily involved in the fishing. Various types of fish are found in the Altunköprü.



Figure (16) Scenery of fish shop in Altunköprü photo by Mahir Koprulu



Figure (17) Scenery of fish shop in Altunköprü

The fertile lands of the district made it suitable territory to produce vegetable and other products. The sub district cryptographic, aesthetic and natural beauty where

surrounded by the trees forests making it the focus of attention of visitors and travellers from throughout Iraq. The city has notorious character and extremely popular for its handcrafts products including pottery, baskets, textures, carpets as well as woodcraft (scalper). In addition, a large section of the population works in governmental administration.



Figure (18) scenery from Altunköprü

UPRISING 1991 KURDS & SHI'AA UPRISING AND MASSACRE OF THE TÜRKMEN IN ALTUNKÖPRÜ

Almost immediately after Iraq accepted the ceasefire in 3 March, 1991 uprisings began to spread from dissident areas in the north and south of the country. Shi'aa in Basra, Najaf and Karbala in southern Iraq took to the streets in protest against the regime. Türkmen and Kurds in the north persuaded the local military to switch sides. Suleimaniyah was the first large city to fall. Within a week the Kurds controlled the Kurdish Autonomous Region and the nearby city of Kerkuk. In mid-February, President Bush Snr had called on the Iraqi people and military to take matters into their own hands. But the hope for US support never came. Instead, Iraqi helicopter gun ships arrived. Civilians and suspected rebels were executed en masse, and hospitals, schools, mosques, shrines and columns of escaping refugees were bombed and shelled.

According to the US, which has been criticised for allowing Saddam Hussein to continue using the military helicopters, between 30,000 and 60,000 people were killed. During the uprising in March 1991 against the Iraqi regime, the inhabitants of the Altunköprü I have decided to leave the town after they heard that Kerkuk was re-

taken by the Iraqi regime, looting, burning property and summary execution were taking place.

With news of the summery executions, opposition to the Iraqi regime quickly spread to Altunköprü .To avoid reprisal, persecution and revenge from the Iraqi secret service and republican guard, the inhabitants of the town decided to escape and shelter in safe areas. The fleeing population from Altunköprü were ambushed and rounded up by the Iraqi army, and the consequence was that all males were separated from females and the Iraqi armed forces and Iraqi secret service on the spot executed hundreds of Iraqi Türkmen's and Kurds. It took two-week from this despicable crime against the civilian people before the relatives of the dead people were allowed to be recovered and to be buried by their families. The Iraq government then confiscated the properties of these martyrs. The dead were buried in a mass grave by Saddam Special Forces and their bodies were later founding a mass grave in Dibis, near Kerkuk. The names of the martyrs are shown in the list bellow. [10]

List of the name of the Türkmen were executed in Altunköprü by the Saddam Hussein regime

- | | |
|----------------------------|-------------------------------------|
| 1. Abbas Salah Sait, | 1973- Kerkuk, Student |
| 2. Abdullah Kahya, | Taze Khurmatu, Retired |
| 3. Abdusselam Resit Hasan, | 1972-Altunköprü, Solider |
| 4. Adil Bayiz Hursit, | 1972-Kerkuk,Student |
| 5. Adnan Halit Menden, | 1958-Altunköprü,Civil Servant |
| 6. Ahmet Enver Abdullah, | 1942-Kerkuk Merchant |
| 7. Ali Abdullah Kahya, | Taze Khurmatu, Student |
| 8. Ali Huseyin Abbas Mali, | Taze Khurmatu, Solider |
| 9. Amir Midhat Izzet, | 1960-Altunköprü, Military personnel |
| 10. Atilla Ahmet Enver, | 1976-Kerkuk,Student |
| 11. Atilla Nasih Bezirgan, | Kerkuk, Student |
| 12. Ayat Kadir Rahman, | 1966-Kerkuk, Solider |
| 13. Aziz Ali Sait , | 1955-Altunköprü, Retired |
| 14. Cabbar Siddik, | 1957-Kerkuk,Solider |
| 15. Celil Fethi M.Ahmet , | 1945-Kerkuk, Retired |
| 16. Cemal Ahmet Farac, | 1962-Kerkuk, Military personnel |
| 17. Cemal Sukur Saki , | Taze Khurmatu , Labour |
| 18. Cengiz Mazlum Nuri , | 1968 Altunköprü , Civil Servant |
| 19. Cengiz Haydar Behram, | Taze Khurmatu , Solider |
| 20. Cetin Esat Bahcet, | 1974-Altunköprü, Student |
| 21. Erdal Ihsan Mahmut, | 1972-Altunköprü, Student |
| 22. Ersat Hursit Resit , | 1955-Altunköprü, Teacher |
| 23. Eyup Salah Sait, | 1975-Altunköprü,Student |
| 24. Fazil Cihat Fettah , | 1954-Kerkuk ,Civil Servant |
| 25. Halil Fethi M.Ahmet, | 1945-Kerkuk , Retired |
| 26. Hamit Garib, | Taze Khurmatu ,Solider |
| 27. Hani Mithat Izzet, | 1970-Altunköprü,Student |

¹⁰ *sacrifice and suffering , the Iraqi Türkmen's struggle to survive by Scott Taylor, page 16, ISBN1-895896-36-3, printed in Canada by Trico Group*

28. Hasim Haydar Behram,	Taze Khurmatu, Solider
29. Hasim Mehmet Tevfik,	1966-Altunköprü,Civil Servant
30. Haydar Geydan,	Taze Khurmatu ,farmer
31. Hasim Ihsan Ali,	1971-Altunköprü, Solider
32. Hazim Enver Abdullah,	Altunköprü,Civil Servant
33. Huseyin Ali Ahmet,	1958-Kerkuk , Military personnel
34. H.A Ekber Suleyman ,	TazeKhurmatu ,Student
35. Ihsan Ali Feyzullah,	1932-Altunköprü,Farmer
36. Ihsan Mahmut Veli,	1940-Altunköprü,Retired
37. Imat Mehmet Resit,	1960-Kerkuk, Civil Servant
38. Isam Mithat Izzet,	1962-Altunköprü, Student
39. Isam Osman Cemil,	1964-Kerkuk, Contractor
40. Ismail Sukur Silav ,	Taze Khurmatu , Solider
41. Kasim Mehmet Tevfik,	1962-Altunköprü , Civil Servant
42. Mansur Mazlum Nuri,	1967-Altunköprü, Solider
43. Mehmet Attar,	1940-Kerkuk, Teacher
44. Mehmet Halit Menden,	1952-Altunköprü, Teacher
45. Mehmet Resit Veli,	1925-Kerkuk, Retired
46. Melik Faysal Suleyman,	1966-Altunköprü, Sergeant
47. Muazzam Osman Ali,	1958-Kerkuk,
48. M.Suleyman Iskender,	1957-Altunköprü ,Astegmen
49. Necat Taki,	Kerkuk , Retired
50. Necip Sait Salih,	1957-Altunköprü, Civil Servant
51. Nevzat Kadir Rahman,	1968-Kerkuk, Student
52. Nihat Abdulkerim Ali,	1965-Kerkuk, Student
53. Nizamettin S.Hamdi	1958-Kerkuk, Civil Servant
54. Nurettin Terzi	1944-Kerkuk, Taylor
55. Nuri Mazlum Nuri	1971-Altunköprü ,Solider
56. Orhan H.Abdurrahman ,	1967-Kerkuk , Solider
57. Osman Cemil,	1930-Kerkuk, Merchant
58. Omer Hursit Salih,	1936-Altunköprü, Civil Servant
59. Sabah Ahmet Hamdi	1944-Altunköprü, Retired
60. Saddam Resit Hassan,	1971-Altunköprü ,Student
61. Saip Tatar Kadir,	1955-Altunköprü , Engineer
62. Salah Sait Salih,	1958-Kerkuk, Self-employed
63. Settar Rahman Aziz	1945-Altunköprü , Labour
64. Suud Hattap Osman,	1967-Altunköprü, Solider
65. Sahap Ahmet Farac,	1961-Kerkuk, Self-employed
66. Sahin Nasih Bezirgan,	Kerkuk , Student
67. Sa'lan Faysal Suleyman,	1967-Altunköprü, Solider
68. Sukur Hamdi Mehmet,	1932-Kerkuk, Retired
69. Tarik Bayiz Hursit ,	1963-Kerkuk
70. Turan Ahmet Enver,	1974-Kerkuk, student
71. Yasar H.Abdurrahman,	1965-Kerkuk, Solider
72. Zaim Ismail Hasan	1961-Altunköprü, Military personnel
73. Zeynelabidin E. Neccar,	Taze Khurmatu , Labour
74. Zeynelabidin Ibrahim,	Taze Khurmatu, Student

On 1st March, 2005, the Turkmen martyrs' names on the commemorating sign in Altunköprü were vandalized and deliberately disfigured by the Kurdish militia with

spray paint. The sign was created in remembrance of the massacre of more than 135 Türkmén by the Ba'ath regime during the uprising of 1991.

This action, carried out by the paramilitary militia, was designed to terrorize and provoke the Turkmen population clearly shows the hostility and hatred of the Kurdish paramilitary militia towards the Turkmen, a hatred that has previously involved Kurds in northern Iraq pretending they will grant Turkmen cultural rights, but never making good on their promises. [11][12]

After the uprising on the 1991, the corpse of the executed Turkmen by the Saddam Hussein security forces was found in the dump near Altunköprü. The corpse were left there for a couple of days, because the families and the relatives of the executed people were scared to go and collect their relative to be buried but after three days families in Altunköprü they were able to find their relatives dead bodies and they were buried in Altunköprü cemetery. The government also banned any burial memorial for them.

However, after the fall of the Saddam Hussein regime a commemorating plaque for the Turkmen people who were executed was established in Altunköprü but the plaque was several times vandalized by the Kurdish militia as shown in the figure (16).

But the commemorating plaque later on was replaced by the Turkmen with a modern design as shown in the figure (22).

On the 28th of March of each year, Turkmen people and political parties visits the cemetery and put a wreath under the commemorating plaque



Figure (19) the Turkmen martyrs' names on the commemorating plaque before and after being vandalized in Altunköprü, Turkmeneli

¹¹ *Sacrifice and Suffering, the Iraqi Turkmen's Struggle to Survive* by Scott Taylor, page 83, ISBN1-895896-36-3, printed in Canada by Trico Group.

¹² Mofak Salman Kerkuklu, *Report of Kurdish abuse in Turkmeneli*, 2009, Ireland, ISBN 978-0-9555-489-2-5



Figure (20) Turkmen students and Turkmen political party members commemorating the execution day of the Türkmen by the Saddam Hussein regime

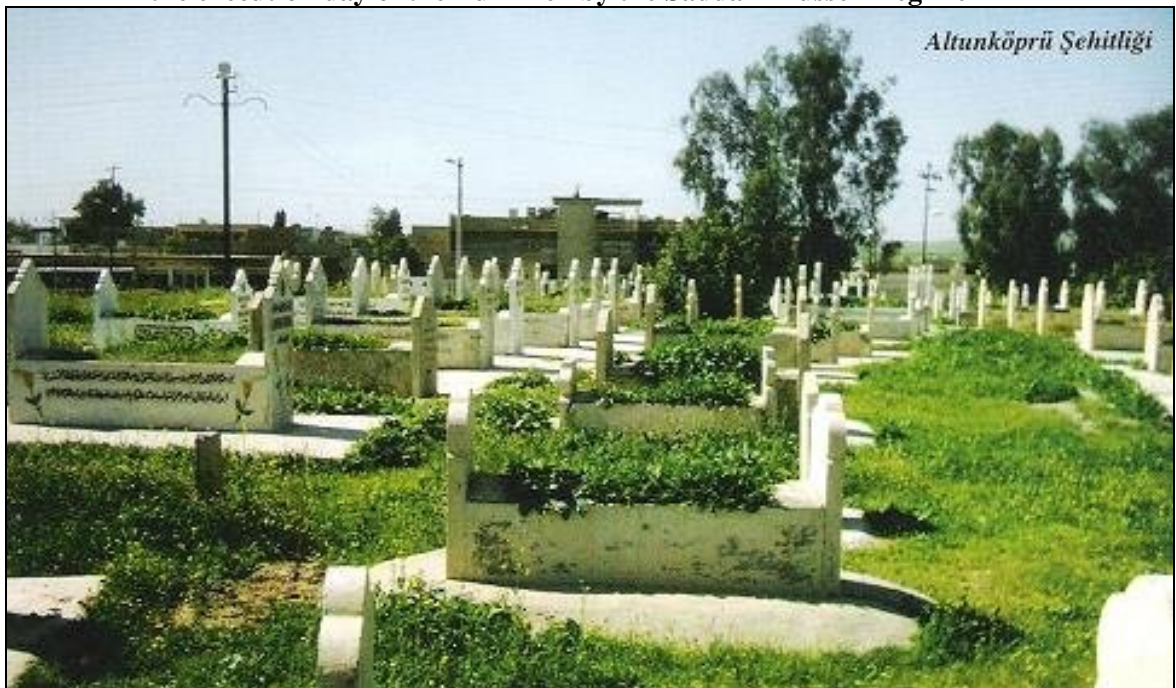


Figure (21) Graveyard for the Türkmen executed by Saddam Hussein regime during 1991 uprising



Figure (22) The Turkmen martyr's name of the 1991 uprising engraved on the memorial panel



Figure (23) Turkmen students and political party members commemorating the execution day of the Türkmen by the Saddam Hussein regime

POLITICAL SITUATION

The Türkmen people in the city were subjected to the Arabization policy which was carried out by the Saddam Hussein government. The Türkmen were subjected to a series of arrests and imprisonment and this was peaked up since 1980 from the era revolution of the 17th July 1968. By the Baath party and after the fall of the Saddam Hussein regime on the 9th April 2003. During the Ba'ath regime a large number of Türkmen intellectual were arrested, imprisoned and executed in 1991

Due to the Arabization policy Türkmen villages were destroyed, Türkmen agricultural lands on both sides of the road between Kerkuk and Altunköprü, Erbil were confiscated and distributed to the Arabs tribes and to the pro-defunct Ba'ath Regime. The Saddam Husain regime built a large number of military bunkers and military compounds along Kerkuk and Altunköprü road to protect the Arabs settles from being attached by the Kurdish rebels and also the solider within the barracks were used to quell any uprising that might occurs in northern of Iraq.

After the fall the Saddam Hussein regime in 2003. The Türkmen, Arabs and Chaldo Assyrians had high expectations, of the interim administration established after 9th of April 2003. The Türkmen expected to see democracy, justice, equality, fairness, an end to discrimination, the right to self-determination and an end to violence. Unfortunately, the opposite has occurred regarding the human rights situation in Iraq, in particular concerning the Iraqi Türkmen.

In order to suppress the Türkmen voice in northern Iraq, the Kurdish militias have established several puppet Türkmen parties to serve their own purpose. All the Türkmen parties, which were established by the Kurdish militia, are of Kurdish origin and working for the Kurdish party and all the bodyguards are from the Kurdish militia. The Türkmen parties established by the Kurds are designed to divide the Türkmen people and are used to smear the name of the Türkmen Republic in Iraq and to discredit the real representatives of the Türkmen.

The changing demography that was carried out by the Kurds after 2003. Saddam Hussein was not able to do it within 35 years. The city has been changing, a wave of Kurdish migrants moving to Kerkuk since the 2003. With the help of both Kurdish parties stretches of the recently build house pup up everywhere, there visual testimony the city is shifting demographics. The Türkmen and the Arab see the mass Kurdish migration is a potential political manoeuvre and attempt a demographic takeover. The majority of the returned Kurds are not from Kerkuk and even lived in Kerkuk before if they are really genuine from Kerkuk they should claim their properties since they are not thus they settled in lived in the football stadium and properties which is belonging the previous government, military camps and houses belonging to the previous Iraqi army compound.

The economic, political, and cultural aspects for the Türkmen completely changed when the Kurds brought over approximately 700,000 settles' to Kerkuk from North of Iraq, Syria, Turkey and Iran. The majority of the returning Kurds settlers were not originally from Kerkuk but were brought to Kerkuk with the help of two Kurdish parties. In the meantime, both of the Kurdish parties have utilizing more aggressive ethnic cleansing policy by changing the demography of the Kerkuk. For instant the

Kurds who were deported by the Saddam Hussein government from Kerkuk and currently are working as a civil servant at the Kurdish controlled province such as Sulymaniya were forcibly transferred to Kerkuk against his willing, they were also prevented to purchase a land or properties in the city of Sulymaniya and they were also forced to register their children in Kerkuk although they were born in Sulymaniya this clearly shows the degree of the demographic changes that have been utilized by the Kurds in north of Iraq.

The demographic structure of Kerkuk have changed seriously and distorted as Kurds, backed by armed Peshmerga forces, migrated into the city in large groups claiming to be original residents. After 2003, thousands of Kurdish settlers backed by the Kurdish militia have poured into Kerkuk and occupied houses, government building, football stadium, military camps, Ba'ath party Head Quarters. After the toppling of Saddam Hussein regime, the Kurds intensified their Kurdization campaign in the city of Kerkuk. The Türkmén have been subject to campaigns by the Kurds in Türkméneli in an often more brutal fashion than carried out on Kurds by Saddam Hussein. Türkmén and Arabs have been kidnapped, assassinated, imprisonment and, arbitrary arrested.

During the Arabization policy, Saddam Hussein regime expelled Türkmén and Kurds from Kerkuk to change the demography of the town by encouraging the Arab population to migrate and settle in the city of Kerkuk. On 10 April 2003, Kerkuk had 810,000 inhabitants. Today, seven years after the occupation of Kerkuk by the Kurdish militia and the massive influx of Kurds to Kerkuk, the population in the city of Kerkuk has exceeded 1.5 million. Kurds brought over approximately 700,000 Kurdish settlers from Northern of Iraqi, Turkey, Syria and Iran.

The demographic structure of Kerkuk have changed seriously and distorted as Kurds, backed by armed Peshmerga forces, migrated into the city in large groups claiming to be original residents but in the reality the majority of the returning Kurds were not originally from Kerkuk but they have been brought to Kerkuk with the help of the two Kurdish parties in order to change the demography of the city and to win the referendum that was planned to be carried out by December 2007. Whereas the Kurds claims that these returnees were forcibly expelled from their homes by the government of Saddam Hussein during the 1980s and 1990s. Mr. Barzani declared that 250,000 Kurds, including Türkmén were expelled from Kerkuk while in fact and according to the official information that was obtained from Saddam Hussein regime showed the actual numbers of the deportees from all ethnic groups in Kerkuk according to the ration cards until 30/3/2003 was 11,568 people.



Figure (24) Historical photo taken on the Altunköprü bridge, this photo clearly demonstrate only Turkmen with traditional dress. The photo shows there is no single Kurds with traditional dress in the photo. This shows clearly the original inhabitant of the town of Altunköprü, photo by Bozkurt Koprulu



Figure (25) Turkmen with their traditional dress in Altunköprü

In addition to, an article was published in the Kurdish Al_taakhi newspaper reported prior of the fall of the Saddam Hussein government the number of people that were expelled from Kerkuk by Saddam Hussein exceeded 60,000 whereas the statistical data were taken from the Ministry of Commerce, showing the number of people who have been transferred to/out of Kerkuk according to ration cards.

For instant, in the provincial elections were held in Iraq on 31 January 2009 the Sunni Arabs in Musul decided to participate in the election as the consequences the Sunni Arabs in Musul won the overall whelming majority of seat in Musul.

In response of the Sunni Arabs, victory in Musul, the Kurdish politician and parties have rejected the Sunni Arab won in Musul and have refastened to participate in the collation government in Musul that was established by the Arabs.

In the view of many of Iraqi and international observer the Kurds has a dream to establish a state of Kurdistan and the Sunni Arabs wining in Musul was a setback to Kurdish dream.

In the view of many Iraqi the Kurds should realise, accept the reality that the city Musul and the surrounding areas are not a part of Kurdistan, and accept the provincial election results that were held in Iraq on 31 January 2009 as democratic election. Many Iraqis believe that greater Kurdistan cannot be achieved without controlling more strategic areas such as Kerkuk and Mosul, which the Kurds do lay claim to, Kerkuk and Mosul are disputed territories. At present, the Kurds cannot realize their dream, due to the weakness of the economical resources, lack of the geographical interconnectedness, lack access of the seaport and opposition of the neighbouring countries. The Kurds have a plan for a great Kurdistan but at the present time, it would not be suitable for the Kurds to declare it.

According to the Ministry of Commerce, the number of Kurds who were deported from Kerkuk under the Arabisation policy by the previous regime was 11,685. However, after the occupation of Kerkuk by the Kurdish militia, the number of Kurds brought by both Kurdish parties from outside of Kerkuk city and surrounding areas exceeded 700,000.



Figure (26) Kurdish frauds report to the voting centre in the Turkmen City of Altunköprü, Iraq, where young Kurds from northern Iraq are casting their votes. The ink that was used could easily be washed off with some chlorine (bleach). The above photos show Kurdish voters caught red handed in Altunköprü, Iraq.



Figure (27) Kurdish frauds report to the voting centre in the Turkmen City of Altunköprü, Iraq, where young Kurds from northern Iraq are casting their votes. The ink that was used could easily be washed off with some chlorine (bleach). The above photos show Kurdish voters caught red handed in Altunköprü, Iraq.



Figure (28) Kurdish frauds report to the voting centre in the Turkmen City of Altunköprü, Iraq, where young Kurds from northern Iraq are casting their votes. The ink that was used could easily be washed off with some chlorine (bleach). The above photos show Kurdish voters caught red handed in Altunköprü, Iraq.



Figure (29) Kurdish frauds have been reported at the voting center in Turkmen City of Altunköprü, Iraq, where young Kurds from North of Iraq were casting their votes. The ink that was used could easily be washed off with some chlorine (bleach). The above photos show Kurdish voters were caught red handed in Altunköprü Iraq.

In Altunköprü the Kurds replaced Turkmen observers and voters identifying members. The Kurdish police and ING were escorting hundreds of buses carrying Kurdish voters from Erbil. [13] The Türkmen in Erbil were prevented from performing promotional activities for the Iraqi Turkmen From coalition list. Many Turkmen posters for promoting the election were destroyed by the Kurdish militia. Also unusual increase in the population of the following regions was noticed due to the participation of Kurds from Erbil and Sulymaniya in the election and this is demonstrated in table (1). [14]

Name of the region	Original population	During Election
Township of Altunköprü	11,560	17,711
Township of Shiwan	2,442	9,566
Township of Kara Incir	3,382	11,206
Azadi district (Kerkuk)	23,200	90,648
Rahimawa district(Kerkuk)	20,000	76,149

Table (1) showing the forgery electors participated in the election



Figure (30) Kurdish police were waving a Kurdish flag during the election to provoke the Turkmen, in Kerkuk, Turkmeneli

¹³ Page 95 sacrifice and suffering , the Iraqi Turkmen's struggle to survive by Scott Taylor, page 126, ISBN1-895896-36-3, printed in Canada by Trico Group

¹⁴ The Iraqi Turkmen Struggle to survive sacrifice and suffering, by Scott Taylor, page 95, ISBN1-895896-36-3, Printed in Canada by Trico Group



Figure (31) Kurdish police were waving a Kurdish flag to provoke the Turkmen again, in Kerkuk, Turkmeneli

In the meantime, the Independent Electoral Commission for monitoring the election for the Iraqi parliament members from 13th to 15th December, 2005 discovered a wide range of irregularities carried out by both Kurdish parties who added 81,000 illegitimate Kurdish names to the voting list in Kerkuk and surrounding areas by providing them with forged documents in order to qualify them for the election.

The Turkmen called upon the U.S. Ambassador in Baghdad, Zalmay Khalilzad, and the UN Representative for Iraq, Mr. Ishraf Kazi, to enforce this removal of these illegal voters through the Independent Electoral Commission.

Document numbers 614/617, dated 9/12/2005 and 10/12/2005 respectively, stipulated that these illegal Kurds should not be allowed to vote because their involvement in the election would be a blow against democracy, and a breach of election rules.

It was therefore shocking to see that the Independent Electoral Commission for monitoring the election for the Iraqi parliament members deviated from its decision and allowed the illegitimate Kurdish voters to vote. It is utterly unacceptable to see that the Commission bowed to Kurdish pressure and indicates that the Independent Commission was incapable of fulfilling its duty. In addition, the Turkmen of Iraq completely lost trust in the above Commission and called a UN representative in Iraq to urgently address the situation. The UN representative took no action. But after the fall of Saddam Hussein regime the Kurdification of Turkmeneli has been intensified and Turkmen and government land have been taken by the Kurds with the help of Kurdish militia. Turkmen township name has been changed to Kurdish name by force. The Kurds continuously have exploited the lack of stability, security and weak central government in Baghdad to rename of townships and village with Kurdish name. The Kurdification policy that was carried out by the Kurds after the fall of the regime was more effective than Arabization policy that was carried out by Saddam Hussein with last 35 years

بسم الله الرحمن الرحيم

كۆمارى عىراق
پارێزگای كهرکوک
نووسینگهی پارێزکار



سوق الله الصلحة

جمهورية العراق
محافظة كركوك
مكتب المحافظ

كرکوك مدينه مراعيه للصحة
كرکوك عاصمة العراق الثقافي لعام 2010
1000 مدينه حياة

التاريخ / ٢٠١٠/١٠/١٥
العدد / ٤٨٦

الى/ الوحدات الادارية في المحافظة كافة
الدوائر الرسمية في المحافظة
م/ تغيير اسماء

١٤٢٦
٢٠١٠/١٠/١٥

نرفق طيا صورة كتاب رئاسة مجلس الوزراء / لجنة تنفيذ المادة (١٤٠) من دستور جمهورية العراق العدد ٣٨٠ في ٢٠١٠/١٠/١٧ المتضمن اعادة اسماء الاقضية والنواحي المذكورة في مضمون الكتاب اعلاه الى اسمائها السابقة .. العمل بموجبه واعادة الاسماء القديمة واعلامنا لطفاً".

المرفقات
صورة كتاب

عبد الرحمن مصطفى فتاح
محافظ كركوك
٢٠١٠/١٠/

نسخة منة الى
لجنة تنفيذ المادة / ١٤٠ من الدستور/ كتابكم اعلاه للعلم مع التقدير .
رئاسة مجلس محافظة كركوك/ مكتب رئيس المجلس/ للعلم مع التقدير .
محافظة كركوك/ قسم ادارة الموارد البشرية/ لنفس الغرض اعلاه العمل بموجبه لطفاً".

Phone : ٠٧٤٨ ١١٤٩٤٧٦
٠٧٤٨ ١١٥٠٤٠١
Email : kirkuk_gov@yahoo.co.uk
www.kirkukgov.net

Figure (32) Document show changing the name of Turkmen township to Arabic then to Kurdish



Figure (33) Document show changing the name of Turkmen township to Arabic then to Kurdish

This is document shows the Kurds tried to change the name of the township of Altunköprü to Qurdi and this name never been heard and used during the Iraqi history but the Kurds tries to Kurdify the northern Iraq prior to declaration of their own state. Although Altunköprü occupied by Kurdish militia belonging to the KDP, the population have been subjected to tremendous oppression and discrimination but still the Türkmen has great rule to play in the Altunköprü.



Mofak Salman Kerkuklu graduated in England with a BSc in Electrical and Electronic Engineering from Oxford Brookes University and completed an MSc in Medical Electronics and Physics at London University and an MSc in Computing Science and Information Technology at South Bank University. He is also a Chartered Engineer from the Institution of Engineers of Ireland. Mr Mofak Salman is the author of *Brief History of Iraqi Turkmen*, *Turkmen of Iraq*, *Turkmen city of Tuz Khormatu* and *A report into Kurdish Abuse in Turkmeneli*. He is the Turkmeneli Party representative

for both the Republic of Ireland and the United Kingdom. He has had a large number of articles published in various newspapers and websites.