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**IMPLEMENTATION OF GENERAL ASSEMBLY RESOLUTION 60/251
OF 15 MARCH 2006 ENTITLED “HUMAN RIGHTS COUNCIL”**

**Written statement* submitted by the International Federation for the Protection of
the Rights of Ethnic, Religious, Linguistic & Other Minorities, a non-governmental
organization on the Roster**

The Secretary-General has received the following written statement which is
circulated in accordance with Economic and Social Council resolution 1996/31.

[16 June 2006]

* This written statement is issued, unedited, in the language(s) received from the
submitting non-governmental organization(s).

Statement on Iraqi Turkmen, Iraq; Xinjiang Uyghur Autonomous Region, China; Talysh, Iran; and the Khmer Krom, Vietnam

Iraqi Turkmen

The Iraqi Turkmen currently constitute one of the main ethnic groups in Iraq, in addition to the Arabs and the Kurds. Since the beginning of the last century Iraqi Turkmen have been exposed to forced emigration, cultural erosion and intensive assimilation policies; reaching its peak during the Ba'ath regime.¹ Consequently, Arabification was augmented in the region and Turkmen exposed to persecution, execution and deportation. In the census of 1977, 1987 and 1997, the government forced Iraqi Turkmen to register either as Arabs or as Kurds, and during the 1990s the Turkmen experienced enforced changing of ethnicity.²

Regrettably, the fall of the Ba'ath regime did not entirely ameliorate the Turkmen situation, as Turkmen have continued to be subjected to marginalisation during the establishment of the Governing Council and the Interim Iraqi government. Turkmen regions continue to be exposed to demographic changes and reports allege that voting processes in the regions have been subject to manipulation.³

In particular, IFPRERLOM would like to bring awareness to the situation in Kerkuk. US military authorities established the first Kerkuk council by the Kurdish-Christian majority. The council appointed a Kurdish governor, Kurdish Mayor and Kurdish police chief. The Property Claims Commission in Kerkuk, staffed mainly by non-Turkmen, refuses to return tens of thousands of hectares of lands, confiscated by the Ba'ath regime, to rightful Turkmen owners.⁴ It is to be noted with concern that Turkmen do not enjoy fair representation, but experience discrimination in access to position of high-ranking staff, governmental offices and police personnel.⁵

According to the new Iraqi constitution,⁶ the fate of Kerkuk is to be determined in accordance to the will of the people of Kerkuk in a census to be held no later than 31 December 2007. Some Turkmen human rights organizations have expressed concern in regard to this process, and fear an outcome unfavourable to protecting the rights of the Iraqi Turkmen.⁷

In view of the abovementioned issues faced by the Iraqi Turkmen, IFPRERLOM urges the Human Rights Council;

to ensure the Durban Declaration is fully implemented to encompass and protect the rights of all minorities in current Iraq; and

¹ "Summary of violation of the Human Rights of the Iraqi Turkmen and attempts to assimilate them during the Dictatorial Ba'ath Period", <http://members.lycos.nl/soitum/GR.pdf>

² Durban Declaration (DD), Issue 59 and 60

³ Iraqi Turkmen Front (ITF) press release on the Iraqi National Election, <http://members.lycos.nl/soitum/ITF1.pdf>

⁴ DD, Issue 12

⁵ DD, Issue 108

⁶ Article number 136, full text of Iraqi Constitution can be found at <http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/content/article/2005/10/12/AR2005101201450.html>

⁷ See reports by the Iraqi Turkmen Human Rights Research Foundation, (SOITM), www.turkmen.nl

to call upon the UN and the international community to engage directly in the upcoming census concerning the future of Kerkuk.

Xinjiang Uighur Autonomous Region

IFPRERLOM would also like to draw attention to incidents of discrimination against Uyghurs in present-day China.

(1) Public Representation

Whereas Eastern Turkestan is called 'Xinjiang Uighur Autonomous Region', there is a lack of self-rule and self-government for the Uyghurs. More than 90 percent of administrative and economic bodies in Eastern Turkestan are occupied by non-Uyghurs. It has also been noted that in positions staffed by Uyghurs, in relation to for instance judges, prosecutors and chiefs of police, there has been a fear of penalising Chinese over Uyghurs so as not to be labelled 'nationalists'.

(2) Employment

According to the Xinhua News Agency, from January to February 2004, more than 600,000 Chinese employment-seekers entered Eastern Turkestan. With the steady flow of Chinese settlers, Uyghurs are increasingly deprived of job opportunities. In comparison to Chinese settlers there is a great discrepancy in employment in Eastern Turkestan, with a considerably high unemployment rate amongst the Uyghur population. Whereas the Chinese authorities are creating new jobs in Eastern Turkestan, these jobs are largely reserved for Chinese settlers.

(3) Health Care

The majority of doctors working in the hospitals in Eastern Turkestan are Chinese. The fact that they do not speak Uyghur causes significant communication problems with regards to non-Chinese speaking Uyghur patients. The infant mortality rate in Eastern Turkestan is 200 per 1000. At present almost 70 percent of all illnesses are fatal, due to lack of proper medical treatment. According to the annual report released by the Statistical Bureau of the Ministry of Public Health in Beijing in March 2003, Eastern Turkestan's death-case ratio was among the highest of all of China's provinces.

(4) Education

Official educational policy entails that, at present, almost 70 percent of schools in Eastern Turkestan have classes taught in Chinese. It is further estimated that 60 percent of the adult population in Eastern Turkestan is illiterate. Very few Uyghur students who graduate from higher educational institutions are able to find jobs apposite to their qualifications. Books and teaching material used in higher educational institutions and technical schools are in Chinese. Many Uyghur parents have opted to send their children to the better-financed Chinese language schools, where the Uyghur language is not taught. The result is that Uyghur students graduating from Chinese language schools gradually lose the proficiency in their mother tongue.

(5) Economy

Despite Eastern Turkestan's natural wealth, the Uyghurs live below the poverty line. According to a report released by the 'Xinjiang Provincial Government' on 28 November 2004, the average income of the Chinese in Eastern Turkestan is 3.6 times higher than that of the Uyghurs.

of Uyghurs. Eastern Turkestan also ranks amongst the lowest in China in terms of per capita income. Approximately 20 of the 100 poorest counties in China are located in southern parts of Eastern Turkestan.

Based on the above IFPRERLOM urges the Human Rights Council;

to denounce the discrimination against Uyghurs in Xinjiang Autonomous Region/Eastern Turkestan;

to call upon the Chinese authorities to guarantee the preservation of the cultural, religious and national identity of Uyghurs; and

to urge China to extend an open invitation to all the thematic mandates of the Council, including visits to the Xinjiang Autonomous Region.

Talysh

The Talysh are Shi'a Muslims, inhabiting the north-western areas of Iran and the southern areas of the modern Azerbaijan Republic.

One of the main concerns of the Talysh is their cultural heritage and its preservation. Many Talishian people have limited knowledge of their own language and Talysh is only taught in elementary school (grade 2 and 4), solely as a facultative lesson. Furthermore, the Talishian people do not enjoy mass media in their own language, and there is only one Talishian monthly newspaper. There are fears about the safeguarding of the Talishian heritage, its history, culture and language. As Azerbaijan is undertaking democratisation measures, it would be imperative that the Talysh are not discriminated against, and their culture institutionally protected.

IFPRERLOM appeals the UN Human Rights Council to adopt a resolution, which calls upon Azerbaijan to guarantee the preservation of the cultural, religious and national identity of the Talysh people. This would specifically entail;

to include the study of the Talishian language as an official subject in the middle and high school educational program in the Talysh region;

to include and encourage the study of the Talishian language, culture, history in various academic institutions;

to permit the broadcast of Talishian language in various public media in Talysh region.

KHMER KROM

Finally, IFPRERLOM wishes to draw attention to discrimination experienced by the Khmer-Krom, an indigenous people who lived in the former Cochin China, occupied by the French colonial Government from 1867 to 1949 and now constituting the southern part of present-day Vietnam.

One of the current concerns is the State-supported settlement of Vietnamese in the Khmer-Krom homeland. This was reported in the *Concluding observations of the UN Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination (CERD): Viet Nam* of 15 August 2001, which stated that: "The Committee is further concerned about the alleged population transfer to territories inhabited by indigenous groups, disadvantaging them in the exercise of their social, economic and cultural rights."⁸

The UN Human Rights Committee (HRC) while considering *Viet Nam's second Periodic Report* requested the country "to provide information on minorities in Vietnam, including the Khmer-Krom community".⁹ However, the assurances provided in Vietnam's response to the HRC dated 23 April 2002,¹⁰ contrasted with the then and current reality of Khmer-Krom situation. Whereas the response indicated that the Khmer-Krom community suffered no alleged human rights violations, in actuality this contradicted reports of ethnic, religious and cultural discrimination. Many remain too terrorized to speak out due to fear of oppression and retaliation, as indicated in the report, "Vietnam: The Silencing of Dissent," by Human Rights Watch of 1 May 2000.¹¹

IFPRERLOM urges the Human Rights Council;

to request Vietnam to take measures in response to the CERD observations;

to re-examine the information provided in response to the HRC request; and

to call upon Vietnam to extend invitation to the relevant thematic mandates of the Council.

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⁸ [http://www.unhchr.ch/tbs/doc.nsf/898586b1dc7b4043c1256a450044f331/89ab2cc93ea628c5c1256a09004fb1b7/\\$FILE/G0045116.doc](http://www.unhchr.ch/tbs/doc.nsf/898586b1dc7b4043c1256a450044f331/89ab2cc93ea628c5c1256a09004fb1b7/$FILE/G0045116.doc)

⁹ Viet Nam's Second Periodic Report to the UN Human Rights Committee (see Paragraphs 127 -130), 14 May, 2001; [http://www.unhchr.ch/tbs/doc.nsf/898586b1dc7b4043c1256a450044f331/f3f11a1fa88629f2c1256be9004c4bfc/\\$FILE/G0142070.doc](http://www.unhchr.ch/tbs/doc.nsf/898586b1dc7b4043c1256a450044f331/f3f11a1fa88629f2c1256be9004c4bfc/$FILE/G0142070.doc)

¹⁰ [http://www.unhchr.ch/tbs/doc.nsf/898586b1dc7b4043c1256a450044f331/9828de37e76b270cc1256be9004c491d/\\$FILE/G0241352.doc](http://www.unhchr.ch/tbs/doc.nsf/898586b1dc7b4043c1256a450044f331/9828de37e76b270cc1256be9004c491d/$FILE/G0241352.doc)

¹¹ <http://www.hrw.org/reports/2000/vietnam/>