

Mr Chairman, thank you very much for giving me the opportunity to express certain issues of Kurdish minority.

My name is Seher Neöz from IMK, International Centre for Human Rights of the Kurds. I would like to highlight only some points of the problems the Kurdish minority faces in the field of education in Turkey. The education system in Turkey is miserable in general but in the case of the Kurdish minority the situation is even worse.

Kurds live predominantly in the eastern part of the country and constitute 1/5 of the whole population in Turkey.

1. In 2009 Turkey aims to spend only 2.8% of their gross national product on education. The average among the other OECD members amounts to 6.3%. Turkey ranks with its budget at the last position between the OECD countries.
2. The Turkish government does not invest in education, the country as a whole does not consider the importance of education; instead it invests in the glorification of Turkish nationalism and in the security policy.
3. Compared to EU standards Turkey lacks 200.000 teachers, 35.000 other school staff and 200.000 teaching rooms.
4. Schoolbooks used in class are not contemporary. According to them there are no minorities in Turkey. The books glorify Turkish nationalism and denigrate minorities. Most Books used in Kurdistan are old books which have been discarded in the western part of Turkey.
5. Turkey in matters of education policy deliberately neglects the Kurdish region.
6. In the Kurdish region there are not enough teachers, not enough schools and there is no heating material for the existing schools. There are no transport facilities for children to attend schools and they have to walk for miles and this journey becomes more difficult in winter as weather conditions in eastern part of Turkey are heavy
7. In most villages there is simply no school.
8. In Kurdish regions where schools exist average student numbers in classes are between 48 and 57.
9. Due to the continuing armed conflict between the Turkish military and the PKK in the Kurdish region, around 4000 villages have been totally depopulated. The people

have moved to the bigger cities where they have a workplace and no or little income. In most cases their children have to work instead of going to school.

10. Turkey still refuses to accept the Kurds as a minority. With this policy Turkey violates chartered international law. (See Treaty of Lausanne)

11. So far Turkey has not accepted the Kurdish language for political reasons. There is no education in Kurdish language and the language is being suppressed by the government.

12. There is no state-run official institution which promotes the Kurdish language.

13. By introducing private courses Turkey does not meet its responsibilities according to international law.

14. Turkey arbitrary defines its minorities. Historically there are three minorities accepted in Turkey: the Greeks, the Armenians and the Jews. The existence of a minority is however determined according to objective and impartial criteria (international law) and not by Turkey's will.

15. Turkey keeps on violating its duties according international law towards minorities and carries out a rigorous policy of assimilation towards the Kurdish minority.

For the solution of the problem it is necessary that Turkey invests more money in education in general, especially in the Kurdish region in order to give the Kurdish children the opportunity to enjoy the same education as their Turkish counterparts. We call on the international community of states to put pressure on Turkey to meet its responsibilities according to international law.

- Turkey has to stop the discrimination against the Kurdish population and put the changes in legislation into practice.
- Kurdish language has to be recognised as first language in the Kurdish region and as second language in the rest of Turkey.
- The prohibitions on the use of the Kurdish language in education, the workplace, official establishments, and at private celebrations have to find an end.
- A completely new constitution, where the rights of the Kurdish people are mentioned and secured is necessary.

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