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3.10.1. Turkmens

COMMON ANALYSIS
Last update: November 2024

The analysis below is based on the following EUAA COI reports: Targeting 2019, 3.4.1; Targeting 2022, 4.2.1, 4.2.2; Country Focus 2024, 1.2.1. Country Guidance should not be referred to as source of COI.

Turkmens are the third largest ethnic group in Iraq after Arabs and Kurds and the second largest group in the Kurdistan region, as of 2021. They comprise both Sunni and Shia, and a small group of Christian.

Step 1: Do the reported acts amount to persecution?

Some acts to which Turkmens could be exposed are of such severe nature that they would amount to persecution. More specifically, there had been reports of abductions and killings of Shia Turkmens by ISIL. Sunni Turkmens have been subjected to forms of collective abuses and killings by the PMF.

The severity and/or repetitiveness of other acts that Turkmens could be subjected to and whether they occur as an accumulation of various measures, should be also considered. Turkmens were reported to have faced discrimination, particularly by Iran-aligned PMF groups. PMF were also reported to have conducted arbitrary and unlawful detention of Sunni Turkmens as well as ask for security clearance in order to give documentation. It has been also reported that Turkmens have been discriminated against by the KRG authorities in the disputed territories. Turkmens have further experienced hate speech and mockery in the traditional media as well as on social media for practicing sacred rituals.

Step 2: What is the level of risk of persecution?

The individual assessment of whether there is a reasonable degree of likelihood for a Turkmen to face persecution should take into account **risk-impacting circumstances**, such as:

- **Home area:** Turkmens in Kirkuk seemed to be more targeted by government forces, including PMF, than other groups inhabiting the city. PMF were reported to have committed violence and detained Turkmens, in Ninewa and Sinjar. Sunni Turkmens have been harassed by PMF at checkpoints in Tal Afar. Turkmens in the disputed territories have been also discriminated against by KRG authorities.

  The presence of ISIL in the home area could also increase the risk. The capture of the Ninewa Plains by ISIL in 2014 brought destruction of non-Sunni minorities, with Turkmens, among others, being particularly affected. There were reports of abductions and killings of Shia Turkmens, including women and children, by ISIL. For the area(s) of presence and activities of ISIL, see 2.4. Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant (ISIL).

- **Religion and perceived affiliation with ISIL:** Security forces had been reportedly treating relatives of the Tal Afar inhabitants who had joined ISIL as ISIL-supporters, particularly in Al-Ayadhiya sub-district. In 2021, the PMF were targeting Sunni Turkmens, seeking revenge for ISIL-committed incidents. See also 3.1. Persons perceived to be affiliated with ISIL.
- **Gender:** Only a small number of abducted Turkmens women reportedly returned to their community. Stigma around sexual violence could lead to honour killings. See also 3.8. Individuals perceived to transgress moral codes.

Step 3: Is there a ground for persecution?

Where well-founded fear of persecution is substantiated for an applicant under this profile, this is highly likely to be for reasons of nationality/race (Turkmens are a distinct ethnic group) and/or religion (ISIL has targeted Shia Turkmens, PMF have targeted Sunni Turkmens). In some cases, (imputed) political opinion could also be substantiated as Sunni Turkmens could be perceived as affiliated with ISIL.



Exclusion considerations could be relevant to this profile as some Shia Turkmens have entered the PMF and others the PKK and may have been involved in excludable acts. Some Sunni Turkmens may have also joined ISIL. See 7. Exclusion.

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