

**Refugee Review Tribunal  
AUSTRALIA**

**RRT RESEARCH RESPONSE**

**Research Response Number:** IRQ23508  
**Country:** Iraq  
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Keywords: Iraq – Atrush – PKK – Duhok – CARE Australia – Humanitarian programs

This response was prepared by the Country Research Section of the Refugee Review Tribunal (RRT) after researching publicly accessible information currently available to the RRT within time constraints. This response is not, and does not purport to be, conclusive as to the merit of any particular claim to refugee status or asylum.

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**Questions**

- 1. Please provide any available information on the activities of CARE AUSTRALIA in Duhok between 1993 and 1995.**
- 2. Please provide any available information on the activities of the World Food Program in Duhok province in late 1996 and early 1997.**
- 3. Is there any evidence that an organisation called Kandeel Humanitarian Program ran a camp at Atroosh in 1997?**
- 4. Is there any evidence that such a camp provided shelter and safe haven to families of the PKK who were pursued by the Turkish authorities?**
- 5. Which Kurdish group controlled Duhok province in 1997?**
- 6. Was there fighting between the KDP and the PKK in Duhok province in 1997?**

**RESPONSE**

- 1. Please provide any available information on the activities of CARE Australia in Duhok between 1993 and 1995.**
- 2. Please provide any available information on the activities of the World Food Program in Duhok province in late 1996 and early 1997.**

A search of all available databases has produced scant information:

ZOZIK Group was established in 1991 in North of Iraq with the head office in Erbil and branch offices in Sulaimanya, **Duhok**, Damascus (Syria) and Amman (Jordan). Its name comes from the Zozik Mountain located in Northern Iraq

Under very tough economical and working conditions, ZOZIK executed various contracts in the region with international organizations and European firms that provided humanitarian support before the implementation of Food for Oil Security Council 986 Resolution.

ZOZIK's activities for the period 1991-1997 cover a wide range of supplies of essential needs and construction (health centers, schools, shelters, etc.). In 1993, ZOZIK became the largest provider of fuel by supplying 800 million liters in the region as a result of the contract signed with **CARE of Australia** (NGO).

With the assistance of a very strong financial background, experienced engineers and qualified staff, ZOZIK has implemented many projects associated with energy (generation and distribution), construction, water and sewage for different UN agencies; ZOZIK has worked with HABITAT, UNDP, UNESCO, FAO, WHO, UNOPS, **WFP**, and several international companies like ABB-Sweden, BWSC - Danish, ENERGO - Bosnia, and Non-Governmental Organizations.

(Untitled. Undated. Zozik. [Human Resources Firm in Iraq].

<http://www.zozik.com/construction.html> - Accessed 4 January 2005 – Attachment 1)

### **3. Is there any evidence that an organisation called Kandeel Humanitarian Program ran a camp at Atrush in 1997?**

A search of all available databases has failed to reveal the name of this organisation.

### **4. Is there any evidence that such a camp provided shelter and safe haven to families of the PKK who were pursued by the Turkish authorities?**

There is no reference to a camp in Atrush.

However there are some references to the PKK at a camp called Atrush. These are listed in chronological order:

(a) 'On January 9, more than 1000 refugees chose to leave Atrush camp for protection in areas controlled by the Kurdistan Workers Party (PKK)'

('Kurdish refugees' lives at risk', 1997, Green Left Organisation

<http://www.greenleft.org.au/back/1997/260/260p17b.htm> - Accessed 4 January 2005 – Attachment 2).

(b) 'Members of the Kurdistan Democratic Party (KDP) from the northern Iraqi town of Duhok met officials from the intelligence unit of the Turkish Foreign Ministry and the Turkish Armed Forces yesterday to discuss the latest developments at the Atrush refugee camp. The meeting was held in the Gendarmerie Headquarters in the town of Silopi, near Diyarbakir, by the Turkish Foreign Ministry. Atrush was one of the subjects discussed at the Monday meeting of the National Security Council (MGK). The General Staff told the meeting that approximately only 300 of the refugees at the camp had joined the PKK terrorist organization, much less than the 1,000-1,500 estimated by UN sources'

('Government officials meet with KDP over Atrush question' 1997, IPR Strategic Information Database, 29 January – Attachment 3).

(c) 'The future of the Atrush Refugee Camp in northern Iraq, home to nearly 14,000 Kurdish refugees, is still a puzzle. Foreign Ministry Spokesman Omer Akbel said yesterday that although the UN flag was still flying over the camp, the UN had stopped supplying humanitarian aid and food. Akbel said Turkey would give all the help it could to refugees from the camp who wanted to return to Turkey. UN officials said that they wanted to lower the flag, however militants of the PKK terrorist organization were not

allowing this' ('Turkey – Deadlock in Atrush camp' 1997, IPR Strategic Information Database, 27 January – Attachment 4).

(d) 'But in January the United Nations pulled out of the camp, saying rebels from the Kurdistan Workers Party (PKK) had set up in the camp -- something Turkey had long asserted -- and were blocking aid work.' (Barkho, Leon, 1997, 'More refugees leave Atrush camp in northern Iraq', *Reuters News*, 25 March – Attachment 5).

(e) 'Atrush was closed in January by the United Nations, saying it could no longer go about its normal business because the camp had fallen under the influence of the PKK, which is fighting the Turkish government for independence ('5,000 Kurdish refugees evacuated from northern Iraqi camp' 1997, *Agence France Presse*, 23 March – Attachment 6).

(f) 'Tansu Ciller, the foreign minister and deputy prime minister, has said that the Atrush camp [Kurdish refugee camp in northern Iraq], which had almost turned into the training centre of the PKK [Kurdistan Workers' Party] terrorist organization, has been totally "evacuated". ('Turkish Foreign Minister says Kurdish camp in northern Iraq "evacuated", 1997, *BBC Monitoring Service*, 5 May – Attachment 7).

## 5. Which Kurdish group controlled Duhok province in 1997?

## 6. Was there fighting between the KDP and the PKK in Duhok province in 1997?

Preliminary Note:

There are variations in the spelling: Duhok is also spelt Dihūk, Duhak, Dihuk, Dūhak. (Duhok, Iraq Page, 2004, *Falling Rain Genomics, Inc.* 14 September, <http://www.fallingrain.com/world/IZ/8/Duhok.html> - Accessed 4 January 2005 – Attachment 8).

In its report dated 1998, the US Committee for Refugees refers to the occupation of the provincial capital of Dohuk by Turkish soldiers backed by the KDP: September 1997:

'During 1997, both Turkey and Iran violated the "safe haven zone" in northern Iraq established in 1991 by the United States...

During the year, Turkey and the **KDP** forged a de facto alliance, and both accused the PUK of being allied with the **PKK** and allowing the PKK to use bases in northern Iraq to launch attacks on Turkey. In return, Iran, which has supported the PUK, condemned Turkey's military operations in northern Iraq and held Ankara responsible for causing refugee flight toward and across the Iranian border.

A second Turkish incursion, backed by the **KDP** faction, took place in late September. Again, Turkish troops targeted **PKK** bases in the Zab area. An estimated 15,000 Turkish soldiers and more than 100 tanks and armored vehicles crossed the border and occupied the provincial capital of **Dohuk** (sic). They also sealed a crossing point between Syria and northern Iraq, alleging that Syria gave sanctuary to the **PKK**. Western aid workers in northern Iraq called the fighting the worst there since Baghdad's 1988 Anfal campaign against the Kurds. ('*US Committee for Refugees*, 1998, Country Report: Iraq,

<http://www.refugees.org/world/countryrpt/mideast/1998/iraq.htm> - Accessed 4 January 2005 – Attachment 9).

A KDP press release confirms that fighting continued in 1997:

Heavy fighting fierce fighting (sic) is continuing on all fronts. The KDP have deployed all its weapons systems including Armoured Personal Carriers (APC). The counter offensive aimed at forcing PUK and PKK to pull back to their positions along the cease-fire line. The initial reports confirm major advance by KDP forces who succeeded in regaining a sizable territory and reversing their threat on major road links between Arbil and **Duhok**. ('Thousands of KDP forces starts today a major counter offensive against PUK and PKK terrorist in Iraqi Kurdistan', 1997, KDP Website, 8 November, <http://www.kdp.pp.se/press/pres38.html> - Accessed 4 January 2004 – Attachment 10).

### List of Sources Consulted

#### Internet Sources:

CARE Australia	<a href="http://www.careaustralia.org.au/index.asp">http://www.careaustralia.org.au/index.asp</a>
Zozik (Human Resources Firm in Iraq)	<a href="http://www.zozik.com/">http://www.zozik.com/</a>
US Committee for Refugees	<a href="http://www.refugees.org/">http://www.refugees.org/</a>
KDP Website	<a href="http://www.kdp.pp.se/press/pres38.html">http://www.kdp.pp.se/press/pres38.html</a>
Green Left Weekly	<a href="http://www.greenleft.org.au/">http://www.greenleft.org.au/</a>
Falling Rain Genomics Inc	<a href="http://www.fallingrain.com/">http://www.fallingrain.com/</a>
Google search engine	

UNHCR	<i>REFWORLD</i>	UNHCR Refugee Information Online
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#### Databases:

Public	<i>FACTIVA</i>	Reuters Business Briefing
DIMIA	<i>BACIS</i>	Country Information
	<i>REFINFO</i>	IRBDC Research Responses (Canada)
RRT	<i>ISYS</i>	RRT Country Research database, including Amnesty International, Human Rights Watch, US Department of State <i>Country Reports on Human Rights Practices</i> .
RRT Library	<i>FIRST</i>	RRT Library Catalogue

### List of Attachments

1. Untitled. Undated. <http://www.zozik.com/construction.html> - Accessed 4 January 2005.
2. 'Kurdish refugees' lives at risk', 1997, Green Left Organisation, <http://www.greenleft.org.au/back/1997/260/260p17b.htm> - Accessed 4 January 2005.
3. 'Government officials meet with KDP over Atrush question', 1997, *IPR Strategic Information Database*, 29 January. (FACTIVA)
4. 'Turkey – Deadlock in Atrush camp', 1997, *IPR Strategic Information Database*, 27 January. (FACTIVA)

5. Barkho, Leon, 1997, 'More refugees leave Atrush camp in northern Iraq', *Reuters News*, 25 March. (FACTIVA)
6. '5,000 Kurdish refugees evacuated from northern Iraqi camp...', 1997, *Agence France Presse*, 23 March. (FACTIVA)
7. 'Turkish Foreign Minister says Kurdish camp in northern Iraq "evacuated"', 1997, *BBC Monitoring Service*, 5 May. (FACTIVA)
8. Duhok, Iraq Page, Falling Rain Genomics, Inc.  
<http://www.fallingrain.com/world/IZ/8/Duhok.html> - Accessed 4 January 2005.
9. *US Committee for Refugees*, 1998, Country Report: Iraq,  
<http://www.refugees.org/world/countryrpt/mideast/1998/iraq.htm> - Accessed 4 January 2005.
10. 'Thousands of KDP forces starts today a major counter offensive against PUK and PKK terrorist in Iraqi Kurdistan', 1997, KDP Website, 8 November,  
<http://www.kdp.pp.se/press/pres38.html> - Accessed 4 January 2004.