

## Say NO to Iraqi Proposed Constitution

The long awaited draft of the Iraqi Constitution was made public finally. The draft was disappointing for many ethnic/religious groups, such as Assyrians (known as ChaldoAssyrians in the 2003 Iraqi Transitional Administrative Law "TAL"), Turkomans, Yezidis, Shabak, Armenians, Mandeans, and Sunni Arabs. The Assyrians continue to stand in awe, anger, and dissatisfaction from the continuous interferences by Kurds in their internal affairs and the domination of Shi'aa Arabs and Kurds in the process of drafting the Constitution. Of course, the Kurds continue to marginalize and undermine the Assyrians – and Turkomans, Shabak, and Yezidis in northern Iraq – as the draft of the Northern Iraq Kurdish regional constitution was made public as well.

The two most prominent and powerful Assyrian political organizations in the Middle East, i.e., the Assyrian Democratic Movement (ADM) and the Assyrian Democratic Organization (ADO), rejected certain articles in the Iraqi Constitution draft where it concerns our people. Both groups stressed that the draft preamble unjustifiably and/or intentionally neglected to refer to Iraq's indigenous civilizations of Assyria and Babylonia. The two groups rejected the article in which the draft refers to our people as two separate ethnic groups, i.e., Chaldeans and Assyrians, contrary to historical facts. The ADO statement pointed that the preamble did not mention that Christianity, Mandeism and Yezidism, as religions, preceded Islam in Iraq and that our one (Chaldean Assyrian Suryani) nation is another component of the Iraqi people, side by side with Arabs, Kurds, and Turkomans.

I call upon our people in Iraq to participate in the October 15, 2005 referendum and vote NO on the proposed draft of the Iraq Constitution.

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