

Oppression, Assassination, Torture, Harassment, Unfair, and Undemocratic Acts by Kurds and Kurdistan Democratic Party (KDP) Against the Assyrians (also known as Chaldeans and Suryan) in North of Iraq.

Compiled by Fred Aprim

(ZINDA) After the 1991 uprising, Assyrians had good working relations with the various political groups in North Iraq. All the same, elections in the spring of 1992 would be a harbinger of problems to come - ultra-nationalists among some Kurdish parties tried and succeeded in exerting their influence over any Assyrian involvement in North Iraqi politics by creating a puppet "Christian Kurdish" party linked to the Kurdistan Democratic Party (KDP), the so-called United Kurdistan Christians (UKC).

<http://www.zindamagazine.com/html/archives/2002/6.3.02/index.php#ZindaSays>

(ATOURE) In 1992 some intellectual Assyrians published a communiqué, in it they warned against the continuous process of the Kurdification of the Iraqi people in north of Iraq. Then the ethnic and linguistic map of northern Iraq was not as it is today; some ten years after the no-fly zone has been established. For its importance, here is a passage from that communiqué: "The Kurdish leadership, and in a well-planned program, had begun to settle Kurds and in large numbers around Assyrian regions like Sarsank, Barwari Bala and others. This Kurdish housing project was naturally to change the demographic, economic, and civic structure of the Christian regions in only few short years; a process that forced the Christian to emigrate as the vacant homes were overtaken by the Kurds."

<http://www.atour.com/news/assyria/20030617a.html>

(ATOURE) Francis Yusuf Shabo: born 1951 in Mangesh (Duhok Province), married with four children. An Assyrian Christian of the Chaldean sect, he was an active member of the ADM. He became a member of parliament after the May 1992 elections and was a member of the National Assembly's Economic Committee. He was also responsible for dealing with complaints submitted by Assyrian Christians regarding disputed villages in Bahdinan from which they had been forcibly evicted by the Iraqi Government and subsequently resettled by Kurds. He was shot dead by armed assailants on 31 May 1993 as he approached his home in Duhok. No suspects were subsequently apprehended. Lazar Mikho Hanna (known as Abu Nasir): an Assyrian Christian born 1933 in Mangesh, married. He was a member of the ICP's Central Committee for the Iraqi Kurdistan Region and was also a member of a three-person committee responsible for the IKF's financial affairs. He was shot dead by armed assailants on 14 June 1993 near his home in Duhok. No suspects were subsequently apprehended. No effective or meaningful investigations into these and other killings have been carried out to date. All the above victims were killed after the Kurdish administration was established. In most of these cases, the Council of Ministers set up committees, headed by investigating or court judges, to gather and examine the evidence. None have so far resulted in any convictions.

Amnesty International has received numerous allegations attributing these killings to special forces within the KDP, PUK and IMIK. The security apparatus of the KDP, Rekkhistini Taybeti, and that of the PUK, Dezgay Zanyari, are said to have units akin to assassination squads, whose members receive orders from senior party officials. There is also widespread conviction that such unlawful and deliberate killings could not have been perpetrated without the knowledge, consent, or acquiescence of the leaders of these two parties, to whom the security and intelligence apparatuses are ultimately responsible.

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(AINA) June 24, 1996 Mr. Edward Khoshaba of Aqla was tending his sheep last year when he came across 3 Kurds who had killed and butchered some of his livestock. When confronted, the Kurds attempted to kill Mr. Khoshaba. Mr. Khoshaba was able to kill off 2 of the attackers before the third fled to his home village. Reportedly, when the Kurd returned to his home village, a celebration had ensued as the Kurdish villagers had assumed that the Kurdish intruders had successfully killed Mr. Khoshaba in addition to his livestock. When they learned that 2 of the Kurdish intruders had died instead, the entire village mobilized to exact revenge.

Mr. Khoshaba likewise fled to an area controlled by his Assyrian compatriots. A standoff ensued for some time until Mr. Khoshaba's parents (fearing a wholesale escalation in violence) convinced Mr. Khoshaba to turn himself in to the local authorities for an investigation and trial. Needless to say, the Kurdish authorities released Mr. Khoshaba to the relatives of the Kurdish intruders. He was tied up in their village and eventually butchered into hundreds of pieces on March 6, 1995. Prior to his death, he was reportedly struck in the head repeatedly by an axe by one of the elder women of the village. NONE of his murderers have been brought to justice. There has been no investigation of these crimes. There has been no investigation of the authorities that evaded their responsibilities.

The Kurdish leader who reportedly heads this village is Qaem Qam Farzanda Zbeer. Mr. Zbeer has now extended his threats, persecutions, and vast land expropriations to the Assyrian village of Hzarjat. In another incident, on January 13, 1996 armed Kurds kidnaped Wassan Mishael, a sixteen-year-old girl from Simele. She was threatened and forced to renounce her Christian faith. Then she was forced to marry one of the Kurdish kidnappers. The attackers have been found and identified. The information has been brought to the attention of the local governmental officials. There has been no investigation. None of the attackers have been brought to justice, there has been no trial.

On January 20, 1996 an armed man named Khorsheed Uthman Galash kidnaped Janet Oshanna, a 13-year-old girl from Mal-Urab near Zakho. The kidnapper has subsequently been identified and all information has been provided to the authorities. No investigation has been carried out. The attacker has not been brought to justice. The young girl has not yet been returned to her family. Sometime in mid-January, the holy room of Saint Sbar Eshoo located in St Gewargis Church in Zakho was burglarized. There has been no investigation of this crime as well.

Almost universally, crimes against Assyrians by Kurds are tolerated and even condoned in the Dohuk area of Northern Iraq. The local authorities have made it clear that a Kurdish attack against an Assyrian will go unpunished. One of the leaders, Nasherwas Barazani, has actually used his position in government to prevent them from demanding proper compensation. He uses the ongoing attacks against Assyrians to encourage further destabilization and further land grabs.

There is a general belief that the authorities are engaged in efforts to effect a demographic change in the area. They aim to drive out the Assyrians. (www.aina.org)

(AI) In May, two unarmed members of the Assyrian Democratic Movement (ADM), Samir Moshi Murad and Peris Mirza Salyu, were killed in 'Ain Kawa, near Arbil, by Kurdish students allegedly associated with the PUK. The ADM members were reportedly intervening to settle a dispute between Kurdish and Assyrian students when they were deliberately shot. Although PUK leaders condemned the killings, no one was brought to justice. (AMNESTY INTERNATIONAL (AI) COUNTRY REPORT, IRAQ 1997)

(AINA) On February 10, 1997 two Assyrians, Mr. Lazar Mati and his son Havel Lazar, were dragged out of their prison by a vigilante group of 200 armed Kurds and were brutally killed. Prior to their murder, they were taunted, tortured, and finally butchered. Before the murder, 100 Kurds stormed the family home of Mr. Mati and burned it to the ground. Mr. Mati and his son had been imprisoned in the governmental jail in Shaqlawa. There was no resistance by the governing authorities. There has been no investigation into the killings. There is, once again, collusion between murderous Kurds and those entrusted (in the "Safe Haven") with the public safety. Apparently, Mr. Mati's daughter had been forcibly kidnapped four years ago by a Kurd named Mohamed Babakir. It appears to be customary in many similar instances of kidnapping and rape by Kurds, that she had been forced to marry her kidnapper. She was a minor, younger than eighteen years old. I presume she had been forced to renounce her Christianity as well. There was no help forthcoming from the government. However, it is generally agreed that the families had met years ago and resolved the matter. There was reportedly no remaining animosity between them. One day prior to the murders of the two Assyrians, the Kurd who had kidnapped Mr. Mati's daughter was found mysteriously killed. That night at evening prayers, the local Kurdish mullah declared that only Mr. Mati could have wanted the Kurd killed. The mullah then proceeded to demand that the Kurds savagely kill Mr. Mati and destroy his home. He reportedly declared that a Christian cannot kill a Muslim. Needless to say, there was no proof, no investigation. The savage mob was incited and the local security forces acquiesced. The local Kurdish officials had arrested Mr. Mati and his son under suspicion for the killing of the Kurd found mysteriously dead. It was in the local jail that the Kurds found the two Assyrians and killed them. The government in Shaqlawa which had been so quick to arrest the Assyrians in order to seek out justice for the killed Kurd, now have done absolutely nothing regarding the vigilante killing of the Assyrians held in their

custody. Mr. Lazar Mati, the father was born in 1943 and his son, Mr. Havel Lazar was born in 1972. To his credit, Barzani came to Shaqlawa and reportedly condemned the killings. In addition, in his statement, he acknowledged recent acts of violence, burglaries, and arson by Kurds against Assyrian homes and shops in the Shaqlawa area. He noted a pattern of intimidation on the part of Kurds in the area. Neither he nor the local government have taken any concrete steps to investigate and seek justice in this case of extrajudicial killings. Reportedly, the Kurds have never punished one of their own when the victims have been Assyrian. It is generally believed that the recent rhetoric is simply that. (www.aina.org)

(AINA) March 9, 1997 Over the past 12-18 months, three separate attacks have been launched against Assyrians in the area of Khalidia. The attacks have led to two deaths and one critical wounding. All of the attacks have been against owners/operators of clubs or restaurants (nadi) that serve alcohol. Allegedly, the Kurdish Islamic Fundamentalists have objected to the serving of alcohol in these areas. It is believed by many Assyrians that these attacks are in fact at least encouraged, if not provoked, by the government. An elderly Assyrian woman whose husband was one of the murdered Assyrians has relayed this information to us. It has been very difficult to get even this small bit of information from her (over several interviews) because she is in tremendous fear of reprisals against her remaining relatives there. She has insisted that her name or her husband's name not be used. This appears to be a recurring theme in the Assyrian community, and it makes news gathering more difficult. The widespread use of this terror makes it more difficult to expose it. (www.aina.org)

(ATOUR) In northern Iraq, both the Patriotic Union of Kurdistan (PUK) and the KDP have been responsible for murders of Assyrians as well as assassinations of Assyrian political leaders. According to Amnesty International's February 1995 report on northern Iraq, "The security apparatuses of the KDP, Rekkhistine Taybeti, and that of the PUK, Dezgay Zanyari, are said to have units akin to assassination squads, whose members receive orders from senior party officials. There is also widespread conviction that such unlawful and deliberate killings could not have been perpetrated without the knowledge, consent, or acquiescence of the leaders of these two parties, to whom the security and intelligence apparatuses are ultimately responsible. The names of individuals alleged to be members of assassination squads within the KDP and PUK have been submitted to Amnesty International, including by officials of both parties who supplied information about the other's security and intelligence activities." Amnesty International also disclosed "details of extensive surveillance operations of named individuals, as well as references to killings and attempted killings by the Islamic Movement of Iraqi Kurdistan (IMIK)."

In addition, land expropriations continue with over 50 villages remaining illegally and forcibly occupied by Kurds belonging to various groups. Abduction of young girls with subsequent rape and forced conversion to Islam have also been perpetrated by all Kurdish groups.

In an interview with the Assyrian International News Agency, Assyrians who had recently visited northern Iraq, suggested that the general belief in the area is that the various Kurdish armed factions are pursuing a policy of intimidation of the civilian population, in order to complete the ethnic cleansing of the Assyrians from their ancestral homeland. A familiar pattern of deflecting accountability from one Kurdish group to another was noted by Assyrians whereby the PUK blames the KDP who blames the PKK who blames the Turks, etc. One Assyrian speaking on condition of anonymity, in order to not endanger relatives remaining in northern Iraq, responded to questions regarding the United Nations sponsored "Safe Haven" designed to protect Iraqi minorities from the excesses of the Iraqi central government by saying "Safe Haven? Safe for whom? Safe from whom? They are all trying to eliminate us!"

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(ATOUR) August 2, 1998 A few weeks ago, Mr. Tawer Goreal from the Ennonny-Barwar Village at the Assyrian region in Northern Iraq, was killed by Kurdish guerillas as he, his wife and children were driving home from Ennonny Village back to the city of Dohuk. The Kurdish guerillas stopped him at the city of Zakho as he was driving with his family. No explanation has been given by the Kurdish Authorities.

SARSENK, Iraq -- A few days ago, 2 Assyrians were killed at the Baderush Village, situated south of Sarsenk and 20 Assyrians were arrested by Kurdish army troops. The reasons behind this force and intimidation was to drive out the Assyrians from this village in order to begin developing a Kurdish village in Baderush. No explanation has been given by the Kurdish Authorities. (www.atour.com)

(AINA) December 10, 1998 Bahra, a magazine of the Assyrian Democratic Movement centered in northern Iraq, reported that on Wednesday, December 9, 1998 the Assyrians of Ainkawa and Shaqlawa in northern Iraq mourned the passing of two Assyrians, victims of yet another brutal attack.

Mrs. Nasreen Hana Shaba born in 1963 and her young daughter Larsa born in 1995 were killed when a bomb exploded in their home. The bomb was planted by unknown assailants in the home of Mr. Najat Toma, located in the district of Terawa in Arbil. Mrs. Nasreen Hana Shaba and her daughter Larsa were killed when they opened the door to their home, which triggered the bomb.

No one has claimed responsibility for this act of terrorism against the Assyrian community of northern Iraq. The Bahra report also mentioned that this family has no affiliations with any political organizations and saw no motive for the murder of the innocent Assyrian mother and daughter.

The Christian Assyrian community of northern Iraq has suffered countless acts of terror and murder committed by certain Kurdish groups since the establishment of the so-called Safe Haven in northern Iraq. It is widely believed that such acts of terror are designed to intimidate and drive out the indigenous Assyrian community of northern Iraq from their ancestral homeland. The Assyrian community of northern Iraq fear that this latest attack will go unpunished since the Kurdish Authority has yet to punish any Kurd whose crime was against Assyrians. (www.aina.org)

(AINA) January 17, 1999 Recent press releases emanating from northern Iraq by the Assyrian Democratic Movement (ADM) on January 7, 1999 and the Assyrian Patriotic Party (APP) on January 9, 1999 have documented an increasing spiral of violence directed at the Assyrian community in northern Iraq.

According to the press releases and independent visitors from northern Iraq, an explosive device was detonated on December 9, 1998 in front of the home of an Assyrian, Mr. Salman Toma, in the Terawa area of Arbil. The explosion resulted in the deaths of his wife Nasreen Shaba and their daughter Larsa Toma. A second explosion targeted an Assyrian convent in the Al Mal'ab district of Arbil in December 1998. The most recent explosion being on January 6 in the 7th of Nisan area of Arbil. This most recent bomb was planted at the front doorsteps of Fr. Zomaya Yousip. Fortunately, no casualties were reported but the home sustained extensive damage.

In another incident, a Kurdish assailant using a shotgun shot Mr. Rimon Emmanuel in the back as he returned home from work in Bebad, Iraq. Mr. Emmanuel sustained several buckshot to his back and head but survived with severe injuries. Local Kurdish authorities dismissed the case against the assailant after "influential" Kurds in the area intimidated Mr. Emmanuel into dropping charges. The attack against Mr. Emmanuel underscores the refusal of Kurdish authorities to prosecute any attacks against Assyrians. This most recent series of violent attacks against Assyrians using concealed explosive devices is an escalation in the terror scheme designed to intimidate and subsequently drive out the Assyrians of northern Iraq. In the past, assassinations of Assyrian leaders and civilians, kidnappings, land expropriations, Assyrian educational restrictions, and generalized harassment has been linked to the main Kurdish groups with military capabilities. The overt goal of intimidating the Assyrian community is believed to further ethnically cleanse northern Iraq of Assyrians and to force the remaining Assyrians to acquiesce to Kurdish political objectives.

Amnesty International's February, 1995 report on northern Iraq concluded that "The security apparatus of the KDP, Rekkhistine Taybeti, and that of the PUK (Patriotic Union of Kurdistan), Dezgay Zanyari, are said to have units akin to assassination squads, whose members receive orders from senior party officials. There is also widespread conviction that such unlawful and deliberate killings could not have been perpetrated without the knowledge, consent or acquiescence of the leaders of these two parties, to whom the security and intelligence apparatuses are ultimately responsible. The names of individuals alleged to be members of assassination squads within the KDP and PUK have been submitted to Amnesty International, including by officials of both parties who supplied information about the other's security and intelligence activities." Amnesty International also disclosed "details of extensive surveillance operations of named individuals, as well as references to killings and attempted killings by the Islamic Movement of Kurdistan (IMIK)."

Assyrians visiting from Iraq have reported that bombings of such technical sophistication must be engineered by these same major Kurdish organizations or the Iraqi regime. Since the Kurdish groups are in control of the area, have remained silent, and have refused to mount any investigation into the attacks, it is generally believed that these Kurdish groups are responsible for the attacks. (www.aina.org)

(AINA) February 19, 1999 The American brokered reconciliation between the Patriotic Union of Kurdistan

(PUK) and the Kurdistan Democratic Party (KDP) announced in September 1998 was designed to revitalize the parliament established in northern Iraq following the Gulf War. The parliament of northern Iraq had been disbanded following internecine fighting by various Kurdish ethnic groups and political parties that led to thousands of people being killed.

The Final Statement on the reconciliation talks outlined a timetable for specific, concrete confidence-building measures designed to ensure a smooth transition to the subsequent reinstatement of the parliament on the basis of a "unified, pluralistic, and democratic Iraq." According to the September 17, 1998 timetable, January 1, 1999 was to mark the "first meeting of the interim assembly." The first responsibility of the interim joint government was to establish a plan to "normalize Arbil, Dohuk, and Suleimaniyah," the three northern Iraqi provinces included in the declaration.

For the Assyrians of northern Iraq, December and January have been anything but normal. The last two months have been marked by escalating violence culminating in a series of shootings and bombings. On December 9, 1998 the Toma family house was bombed resulting in the deaths of Nasreen Shaba and her daughter Larsa Toma in Arbil. Another explosion rocked an Assyrian convent in December also in Arbil. A third bomb targeted Fr. Zomaya Yousip's house in Arbil on January 6, 1999. Unfortunately, no investigation has been carried out by the Kurdish authorities to determine the source of or motives behind the bombings. In a recent statement regarding these tragedies Amnesty International reported, "We are currently in the process of raising a number of individual cases with the KDP authorities and...that we will be addressing the case of Nasreen Maria Shaba and her daughter as well as the case of other Assyrians". The timetable also envisions that the interim joint government establishes a plan for the organization of elections by April 1, 1999. During this period, the interim assembly is also asked "to conduct a census of the area in order to establish an electoral register" leading up to elections. The silence and blatant lack of concern by the PUK and KDP supposedly entrusted to "normalize" Arbil has left the Assyrian community in northern Iraq wondering how these very same Kurdish organizations are now entrusted with carrying out a fair and honest census of Assyrians.

Many Assyrians are convinced that the bombing campaign is intended to intimidate the Assyrian community still residing in the northern three provinces. The bombings appear to be part of a greater policy to further ethnically cleanse the northern Provinces. Killings of Assyrians by Kurdish assailants go uninvestigated and unpunished. Kurdish authorities and their associates expropriate historically Assyrian lands. Assyrian churches, convents, and clergy have been attacked. Efforts to Kurdify the Assyrians have led to restrictions on the teaching of the Assyrian language. Assyrians are not recognized as a distinct ethnicity, but only referred to as "Kurdish Christians". Young Assyrian girls are kidnapped, raped, and forcibly converted to Islam. When viewed in the context of over 200 villages having been destroyed by the Iraqi government in the 1970's and 80's, this additional persecution by the Kurds has understandably led to the intended mass exodus of Assyrians from their homes in northern Iraq.

As has been reported previously, the Kurds intend to further diminish the numerical significance of the remaining Assyrians by separately classifying Assyrians and Chaldeans despite proclamations by the respective patriarchs and American national organizations that Chaldeans and Assyrians are indeed one people.

In a recent letter to Secretary of State Madeleine Albright, Congressman Rod Blagojevich and Ray LaHood expressed concern regarding the fate of Assyrians in Iraq by stating "our support for an alternative to Hussein's dictatorship is hollow if we do not insist that the opposition also uphold democratic values and respect the rights of all people. We urge you to articulate, clearly and forcefully, to the Kurdish parties in Northern Iraq that continued U.S. support is dependent on their respect for the rights of all peoples in their area of influence." (www.aina.org)

(AINA) June 19, 1999 Attacks against Assyrians in the northern Iraq's "Safe Haven" have continued despite efforts in Washington to forge a democratic and pluralistic Iraqi opposition to the central government in Baghdad.

Earlier this month, the body of Ms. Helena Aloun Sawa, an Assyrian woman, was found by a shepherd partially buried in a shallow grave in Dohuk province near Dohuk dam.

Ms. Sawa was a twenty-one year old Assyrian from the village of Bash in the Nerwa o Rakan region of Dohuk province. Ms. Sawa was the daughter of Mr. Aloun Sawa, an Assyrian member of the Kurdistan Democratic Party (KDP). Mr. Sawa had been killed in 1991 by Iraqi government forces while fighting for Mahsoud Barzani's KDP during the uprising against the Baghdad regime following the Gulf War. Mr. Sawa was formally recognized by the KDP as a martyr and, as is customary for fallen fighters of the KDP,

the party had promised a pension to the Sawa family in recognition of the sacrifice made by Mr. Sawa. After only two monthly stipends, however, the pension was inexplicably denied to the Sawa family while other Kurdish families continued to receive their pensions.

When the Sawa family appealed to the KDP for reinstatement of the pension, the KDP instead suggested that the Sawa's turn over their young daughter Helena to work as a housekeeper for a senior KDP leader in order to continue the monthly payments. Thus, out of desperation the Sawa's were obliged to ask their daughter to work for a pension that other Kurdish families were provided outright. Consequently, Ms. Sawa came to work in the home of Mr. Azet Al Din Al Barwari, a higher echelon KDP operative and a leading member of the political bureau of the KDP. Ms. Sawa lived and worked in the Al Barwari home and was allowed to return to her family's home only once monthly.

Most recently, Ms. Sawa was expected home for her monthly furlough from work on May 5, 1999. When she did not arrive at her family home, the concerned Sawa family inquired regarding Helena's whereabouts. The Sawa family had already been deeply troubled about Helena's well being since she had appeared agitated and distraught on her previous visits home. Mr. Al Barwari and the KDP denied any knowledge about Ms. Sawa's whereabouts since she was alleged by the Kurds to have left the Al Barwari home on May 3. The KDP offered no assistance in searching for Ms. Sawa. Mr. Al Barwari has used his authority within the KDP to intimidate the Sawa family into not pursuing an investigation of the crime. Once again, the KDP's reluctance to launch an investigation and Mr. Al Barwari's intimidation has led many Assyrians to suspect KDP and Al Barwari complicity in the murder of Ms. Sawa.

More than four weeks after her disappearance, Ms. Sawa's shallow grave was discovered by a shepherd tending his flock. The decomposed body was partially exposed and appeared to have been partially eaten by scavenging wild animals. The Sawa family was brought to the burial site in order to provide a positive identification of the remains of the body. Following identification, the body was exhumed and taken to a Dohuk hospital for examination. Because of the mysterious circumstances of Ms. Sawa's murder and the family's belief that she may have been raped, an autopsy was requested. However, because of Kurdish intimidation, the final report has been delayed and is not expected to be scientifically objective or valid. The Helena Sawa tragedy resembles a well-established pattern of Kurdish authority complicity in attacks against Assyrians in the northern Iraqi provinces. Most Assyrians in Iraq are skeptical that the Kurdish authorities will ever investigate, capture or let alone punish these Kurdish assailants on behalf of their Assyrian victims especially if the assailant is politically connected. However, it is hoped that with the West's recent interest in safeguarding minority human rights, these ongoing attacks against the Assyrian Christians in Iraq will prompt investigations by international organizations and governments. Kurdish leaders such as Mr. Al Barwari who is believed to hold a Swedish passport may be vulnerable to investigation if he ever leaves northern Iraq or when law and order return to Iraq itself.

The tragedy of the Sawa family underscores the dire situation of Assyrians living in Iraq. Whether they reside under Kurdish occupation or within government controlled areas, Assyrians often find themselves the targets of persecution and attacks. Although Mr. Sawa felt obligated to sacrifice his life fighting against Iraqi government oppression on behalf of the KDP, his daughter fared no better living within the United Nations administered "Safe Haven" in a territory controlled by the same KDP. Nor have dozens of other Assyrians such as Francis Shabo- an Assyrian member of the parliament of northern Iraq who Amnesty International said was killed by KDP operatives- fared any better. The murder of Helena Sawa and the scores of other attacks against Assyrians including rapes, abductions of young girls, murders, attacks on Churches and clergy, cultural and linguistic persecution, and land expropriations by Kurds in the past several years have had the cumulative effect of terrorizing the indigenous Assyrian community in northern Iraq.

The premeditated and well established pattern of directing attacks against Assyrians and then steadfastly denying justice to the victims by Kurdish leaders has led to the gradual exodus of Assyrians from their ancestral homes. Such acts reinforce the conviction amongst many Assyrians that the "Safe Haven" designed to protect people from the ravages of the central government has in fact provided the Kurds license to victimize the Assyrians in northern Iraq. Such acts also have the effect of galvanizing the Assyrian community in the Diaspora to seek international recognition of a safe haven for Assyrians as a necessity for Assyrian survival in Iraq. A territorially delineated Assyrian safe haven within predominantly Assyrian areas would allow the recognition and protection of Assyrians, their lands, schools, and churches. Perhaps within an Assyrian safe haven, an Assyrian family like the Sawa's could feel secure enough to continue to live in a land inhabited by their ancestors for several millennia. (www.aina.org)

(AINA) August 25, 1999, armed Bahdinanis of the Kurdistan Democratic Party (KDP) imposed a blockade against a string of eight Assyrian villages in the Nahla area of northern Iraq. Earlier in August, the Bahdinanis of the KDP had ordered the villagers not to transport any food into the villages under threat of force. Having no other viable recourse, they appealed to United Nations (UN) and the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) monitors in northern Iraq to intervene on the Assyrians' behalf. Fortunately the UN and the ICRC demanded a lifting of the blockade against the Assyrian villages as at least a portion of provisions directly originated from the UN "oil for food" Resolution 986 program. In order not to appear to be in defiance of a UN resolution, the Bahdinanis temporarily relented. However, intimidation and on again off again blockades have continued despite UN protests.

The Nahla area lies several kilometers east of Aqra in the Dohuk province of northern Iraq. The eight wholly Assyrian villages remaining in the Nahla district include Merokeh, Belmat, Khalilaneh, Hizaneh, Jouleh, Chameh Chale, Rabatkeh, and Kash Kawa. The Assyrian villages in this district have remained relatively isolated and it has been this relative isolation that has thus far spared them. However, on account of their isolation, Assyrian villagers there are dependent upon provisions brought in from the Aqra city center. With no developed road system, supplies are carried by hand or mule monthly across dirt roads and through mountain passages. Even prior to the August blockade, the villagers were sometimes exposed to confiscation of their goods by Bahdinani bandits or KDP operatives often after the villagers had trekked several kilometers on foot and just as they had nearly reached their homes.

Following the initially successful UN and ICRC intervention, armed KDP Bahdinani thugs continued their campaign of terror against the Assyrian villages. On the night of August 27 and 28, the Bahdinanis besieged the village of Kash Kawa and indiscriminately fired automatic weapon rounds upon Assyrian homes. Fortunately, no Assyrians were harmed by the shots although livestock were killed and property was damaged. The armed KDP operatives subsequently entered the village intimidating the inhabitants. Residents of the village were pulled from their homes in the middle of the night and gathered into a group. Mindful of previous Kurdish atrocities, women and children cried in horror and fear. Two Assyrian men, Mr. Samir Daniel and Mr. Yonadam Moshe were singled out from the crowd and severely beaten upon their heads with the butts of rifles, leading to concussions and severe external hemorrhaging – all before terrified women and children.

The alleged "justification" by the Bahdinani leadership for the initial blockade and subsequent brutality against the residents of Kash Kawa was a supposed belief by the KDP that Kurdistan Workers Party (PKK) guerillas were benefiting from the relief supplies entering the village. With the arrest of the PKK leader, Mr. Abdullah Ocalan, in Turkey, significant numbers of fully armed PKK fighters have fled Turkey into northern Iraq. The presence of still more armed Kurmanji tribesmen from Turkey into the area has been unsettling and destabilizing. Assyrian villages have also been raided for supplies and food by PKK guerillas in recent months. The increasing tension between the PKK and the KDP has raised the specter of still greater blood feuds by the various Kurdish ethnic groups and political parties, leaving the Assyrians in a precarious position.

The Assyrian villages in the Nahla region are a small remnant of what was a markedly more robust and significant Assyrian presence in the Aqra area a mere twenty to thirty years ago. Many of the surrounding Assyrian villages were destroyed by the Iraqi government in the 1960's and 1970's and subsequently illegally expropriated by Bahdinani settlers. Ironically, the pretext for the Iraqi government destruction of Assyrian villages in northern Iraq was that they were aiding these same Bahdinanis of the KDP that are now attacking the Assyrians under the pretext that the Assyrians are now aiding the Kurmanjis of the PKK. The Assyrians in northern Iraq have not supported either of the two warring ethnic factions, as the Assyrians are only too painfully cognizant of the previous destruction and expropriation of Assyrian villages by the PKK in southeastern Turkey and by the KDP in northern Iraq. Assyrians in the area also remember all too well the December 1997 massacre of seven unarmed Assyrian civilians from Mangeshe, Dohuk in northern Iraq by the PKK (12-28-1997 AINA report). In the case of Kash Kawa the Bahdinani forces of the KDP eventually left the village after wreaking havoc, confiscating supplies, and ultimately, finding no evidence of pro-PKK sentiment. (www.aina.org)

(ZNAI: Chicago) According to a report by the Assyrian International News Agency, in late August the Kurdistan Democratic Party (KDP) began imposing a food blockade against eight Assyrian villages in the Nahla area of Dohuk region in northern Iraq. The villages of Merokeh, Belmat, Khalilaneh, Hizaneh, Jouleh, Chameh Chale, Rabatkeh, and Kash Kawa were liberated from the KDP with the assistance of the

United Nations and the International Red Cross and some provisions from the UN "oil for food" Resolution 986 program were allowed into these Assyrian villages. However, the siege continued only a few days later. In Kash Kawa KDP's Bahdinani "indiscriminately fired automatic weapon rounds upon Assyrian homes." Although no Assyrians were harmed, some livestock were killed and property was damaged. Residents of the village were forced out of their homes and two Assyrian men, Samir Daniel and Yonadam Moshe, were severely beaten.
(http://www.zindamagazine.com/html/archives/1999/oct26_1999.htm#Anchor-49575)

(AINA) 11-30-1999 Bahdinani security forces of the Kurdistan Democratic Party (KDP) stepped up their campaign of intimidation against the eight remaining Assyrian villages in the Nahla area near Aqra in northern Iraq. The earlier reported August midnight attack on the village of Kesh Kawa was followed by a similar raid on the Nahla village of Belmat on September 10, 1999. As in the previous attacks, approximately one dozen armed security forces of the KDP surrounded the village and fired automatic weapons into the air rousing alarmed and terrified villagers from their sleep. Assyrians in the Nahla region with grievances have had little if any legal recourse from Kurdish authorities in the past several years. The village of Belmat has been especially sensitized to the difficulties in relying on the Bahdinani concept of justice. In 1995, Mr. Edward Khoshaba, a resident of Belmat, was tending his sheep on his own land when he apparently surprised three Bahdinani bandits who had killed and butchered some of his sheep. Seeing Mr. Khoshaba outnumbered, the bandits attacked Mr. Khoshaba when they were confronted. Mr. Khoshaba was able to kill two of his assailants in self-defense as the third fled to his neighboring village. In order to avoid greater tension between Assyrians and Bahdinanis, Mr. Khoshaba surrendered to the supposed legal authorities in order to have a proper investigation of the attack. The local Bahdinani police immediately surrendered Mr. Khoshaba to an angry mob of the attacking bandits' family and fellow villagers. Mr. Khoshaba was taken to the Bahdinani village where he was brutally beaten. Then after being tied to a tree he was taunted and tortured for hours before he was finally killed. The whole drawn out, sordid, death ordeal was treated by the Bahdinani villagers as a sort of celebratory festival until the climactic "honor" of finally killing Mr. Khoshaba was given to the eldest woman of the village who repeatedly hacked Mr. Khoshaba on his head with an axe until he lost consciousness and died. Mr. Khoshaba's hacked, bloody, and broken corpse was later ignominiously dumped near his home. Neither the murderous mob nor the legal authorities that denied Mr. Khoshaba due process were ever captured, investigated or punished for his extra judicial lynching.

The underlying motivation for continued attacks and intimidation against Assyrian villages such as in the Nahla region and other parts of northern Iraq is best illustrated by recent declarations by the KDP regarding the Assyrian village of Millet Arwana adjacent to the Nahla region Assyrian villages. Following intimidation and harassment, many of the Assyrian inhabitants of this village had left northern Iraq. Recently, it has been reported that Mr. Hisbyer Al Zebari of the KDP has ordered that ownership of the village lands be redistributed with over 80% being handed over to Bahdinani settlers belonging to the Zebari Kurdish tribe. Mr. Al Zebari is reportedly a political bureau member of the KDP as well as an in law relative of KDP leader Masoud Barzani. Various ethnic groups and armed political groups in northern Iraq such as the predominantly Bahdinani KDP, the predominantly Sorani Patriotic Union of Kurdistan (PUK), and the predominantly Kurmanji Kurdistan Workers Party (PKK) have used the pretext of instability and violence to further consolidate their land holdings by force at the expense of unarmed Assyrian villagers. With a premeditated policy of intimidation, threats, and harassment, Assyrians are forced from their ancient ancestral lands as various illegal settlers, often related to the political leadership ordering the violence, occupy more and more Assyrian villages. The Iraqi government has demonstrated complicity in this program in so far as over 200 Assyrian villages were destroyed in the 1960's and 70's and were subsequently resettled by Bahdinanis and Soranis. With a renewed influx of the predominantly Kurmanji PKK, additional tension and conflict can be expected in the future. Since the Gulf War, more than fifty additional villages have been expropriated by various Sorani and Bahdinani groups, the most recent being Millet Arwana. The attacks against the remaining villages in the Nahla region are merely the latest salvos in a continuing policy of ethnically cleansing the region of Assyrians. (www.aina.org)

(AINA) 12-25-1999 This year's holy Christmas season has been marred by escalating violence against Assyrian Christians. According to news reports from the Ankawa Homepage released on December 19, 1999 and the Assyrian Democratic Movement (ADM) released on December 16, 1999, another Assyrian

was assassinated in Arbil on December 15, 1999. Described as a well-liked and humble man, Mr. Habib Yousif Dekhoka was a sixty-year-old Assyrian man of the Chaldean Church and a lifelong resident of Ankawa. According to the two independent press releases, Mr. Dekhoka was a merchant in the Sheikh Allah business district in the Arbil city center. Apparently, Mr. Dekhoka was an Assyrian businessman in an area of the Sheikh Allah retail district dominated by Behdanani and Sorani storeowners.

Mr. Dekhoka had been threatened several months ago by armed thugs attempting to force him to give up his business. On one occasion, Mr. Dekhoka's store had been firebombed. He survived that attack and succeeded in rebuilding his business all the while withstanding escalating harassment and intimidation. On December 15, 1999, however, a bomb planted in his store exploded and took his life. Following the blast, Mr. Dekhoka endured several hours of excruciating pain until his burned and bloodied body finally succumbed. (www.aina.org)

(ZINDA) February 12, 2001 A bomb explodes at the house of Rafael Dawud Hilo in the Shorish District in the city of Arbil. Mr. Hilo's wife is a teacher at the Assyrian school in Arbil. (www.zindamagazine.com)

(AINA) 7-2-2001 The May 26 municipal elections in the so-called "Safe Haven" in northern Iraq were once again muddied by discrimination against basic Assyrian political, civil, and human rights. In a lead up to the elections, the predominant Assyrian political party in northern Iraq, the Assyrian Democratic Movement (ADM) sensed that the impending elections were jury-rigged and consequently prepared for a possible boycott of the election. In the past few years, Behdanani and Sorani tribal chieftains have been at great pains to present themselves to the world as respecting political rights as well as diversity within their area of military occupation. In the recent past, international sympathy for the Behdanani-Sorani struggle for occupation of northern Iraq has greatly suffered on account of repeated accounts of Kurdistan Democratic Party (KDP) and Patriotic Union of Kurdistan (PUK) persecution of the indigenous Assyrians. Fearing still greater erosion of international support, the Behdanani and Sorani political organizations proposed a meeting with ADM leaders aimed at ensuring ADM participation in the election process. The hastily arranged meeting was held prior to the May 23 date that the ADM was scheduled to issue a formal election boycott declaration to Assyrians in northern Iraq. (www.aina.org)

KDP continues to permit seizure of Assyrian-owned land and villages, murder of Christian civilians, and political assassinations of Assyrian leaders in areas under the control of its forces. Mr. Fawzi Hariri is a high-ranking Assyrian member of the Kurdistan Democratic Party (KDP) and is currently traveling Europe to raise awareness of the political and human rights situation of the Assyrians in northern Bet-Nahrain. (<http://www.zindamagazine.com/html/archives/2001/10.29.01/index.php#SurfersCorner>) Zinda magazine called for the boycott of this seminar questioning Hariri's real intentions.

(AINA) March 29, 2001, Ms. Khawa Warda, an Assyrian American from Chicago, arrived at the Iraqi-Turkish border en route to her family home in Ber Seve near Zakho, northern Iraq. Following a grueling overland journey to the Iraqi border where she was met with checkpoints, automatic weapons, and suspicious Kurdish and Turkish border police, Khawa was finally warmly greeted by friends and family. Assyrians throughout northern Iraq had just gathered to celebrate the 6751st Akitu Festival of the Assyrian New Year once again marking Assyrian ties to the historic heartland of Assyria. The Warda family spirits were still more heightened in anticipation of the upcoming April 17 wedding of Khawa's brother, Youkhana. Youkhana Yalda Khaie, Khawa's brother, was a 32-year-old self-described Assyrian from the Chaldean community who had made his home in Chilke Nisar. Youkhana was a hardworking farmer who labored on a large tract of land that he owned. The young Assyrian was also a well known activist and had been interested in raising funds to rebuild the ancient Church of Mar Moshe in his family's home village of Chilke Nisar which had been razed by government forces in June, 1979. Unfortunately, though, the combination of Youkhana's activism and extensive land holdings earned him the envy of the Behdanani Kurdish tribesmen near his home and therefore made him the target of the mostly Behdanani Kurdistan Democratic Party (KDP). On April 5, Youkhana was deceptively lured to the village of Kane Misy by KDP agents with the promise of donating supplies for the new Mar Moshe Church. Upon his arrival to Kane Misy, Youkhana was apprehended and subsequently disappeared. In a frantic search throughout the region, Khawa was unable to locate Youkhana until inquiries by United Nations (UN) personnel revealed Youkhana had been held in solitary confinement in a KDP political office. Later, Youkhana was moved to Femandy Prison in Duhok. He was not allowed any visitors for more than two weeks including by his

fiancé until Khawa was able to bribe a prison official for two visits on April 20 and May 20. During these visits, Khawa discovered that Youkhana had been severely whipped in the face and legs with a wire cable by two KDP agents. The beatings had left Youkhana badly scarred and unable to stand or walk. He was kept in isolation in a small cell while blindfolded with his hands tied- his only visitors being those KDP guards intent solely on further mocking and taunting him. The extent of his beatings was so profound and disfiguring that Youkhana was removed from the prison for four days during an inspection by the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) so that the extent of his torture would not be discovered. During Khawa's visits with Youkhana, KDP prison guards repeatedly threatened the Khaie family that any complaints about Youkhana's torture to the UN or ICRC would result in still greater pain and cruelty for Youkhana and his family. Till this day, Youkhana has not been charged with any crime nor has he had access to an attorney or visitors outside of family members willing to bribe prison guards. No court date has been set and no end to his daily torture and imprisonment is in sight. Youkhana remains in prison in imminent fear of death. Throughout his interrogations and torture sessions, Youkhana was repeatedly asked to confess his ties to the Kurdistan Worker's Party (PKK), the predominantly Behdanani KDP's Kurmanji paramilitary rival organization. Youkhana and his family have vehemently denied any previous or current ties to the PKK and the KDP has provided no evidence or formal hearing on the matter. The predominantly Behdanani tribes of the KDP have conveniently used their blood feud with the Kurmanji tribes of the PKK to target Assyrian civilians literally caught in the crossfire. For its part, the PKK as it had similarly systematically done in southern Turkey, often enters an Assyrian village under cover of night and demands assistance by threat of arms. Fearing violent reprisals, unarmed Assyrian villagers are unable to refuse. Those villagers acquiescing to PKK demands then find themselves suffering violent attacks by KDP thugs the following day.

The very same script was played out in the KDP attacks against the Nahla Assyrian villages (AINA 1-21-2000). As a result of an international Assyrian outcry against the KDP paramilitary raids, the KDP egregiously threatened the Assyrian village leaders into signing a letter denying that the raids ever occurred. The KDP was humiliated when their crude scheme was exposed by confirmation of the attacks by UN and ICRC reports. The underlying motivation of this KDP policy is to heighten fear and intimidation of Assyrians so that they abandon Assyrian lands. Till now, the Assyrian villages in the Nahla area remain under virtual siege with heightened tension. Not surprisingly, the motivation behind Youkhana's ongoing torture is believed to be based on driving him off his land. In a formal statement to Amnesty International, Khawa Warda asserted that the primary reason for her brother's arrest and torture was that "They are trying to take his land away from him." The totality of the savagery of the ongoing torture of Youkhana is believed to be carried out by the security forces of the KDP- the Rekkhistine Taybeti- under direct instruction from the leadership. The Rekkhistine is believed to be headed by Nerjewan Barzani, the nephew of KDP strongman, Masoud Barzani. In their 1995 report on the human rights situation in northern Iraq, Amnesty International concluded that "The security apparatus of the KDP, Rekkhistine Taybeti, and that of the PUK (Patriotic Union of Kurdistan), Dezgay Zanyari, are said to have units akin to assassination squads, whose members receive orders from senior party officials. There is also widespread conviction that such unlawful and deliberate killings could not have been perpetrated without the knowledge, consent or acquiescence of the leaders of these two parties, to whom the security and intelligence apparatuses are ultimately responsible."

Assyrians with political roots in northern Iraq have insisted all along that torture and assassinations are used as deliberate instruments of policy by the Barzani clan occupying parts of northern Iraq. Assyrian villagers are purposely targeted in an effort to ethnically cleanse the region of its indigenous Assyrian inhabitants in order to further consolidate the KDP paramilitary occupation of Assyrian lands. Regrettably, rather than having gained a greater appreciation for the intrinsic value of respecting human rights and appreciating diversity following their alleged victimization by the government of Iraq, the occupying paramilitary Behdanani forces now in northern Iraq have instead turned doubly savage towards the indigenous Assyrian population. (www.aina.org)

(AINA) 5-24-2002 Increasingly, reports from northern Iraq have revealed a dangerously escalating degree of Islamist militancy and fundamentalism in Iraq in general and especially within the portion of northern Iraq currently occupied by the Kurdistan Democratic Party (KDP). Not surprisingly, Islamic militancy in the UN "Safe Haven" has been particularly detrimental to the indigenous Assyrian Christian population in the area. An ever growing number of Islamic fundamentalist and other terrorist organizations operate freely in the KDP occupied region of northern Iraq, often with direct support from the KDP strongman, Mr.

Masoud Barzani. The most notorious Islamic fundamentalist organization with direct ties to the Barzani clan is the Kurdish Revolutionary Party of God (Hizballah al Thawry al Kurdi) headed by Sheikh Mohammed Khalid Barzani, the late Mulla Mustafa Barzani's first cousin. In fact, Sheikh Khalid happens to be Mr. Masoud Barzani's father-in-law as well as that of Mr. Barzani's late brother Adris as well. In their 1995 report entitled "Human Rights Abuses in Iraqi Kurdistan Since 1991," Amnesty International noted that the "Kurdish Hezbollah" was "led by Sheikh Muhammad Khaled Barzani (a cousin of Mas'ud Barzani), which was formed in 1982 in Iran." The group has enjoyed generous support from Iran on account of its fundamentalist character and ideology.

Another organization referred to as the Islamic Movement of Iraqi Kurdistan (IMIK) (Al Haraka Al Islamayia Fi Kurdistan Al Iraq) is likewise supported by the Iranian government and functions primarily in the Arbil and Sulaimaniya regions. Although the IMIK began initially as an Islamic charitable organization, they subsequently deteriorated into a militant terrorist organization at times targeting the indigenous Assyrian Christian community with threats and intimidation. Initially, the IMIK was headquartered in Halabja in the area currently under the occupation of the Patriotic Union of Kurdistan (PUK). In the mid 1990's, the internecine tribal blood feud between the KDP and PUK led Mr. Masoud Barzani to actively support the IMIK as a hedge against the PUK. With the quieting of the bloodletting, it is widely believed that Mr. Barzani has maintained ties to the organization as insurance for any future battles against the PUK as well as a constant source of pressure and intimidation against the indigenous Assyrian Christian population. (www.aina.org)

(AINA) 5-24-2002 A recently disclosed letter written by the Kurdistan Democratic Party's (KDP) Director of Religious Affairs Dohuk (Nohadra), northern Iraq underscores institutionalized and deliberate religious discrimination by certain KDP officials targeting the indigenous Assyrian (also known as Chaldean and Syriac) Christian community in the northern Iraqi United Nations administered "Safe Haven." The letter is the final summary response refusing a request from an Assyrian Church to build a bishopric intended to serve its adherents in the northern Iraqi provinces. At the time of the formal request in 1994, the Ancient Church of the East did not have any Bishop-level presence in all of northern Iraq. Mr. Abdul Hameed Adil Yazdeen's refusal to grant permission to build the Assyrian Church center has since been repeatedly upheld by certain KDP leadership till today such that 8 years later, the Ancient Church of the East is still not able to properly minister to its adherents. A local Assyrian resident, who recently fled the area with his family, speaking on condition of anonymity, stated: "Why do you think we left? I pray to God that the day would not come that these gangs are given power in Northern Iraq. Such actions are even worse than that of the dictator Saddam! At least we are allowed to have a bishopric under his rule." The KDP's refusal to allow the building of an Assyrian Bishop's center was supposedly based on several factors. First, either purposely or ignorantly, Mr. Yazdeen erroneously asserted that the Ancient Church of the East already had such a center in the area of Barwari Bala. In fact, the Ancient Church of the East has no such center whatsoever anywhere in northern Iraq. Rather, the center in Barwari Bala belongs to the Assyrian Church of the East, an ecclesiastically distinct Assyrian Church. This point was repeatedly clarified to the KDP tribal chieftains in the course of the request for permission to build the religious center. In either event, the egregious assumption that a KDP tribal appointee could better assess than the Church community itself whether the Church had sufficient facilities to minister to the spiritual needs of its members is in its own right arrogant and deeply disturbing. Rather than use the earmarked funds for the Church project, Mr. Yazdeen suggested instead that other non Assyrian Christian projects be considered including "a scientific college, an orphanage, a martyr's center, or a health center which is more preferable in the present circumstances of Kurdistan." Most disturbing, though, remains Mr. Yazdeen's allegation that the building of an Assyrian religious site in the ancient Assyrian city would anger neighboring Muslims and flare religious tensions. According to Mr. Yazdeen, "The site chosen for the bishopric headquarters is close to Muslim mosques and is located within their modern residential areas. This situation will create religious sensitivity." The ultimate affront to any sense of tolerance remains Mr. Yazdeen's last point wherein he states bluntly and unapologetically that "Islamic law (Shari'a) does not justify the creation of a church in an Islamic country". Regrettably, such Islamic fundamentalism has steadily increased within the KDP and has been spearheaded by the Hizballah party led by Sheikh Mohammed Khalid Barzani, KDP stongman Mr. Masoud Barzani's father-in-law. (www.aina.org)

(ZINDA) The parliament of the region of Iraqi Kurdistan discussed the joint federal plan presented by the ruling parties in the region, Kurdistan Democratic Party and the Patriotic Union of Kurdistan and approved

this plan as a proposal during its session of 7th November 2002. The proposal suggests that the make-up of the Iraqi nation consists of Arabs and Kurds, considering them to be the “two main nations” and inferior to other groups. The proposal dealt with the Assyrian people as two different nations (Assyrian and Chaldean). The proposal stated that Iraq consists of Arabic and Kurdish Federals and eliminates the roles of other ethnic groups. (<http://www.zindamagazine.com/html/archives/2002/11.11.02/index.php#ZindaSays>)

(AINA) October 8, 2002 A resolution adopted by the parliament in northern Iraq has raised concern amongst Assyrians regarding the potential formal and legal transfer of illegally expropriated Assyrian lands to their Kurdish squatters. The directive entitled “General Conditions for the Ownership of Illegally Obtained Lands” mandates the conditions necessary for official governmental land deeds to be granted to Kurdish squatters. According to the directive, all lands confiscated “prior to and until January 1, 2000” are targeted for ownership transfer. Both private and government owned lands are included in the resolution. The directive authorizes a State Planning Board dominated by Kurds to oversee the surveying of the subject lands including urban areas and their surrounding villages. The directive authorizes an appraisal of any occupied lands and stipulates that no land may be appraised for less than 50 dinars per square meter (approximately 3 US dollars). Kurdish squatters are entitled to purchase the land from the regional Kurdish parliament for the value appraised by their fellow Kurds in addition to a small service fee fixed at 14 dinars (approximately 1 US dollar) per square meter in urban areas, 10 dinars per square meter in surrounding suburbs, and 8 dinars per square meter in rural areas. The directive adds that the authority for the transfer of occupied lands to predominantly Behdanani tribal squatters rests on Parliament Resolution 5 in the year 2002 as well as the Prime Minister’s directive number 1, in the year 2002. Committee branches are warned that failure to comply in a “direct and speedy manner” will lead to summary prosecution to the fullest extent of the law. (www.aina.org)

(ZINDA) According to a report by the KDP's official newspaper, Brayati, on 26 February a new party under the name of the Chaldean Democratic Unity Party (CDUP) [Kurdish: Parti Yekyati Demokrati Kildani], was officially established last week in North Iraq. With the support of the Chaldean National Congress, another new-comer in the politics of Gulf War II phase of Iraqi politics, KDP’s Ministry of Interior has relied on its “Decree 1236” and “Act 17 of 1993” to help found the CDUP in promoting its divisive strategies among the Assyrian people. (<http://www.zindamagazine.com/html/archives/2003/3.3.03/index.php#ZindaSays>)

(ZINDA) December 2003 This year's elections of the Students Unions were special due to the fact that Iraq was liberated and the Kurds expanded the election process to include Mosul and Kirkuk as well. The organizing committee of the elections visited all the five governorates of Sulaymania, Arbil, Dohuk, Kirkuk, and Mosul. However, the committee, which is controlled by Kurds, when visiting Kirkuk and Mosul did not visit with the Assyrian, Arab, or Turkoman city council representatives in the two governorates to coordinate with them the details of the elections or how they should be conducted. Their communications were solely with the Kurdish city councils in the two said governorates. To make things worse, they selected the December 24, 2003, as the date for the Student Unions elections. As it is well-known throughout Iraq that the ChaldoAssyrian Christian students stay home on both the 24th and 25th of December because of Christmas. The Kurdish committee insisted to hold the elections on the 24th, when students were out of school, and the ChaldoAssyrian Student Union was forced to boycott this year's elections. There is another important issue. Due to previous central and local government policies against the Assyrians in Iraq in general and north of Iraq in particular, there are Assyrian localities that Assyrian students make a small minority compared to Kurds. The ChaldoAssyrian Student Union fights in order to have the Assyrian students (wherever they existed) to hold their own separate elections and select their own representatives to the regional Student Union Federation. The Kurds have blocked such move, in order to force whenever a small Assyrian minority students existed to vote for Kurdish representatives. It is obvious that 20 or 30 Assyrian students in any school cannot win against 300 or 500 Kurdish students. As indigenous people, the Assyrians must be given special considerations in any kind of elections, including those of the Student Unions. The low Assyrian population is due to decades of central and local government policies against the Assyrians, who were forced to flee their ancestral lands in northern Iraq. (<http://www.zindamagazine.com/html/archives/2003/12.29.03/index.php#TheLighthouse>)

July 2004 ZINDA

Iraqis were jubilant for the transfer of power to them, as they begun to put the foundation for democracy, represented by the elections that are to take place in 2005. These elections are the aim of everybody. Iraqis struggled for this democracy through leading patriotic organizations, including Assyrian groups, that gave many martyrs through the decades. The Assyrian Democratic Movement fought dictatorship, oppression, and despotism for more than quarter of a century and gave sweat and blood for that. It was for those patriotic stands that the ADM gained its place among the Iraqi opposition and the respect of the people, which qualified it to be the people's real front runner. In the middle of this optimism, the individuals who are preparing to name the delegates of the Governorate of Arbil to the Iraqi national Conference are neglecting the role of the ADM. This they do despite the fact that the ADM is the representative of the ChaldoAssyrians in the Kurdish parliament, a parliament that they refer to so proudly as an historical accomplishment. In the forefront is the Kurdistan Democratic Party (KDP) who is leading the way in marginalizing the role of the ADM. Furthermore, the KDP is belittling the principles of representing our people and selecting our representatives. The KDP officials selected those they desired in order to participate in the local governorate (province) conference and it was them (i.e. KDP officials) who supplied the required delegates to the Iraqi National Conference.

http://www.zindamagazine.com/html/archives/2004/7.30.04/index_fri.php#GoodMorningAssyria

(ZINDA) July 23, 2004, A clarification was issued by Judge Michael Shimshon, Head of Committee in Dohuk governorate selected to prepare for the Iraqi National Conference. That clarification came in response to the clarification of the Assyrian Democratic Movement (ADM) in Dohuk about what took place during the committee meetings. Judge Shimshon stated that the ADM was expatriated from participating in the local Dohuk conference, which took place on July 22, 2004. The local conference was to select the governorate's delegates to the Iraqi National Conference that was to select the Interim Iraqi National Assembly. The clarification went further to state that this expatriation was through the collaboration between the local administrative authorities in Dohuk Governorate, which is ruled by the Kurdistan Democratic Party (KDP), and the special committee assigned by the Upper Committee of the Conference.

http://www.zindamagazine.com/html/archives/2004/7.30.04/index_fri.php#GoodMorningAssyria

(ZINDA) 11 July 2004, Kurdish special security forces told the Assyrian storeowners in Sarsank and Amadiya (north Iraq) to raise the Kurdish flag on their stores or their stores were going to be closed. Two months earlier, the ADM office in Ain Sifni was told by Kurds to lower the Iraqi flag, and the ADM did. The Assyrian mayors (Mukhtars) in north of Iraq were also told to raise the Kurdish flag on their homes and receive \$100 per month as a reward or they would lose their positions. Assyrians have been also forced to raise the Kurdish flag in Alqosh, Ba'shiqa, Telkepe, Bartilla and Baghdede. The KDP has even prevented the Assyrian Democratic Movement (ADM), the Assyrian Women's Union and the ChaldoAssyrian Student Union in Dohuk from nominating their representatives from this governorate (see News Digest). In Arbil the local government made few changes in the election of some key positions. It appointed and then approved Sarkis Aghajan as deputy prime minister and the minister of finance for the Kurdish local government in north of Iraq. Sarkis Aghajan is an Assyrian; however, he has been a member of the Kurdistan Democratic Party (KDP) under Masuad Barazani during most of his political career and has worked against the interests of the Assyrians and the Assyrian Democratic Movement (ADM).

http://www.zindamagazine.com/html/archives/2004/7.30.04/index_fri.php#ZindaSays

(ZINDA) The U.S. Department of State expressed concern to representatives of the two main Kurdish parties in northern Iraq, regarding the establishment of Assyrian secondary schools in northern Iraq. Both the KDP (Kurdistan Democratic Party) and the PUK (Patriotic Union of Kurdistan) denied having any knowledge of the situation, which Assyrian organizations and individuals have confirmed.

<http://www.zindamagazine.com/html/archives/2003/8.11.03/index.php#GoodMorning>

During the mid-November sessions of the north of Iraq regional Kurdish parliament, the Kurdish two main parties, i.e. the KDP and PUK, instituted an article to refer to the indigenous Syriac-Speaking Christians of north of Iraq as two separate peoples (Assyrians and Chaldeans) contrary to all historical facts that prove that Assyrians and Chaldeans are ONE nation. This the KDP and PUK is practicing to weaken the indigenous Syriac-speaking Assyrians (known as ChaldoAssyrians under TAL). The Assyrian Democratic Movement (ADM) threatened to withdraw from the north of Iraq regional election if this nation was

divided into two nations. Only with pressure from His Holiness Mar Emmanuel Delly, Patriarch of the Chaldean Catholic Church, the Kurdish authorities retracted their motion. The Kurds continue to undermine the Assyrians' rights in north of Iraq and try hard to employ the "Divide and Rule" policy.

2006

Northern Iraq

Kurds murdered Akhiqar from the village of Kondi Kosa who refused to sell his land to Kurds. The murderer is still free.

<http://www.assyrianconference.com/index.php?news=1359>

AINA, March 14, 2006

Earlier this year, at the request of the local Assyrian (also known as Chaldean and Syriac) and Shabak communities of the Nineveh Plain, and the local police force of the Hamdaniya and Telkaif districts, the Ministry of Interior gave the order to assign approximately 800 new policemen from the local communities in the two Nineveh Plain Districts. This was long overdue as these two districts have a substantially low number of policemen to maintain security in the region. In addition, over fifty percent of the anemic police force in this region is made up of Kurds from outside the area who are loyal to the Kurdistan Democratic Party (KDP).

The first order from the ministry was handed down on March 14th, 2006. With a second official order dated April 6th, 2006, the approved applicants were asked to report for duty immediately. However, the Provincial Council of Nineveh, headed by Police Chief Wathiq Muhammad Abd Al-Qadir, has continually delayed the implementation of the ministry's order in the hopes of maintaining KDP control over the region. The Provincial Council of Nineveh is dominated by the Kurdish KDP even though the majority inhabitants of the area are Sunni Arabs, Shiite Shabaks, and ChaldoAssyrian Christians, After several complaints from the locals, the order was finally implemented on June 14th, 2006, but with the modification that the Nineveh Plain approved applicants report for duty not in their Nineveh Plain hometowns but instead in the most troublesome neighborhoods in the city of Mosul.

The revised order gives the 800 Assyrian Christian and Shabak applicants two weeks to report for duty or their already approved applications will be revoked and rendered invalid. The Mosul city police stations where the new recruits are to report for duty already have assigned to them over 3,000 policemen from the Gayyara district. So far, none of the newly approved applicants have reported to Mosul in protest to the unjust alteration of the order to serve in Mosul rather than in their own towns and villages. Security personnel in the two Nineveh districts number a small fraction as compared to the 3,000 strong Police Force in the Mosul neighborhoods where the new recruits are to be deployed.

A complaint letter was formally filed with the Nineveh Provincial Council by the Assyrian and Shabak applicants, objecting to the revision to the order which only serves the political ambitions of the KDP and ensures its control over ever increasing parts of Nineveh and of its native inhabitants. No other region in Iraq has been subjected to such unreasonable demands. In all other urban centers and rural towns and villages the police forces are comprised mainly of local residents who man the local police stations and protect their hometowns.

With its usual aggression and political maneuvering, the KDP is betting that it can continue its dominance over the Nineveh Plain by infiltrating and controlling the police force. The KDP's excuse, which is rejected by the locals, continues to be that the locals are too afraid to police the area, and so they are forced to bring in KDP militia personnel from the outside. Such blatant suppression of the rights of Assyrians along with notorious KDP aggression have become the trademark of tribal warlord Masoud Barzani in the relentless pursuit of his dream of an independent Kurdistan. To be sure, Barzani has been listening to those who have been advising him that an independent Kurdistan is not viable without the oil-rich areas of Kirkuk and the Nineveh Plain.

Kurdish Prime Minister Nechirvan Barzani further demonstrates the KDP's plan to annex Assyrian and Shabak towns when he publicly labels them as "Kurdish towns". In his interview on June 3rd, 2006, Asharq Al-Awsat writes "He emphasized that democracy is part of everyday life in Arbil, Dahuk, Al-Sulaymaniyah, Ba'shiqah, Al-Qosh, Barzan, Bartalah, Zakho, and the remaining Kurdish cities and villages."

The head of the Political Bureau of the KDP and the Provincial Deputy Governor of the Nineveh Governorate, Khisro Goran, has set up KDP offices in even the smallest villages in the Nineveh Plain. He says of the blue-uniformed Iraqi police "They are not much good at finding terrorists...because they are

terrorists themselves." In the December 15th General Election, in the Assyrian town of Bartilla, approximately 500 non-resident Kurds had entered the polling center at 11:30 a.m. and demanded to vote. When the director refused, Mr. Khisro Goran, ordered the director to allow the illegal vote. Over 200 voted by the time Coalition forces intervened to stop further illegal voting.

<http://www.aina.org/releases/20060624123753.htm>

AINA, March 9, 2007 - Dohuk

Kurdish occupation authorities in Dohuk are preventing Assyrians from naming their businesses and shops Assyrian names or put up signs in Assyrian language in their storefronts.

The problem facing the Assyrians in naming their shops trade names of the Assyrian language where to choose between the Kurdish or English languages only, a situation similar to the former regime at a time when the Assyrians were forced to use Arabic names instead of the Assyrian names

<http://assyrian4all.net/akhne/viewtopic.php?t=1444>

<http://www.aina.org/news/20070310144443.htm>

AINA, March 22, 2007 - Mosul

In the early morning of March 22 a group of Kurdish soldiers abducted James Al-Bazi from his house in the Tel Kef district in North Iraq, reports the Assyria National Assembly. Mr. Al-Bazi, a Christian Assyrian (also known as Chaldean and Syriac), was blindfolded and severely beaten for 90 minutes. He was released later in the morning. No reason was given for his arrest. Mr. Al-Bazi was involved in a minor scuffle with his friend, who some say reported the incident to the Peshmerga (the Kurdish militia). Community leaders have discounted this and say that the Peshmerga does not involve itself in the affairs of the Assyrian people in their villages and is not a police force. Assyrians point out the actions of the Peshmerga undermine the police force. Three other Assyrians in Tel Kef and other Assyrian areas were also arrested and beaten, under pretense of not carrying their identity cards when standing next to their homes.

<http://www.aina.org/news/20070331194510.htm>

March 26, 2007

Northern Iraq

Our sources in Kora Govana has confirmed that at 02:00 pm local time a Kurdish person accompanied by an Assyrian from Shayeez has terrorized the

Village and our people have responded to them by force and both of them were beaten up by the Assyrian residents of the village. The Mayor of the district of Zaweeta (Shimmal Ammadi) and a three star general of the KRG security forces (Sarwan Trawanshi) have issued a threat and a warning to the Assyrian residents of the Village not to attack the Kurds again even if they are terrorizing the village. The Assyrian residents of the village has filed several complains to the Governor and the Assyrian vice Governor of Duhok both has closed their ears and eyes about the threats and the continuing occupation and annexation of the Assyrian lands in Kora Govana and many other Assyrian Villages.

The Kurds intention is to chase the Assyrians out of their village so they can complete their ultimate goal of kurdifying the village, the KRG has rebuild more than 600 illegal homes for the Kurds over Assyrian land in this village and many other Assyrian villages.

Before the Assyrian massacre of 1933, approximately 300 families lived in this village in 100 homes.

While some of the families joined the migration lead by Malek Yacou Malek Ismail to Syria, however, most of the families remained in the village in solidarity with their leader Malek Chikko.

After the Kurdish uprising in 1961, specifically after the death of Martyr Hormiz Malek Chikko in 1963, Kora Gavana was continuously persecuted at the hands of the Iraqi authorities and its Kurdish supporters. This ill treatment forced many of its residents to leave and dwell in other villages and cities. Some of its original residents would return again when the situation would be relatively calm.

In 1976, after the late Gewargis Malek Chikko was forced out Iraq by the dictator Saddam Hussein and his criminal Baath cronies, many trespasses took place on the village's inhabitants and its lands by the Ba'ath government and their Kurdish supporters. By end of 1970s, the Iraqi government had built a residential compound of 500 homes to settle the Kurds who had been forced out of their villages and who in turn trespassed on the village's lands. After 1991 Kurds from other villages mainly from Zawita village also trespassed on Kora Gavana's lands.

When the number of Kurds settler in Kora Gavana surpassed those of the Assyrian inhabitants, their assault on the Assyrians resumed, however, most horribly than before.

These assaults ranged from bullying and harassment to criminal acts such as life threatening beatings and vandalizing and destroying of crops in the middle of the night. These criminal acts were in tremendous escalation on a daily bases which made the lives of the Assyrians in Kora Gavana intolerable. The continuous assaults and brutal attacks were so excessive and damaging to the livelihood of the Assyrian living in this village that most of them who cultivated and made their living from farming in Kora Gavana, were forced to leave their properties and houses and migrate to other villages and cities looking for employment and other source of income.

Once again the deprived inhabitants of this Assyrian village were compelled to leave their beloved village. This relocation hugely reduced the number of Assyrians living in Kora Gavana to a mere 5 families.

Today, as the acts of war terror escalates in cities such as Baghdad, Mosul and Kirkuk; many Kora Gavan Assyrians who fled Kora Gavana in late 1970s, and resided in these cities find themselves in a quandary, yet one more time. The predicament is weather to stay in these cities and face death each and everyday, or take shelter in their village Kora Gavana. The underlining problem, however, is that if they go back to the village they have to confront the atrocities that continue to take place in Kora Gavana on the hands of the Kurds and their Assyrian supporters on a daily bases.

<http://www.aina.org/news/20070411101103.htm>

April 25, 2007 (Reuters) - Journalists in Iraq's autonomous Kurdistan region face arrest and harassment for reporting on government corruption and poor public services, the United Nations said in a human rights report on Wednesday. The United Nations said it was also concerned about arbitrary detentions by Kurdish authorities. Hundreds of detainees have been held for long periods without charge or without being referred to an investigative judge, it said.

<http://www.alertnet.org/thenews/newsdesk/BAY554793.htm>

April 27, 2007

The Kurdish Coalition in the Iraqi Parliament undermined the Assyrians' interest during the formation of the new Independent Electoral Commission of Iraq. The Kurdish representatives opposed the selection of any of the nominated Christians to represent the Assyrian Christians [also known as Chaldeans, Suryanis and ChaldoAssyrians] on the new Commission. The Christian nominees were educated and well qualified for the position, including a previous dean of a college and an attorney. The Kurdish Coalition, for example, did not like one of the main nominees due to his possible sympathetic support for the Assyrian Democratic Movement.

Meanwhile, Iraqi parliament member Mohsin al-Sa'doon belittled the Christian nominated attorney when he (al-Sa'doon) does not have the credentials to match those of any of the Christian nominees.

Member of parliament Mr. Abd al-Ahad Afram addressed al-Sa'doon by saying to him: "he, the nominee, is more capable and efficient that you for this position." Mr. Younam Kanna addressed al-Sa'doon by saying: "why not say that Iraq is an Islamic country and that non-Muslims have no role in it. Let everyone know that, let it be clear and everything is over." He then withdrew from the meeting hall disgusted. Is this the democracy that the Iraqi groups claim?

<http://www.kitabat.com/i27621.htm>

More on the issue here:

<http://www.kitabat.com/i27697.htm>

September 4, 2007

A member of the Assyrian General Conference in the Nineveh Governorate was attacked by the Kurdish Peshmergas known as the GCC and supported by the occupying forces, near the Nineveh hotel in the region. They beat, insulted, and took him to one of their centers near the hotel without any reason or motive.

www.zindamagazine.com (September 17, 2007 issue)

September 2007

Kurdish authorities have rejected applications by Iraqi Assyrian students that were forced to relocate from Baghdad and other violent cities to study at universities located in the Kurdish region in northern Iraq (KRG). However, those same Kurdish authorities have assigned 10% (later increased to 20%) of the seats at the said universities in the KRG to Kurdish students from Iran and Turkey.

October 13/14, 2007

Shaqlawā, Arbil

A gang attacked Aziz Toma and his son Michael and stabbed them repeatedly with their knives when the father and son tried to prevent the gang from stealing their pick up truck.

<http://www.ankawa.com/forum/index.php/topic,132298.0.html>

October 22, 2007,

Al-Malaf Press posted an interview with Mulla Bakhtiyar, In Charge of Foreign Relations Bureau in the Patriotic Union of Kurdistan (PUK) party under Iraqi President Jalal Talabani.

See here <http://almalafpress.net/?d=143&id=44161>

Mr. Bakhtiyar stated, quote: "...It is known that nations (peoples) have the legal right to establish their own states or regions if they had historic and geographical lands; however, the Turkomen and ChaldoAshur [Assyrians] are residing in Kurdistan and they have full citizenship rights in it, but they [Turkomen and Assyrians] do not own/have any Turkomeni or ChaldoAshuri [Assyrian] lands in Kurdistan and/or in Iraq." Unquote.

The plan to rewrite the history of northern Iraq (Assyria) and change the demographics of the region continues by officials in the PUK and Kurdistan Democratic Party (KDP). Unfortunately, this methodical campaign of denying and usurping the history of northern Iraq and Assyrians goes on today in the supposedly new, free and democratic Iraq.

February 2008

Kurds murdered Aprim Isaac (born 1982) from the village of Jdeedah in the region of Barwari Bala, northern Iraq. The murder took place outside the village. Isaac had gone hunting and he called his family via his mobile phone informing them that he was coming home, but he never made it. He was found dead hours later. The murder occurred about one week before the kidnapping of Chaldean Catholic Church Bishop Polous Faraj Rahho on February 29, 2008.

<http://www.assyrianconference.com/index.php?news=1359>

March 13, 2008

Washington

The US Department of State's (DoS) 2007 International Human Rights Report verifies the ethno-religious targeting of Iraq's Assyrian/Chaldean/Syriacs and other minorities. Ethnic-based targeting from Kurdish authorities was acknowledged. The report states that there were numerous reports of Kurdish authorities discriminating against minorities in the North, including Turkmen, Arabs, and Christians. According to these reports, authorities denied services to some villages, arrested minorities without due process and took them to undisclosed locations for detention, and pressured minority schools to teach in the Kurdish language. During the year there were allegations that the KRG continued to engage in discriminatory behavior against religious minorities. Members of these groups living in areas north of Mosul, such as Yazidis and Christians, asserted that the KRG encroached on their property and illegally built Kurdish settlements on the confiscated land.

March 2008

The Assyrian village of Hamziya (named Hamzik by Kurds) continues to suffer from acts of trespassing by Kurds, just like other Assyrian towns and villages in the Governorate of Dohuk. Hamziya is located in the Sapna region, northeastern Dohuk. Most of its people fled with the 1961 Kurdish revolt. The trespassing is committed by the new arrival of Kurdish families that are added to earlier four Kurdish labor families. Those earlier four families worked for the al-Mufti Kurdish family that began to own some land in the village since the 1990s. Today, there are (18) Kurdish families from the Nerwa tribe in Hamziya besides the (21) Catholic Assyrian (Chaldean) families. Many efforts to persuade the Kurdish families to leave failed. The Assyrians complained repeatedly; they knocked on the doors of all officials in the Sarsink sub-district, Amadiya district, 8th branch of the Kurdistan Democratic Party headed by Mohammad Muhsin, the Governor of Dohuk and even the Kurdish regional parliament. However, all these officials turned a blind eyes towards these complains. When the Kurdish families realized that the officials were on their side, they began the process of building a mosque, knowing that the presence of the mosque would enforce their presence in the village. This Assyrian Christian village continues to wait for a fair and just action by the officials in Dohuk and KRG to protect it from the continuous illegal trespassing.

<http://www.kitabat.com/i37978.htm>

April 9, 2008

Northern Iraq

The village of Kashkawa is situated north of the Assyrian town of 'Aqra. The Khazir River passes through the northeastern parts of the village. In the 1957 Iraqi Census, Kashkawa had a population of 174 Assyrians. The village housed 30 homes and 100 families before it was burned by the thugs of the Zebari Kurdish tribe on the pretext that the village aided the Kurdish movement. During that operation, many Assyrians of the village were killed, including Daniel Toma, Moshe Zaia, Youkhana Shamas and others from other nearby villages. Survivors of the atrocity were forced to seek refuge in several Iraqi cities until their return after the March 11, 1970 Iraqi-Kurdish Peace Communiqué. The village was rebuilt, but in 1987 the Iraqi regime deemed the village as a prohibited area and ordered to be completely demolished and to transfer its inhabitants to a residential complex built strictly for this purpose. After 1991, about 40 houses were built and the returning journey to the village started again, but ironically the village remained persecuted by the same people who were used to committing such crimes even during or after the downfall of the Saddam's regime. As it is known to many people mercenaries like Mahmood Agha al-Zibari and his son Zubair were the bitter enemies of the Kurdish movement yet the most aggressive toward our people and even toward the Kurdish people as their crimes included killing, setting fire to villages, ransacking, plundering and rape. When the Ba'ath regime discovered in early 1980's that Zubair, who now has claimed leadership after the death of his father, had secretly collaborated with the Kurdish movement, the regime plotted and carried out his poisoning with thallium. He was the most aggressive mercenary and considered the direct reason behind the Assyrians' resentment toward the Iraqi authorities and the cause for their expulsion from their villages. The Assyrians were seriously and constantly exposed to dual persecution by both the authorities alleging that the villagers had collaborated with the Kurdish movements and by the Peshmerga (Kurdish Militia) claiming that they had cooperated with the Iraqi authorities. But apparently today the Kurdish movements were behind the displacement of our people from their villages for the purpose of Kurdifying them hence to inhumanely portray the aggressiveness of the Iraqi authorities in order to gain the Christian International public opinion support for the Kurdish case. They somehow succeeded in their policies and gained the western support as they brilliantly succeeded in Kurdifying the Assyrian regions and villages and the best example for such attempt is the Christian Assyrian City of Duhok (Name Kurdified from the Assyrian name of Nohadra).

What has really prompted us to write about this subject is the new and constant persecution and unjust treatment committed against the people Kashkawa that scarified their lives defending their land and dignity. On Wednesday April 9 the people of Kashkwa were surprised to see herd of sheep estimated by thousand pasturing in their grassland, when they rushed to drive the cattle out of their grassland a huge fight broke out using rocks, sticks and weapons between Kashkwa men and the trespassers, but luckily it ended with no human loss except for some wounded from both sides.

This is not the first time in which Ridha and Shemal al-Zibari (sons of Zubair Mahmood Agha al-Zibari) had trespassed against this village and its people; they continuously rented the village grassland illegally to Kurdish shepherds of Surcheen Kurdish tribe. On the other hand, to protest against this matter, the people of Kashkawa village had filed a complaint with the authorities condemning such irresponsible conduct, the matter had even reached to Massoud Barazani, but again and as it is customary to those people no definite measure was ever taken despite of all the registered documents showing the ownership of these grassland to the Assyrian people of Kashkwa.

The village had not witnessed any transgression for the last two years up until this year the matter reoccurred again when most parts of Iraq and especially al Jazeera region and Arbil plain suffered the shortage fall of rain which gave the opportunity to both Ridha El-Zibari to sign a contract with Kurds (al Surcheen Kurdish tribe) and his brother Shemal to sign a contract with Arab shepherds giving them the right to use Kashkwa grassland without the approval and knowledge of the Assyrian people of Kashkawa Village, in return the brothers received money in advance.

After the fight was over and the trespassers pulled out of some grassland near the village, the chief of the village along with the elder men officially handed a request to the officials demanding a solution for the problem caused by the Zibari Kurdish brothers. After the request was officially filed to Denarta Regional Manager as it was instructed by the 'Aqra District Commissioner, the Regional Manager of Denarta in his part informed the villagers that the subject had reached Massoud Barazani and there is nothing he can do but to transfer their request back to 'Aqra District Commissioner. The Commissioner on the other hand is

not able to take any measure against the reckless Zibari Kurdish brothers for they have all the power and personally related to Massoud Barazani (his uncles).

Such non-actions and trespassing have subsequently forced many Assyrians to leave their village same as it happens in other Assyrian villages such as Dafri, Kerbish, Assan, Arkan, Jumseni and other Assyrian Villages.

<http://www.ninweh.com/forum/index.php?topic=2548.msg2585#msg2585>

April 22, 2008

Nineveh province, northern Iraq

Sources in the Nineveh Plains in north Iraq confirmed the news that Kurdish militias continue to terrorize the citizens in the areas, which are under their control. The two main Kurdish parties have offices in almost all villages and towns in the north of Iraq, and their members threaten, arrest people illegally, they also violate human rights and the laws of the land.

All this is going on under the watch and with full support from the Council of Nineveh province where most of the members are Kurds. These practices are used in order to gain further political power by the two Kurdish parties.

This was further confirmed today by both members of parliament Hunain al-Qaddo who accused the two Kurdish parties of distributing flyers threatening to kill him while Ezz el-din al-Dawla said that: " All areas in Kirkuk are under the control of the Kurdish militias and the citizens didn't have a say in that because they fear the brutality and retaliation of these militias".

News such as these do not find their way out of the areas which are under Kurdish control because people are fearful to speak up while the Kurdish propaganda machine supported by some people in the northern areas and some international bodies continue to spread false assurances about the safety level in the northern area of Iraq.

<http://www.assyrian4all.com/akhne/index.php?topic=9344.0>

April 2008

Nahla, Northern Iraq

Most recently, the Kurdish leadership and government have placed some very violent and hostile Kurds near the Assyrian Nahla region in northern Iraq. Furthermore, Kurdish officials in that region have been taking Assyrian lands and selling or renting them to Kurds without permission of or agreement from the Assyrian owners. When the Assyrians confronted the Kurds, they were threatened by pulling guns at them.

April 24, 2008

Dohuk

Sources from the Assyrian village of Shioz, situated between Nohadra (Dohuk) and Zakho in northern Iraq, reported that Kurdish security forces (Asayesh) assaulted several Assyrian young men, beat them up and prevented them from entering Shioz to participate in the commemoration of St. George's Feast, which is celebrated on April 24 every year. Asayesh assaulted and beat the Assyrian young men under the pretext that the young men were not with their families.

Furthermore, when the young men protested Asayesh's action, the Kurdish security forces assaulted the young men and beat them up again.

<http://www.assyrian4all.com/akhne/index.php?topic=9412.0>

April 26, 2008

Northern Iraq

Sources from Nineveh Governorate reported that units from the Kurdistan Democratic Party (KDP) imposed upon Assyrian (ChaldoAssyrian) towns and villages in Nineveh Plains (Telkaif District) and upon other Christian villages, including Wana. In an organized fashion, the KDP units imposed on the indigenous inhabitants and forced them to fill specially prepared forms by the KDP requesting from the authorities to join their towns and villages to the northern Iraq Kurdish region. The sources that asked to remain anonymous stated that members of the KDP including: Ali Mohammad Salih Garo, the mayor of Wana, Lieutenant Colonel Safar, In Charge of the safety of the dam in the region, Lieutenant Colonel Arshad, the Asayesh (Kurdish Security) officer in Wana and other village heads supported by the Zerevani (Kurdish forces that protect the roads) imposed on the indigenous inhabitants, forced them to fill the forms and sign them. These KDP members were using their power and authority in the region to execute the plan.

The inhabitants were compelled and forced to fill out the forms (that included the names of the entire family) and to sign them.

The sources emphasized that similar practices by the KDP took place in Batnaya, Telesqof, and Telkaif as identical forms were distributed.

The KDP actions came as a reaction to the recent meeting that took place between the Assistant to the Representative of the United Nation's Secretary General with Christian, Yezidi (Izidi), certain independent Arab tribe, and Shabak notables and some clergymen. Most of those notables and clergymen refused any plans to join northern Iraq Kurdish region.

Shaba Dinha of Batnaya stated that we were happy after the fall of the dictator; however, these practices are somber reminder. He added, we never thought that the Kurds that were victims of practices by bygone regime would reserve to the same practices. Dinha concluded: it is true that the victim often transmigrate the identity of the executioner.

http://nirgalgate.com/asp/v_news.asp?id=7253

Here is a translation of the KDP prepared form

To the Committee Implementing Article (140)

We the undersigned notables, clergymen, and mayors from the Christians (Chaldeans, Syriacs and Assyrians) in Telkaif District demand to join the Telkaif District to the region of Iraqi Kurdistan. However, we as Christians should have a "self-rule" within the region of Iraqi Kurdistan.

We ask all concerned extremities to implement article 140 of the Iraqi constitution and to respect the opinion and will of the people. We hope that the rebuilding of Iraq is based on principles of democracy and the respect of human rights. We implore and insist that our district be joined to Kurdistan region as this is the wish of the people of the area in order to protect our sacrosanct things, including churches, monasteries, worship places and clergymen, specially those who were forced to leave central and southern cities and central Mosul under pressure and oppression of terrorism and due to sectarian killing. Thus, we couldn't find a safer place where we could enjoy dignified living and security except in the shadows of the Iraqi Kurdistan regional government.

Hence, we hope that our just demand be answered and our decision honored, knowing that there are geographical, historical, economical and social ties that fasten us to the Iraqi Kurdistan region.

Issued: April 20, 2008

May 17, 2008

Mosul

During the time that Iraqi Prime Minister Nuri al-Maliki has been in Mosul overseeing the operations against terrorists in Nineveh Governorate, he was surprised to discover that secret kept investigations with three captures indicated that Khasro Goran, Deputy Governor of Nineveh Governorate and Head of Kurdistan Democratic Party (KDP) was connected with a special assassination and bombing network in Mosul. The investigations revealed as well that the head of Goran's office at one time Ahmad al-Jawwari was the link with that special assassination and bombing network. Al-Jawwari was arrested. The Prime Minister asked to see Goran immediately for questioning, but the KDP member declined and traveled to Arbil.

www.aljeeran.net/wesima_articles/reports-20080517-112846.html

<http://www.iraq-ina.com/showthis.php?type=1&tnid=28951>

Many believe that this network was behind the murder of Bishop Faraj Rahho in Mosul.

October 2008

Mosul

Earlier in October, the Governor of Nineveh excused the Mukhtar (Chief or mayor) of Karamlesh (Karamles) George Yacoub al-Kikhwa from his position. Three individuals from the Committee of Karamlesh's Notables presented a letter of complaint against the Chief to the District of Hamdaniyya (Karamlesh is part of the Hamdaniyya district) and the district without any investigation forwarded the complaint to the Nineveh Governorate. The three (3) are Rev. Yousif Shamon, George Mayya (Head of the Committee), and Dhiya' Khidir (In Charge of Christians Affairs in the region representing the office of Sargis Aghajan, Kurdish backed minister). When the governorate office was asked about the matter, the

governor explained that the Qaaim Maqam of the district originally made the suspension decision and that the governorate backs the decision of the local authorities in Hamdaniyya District when things are unclear to the governorate.

The people of Karamlesh did not approve because the chief did not commit anything in particular. A petition began to circulate in Karamlesh and 800 signatures were gathered in the first two (2) days in support of the suspended chief. The petition and the signatures were presented to the authorities. Then came the resignation of Mattay Ismael al-Kaddo, a member of the Committee of Karamlesh's Notables, due to the unfairness of the suspension. In his resignation letter he stated that we in the committee protested the action, but the head of the committee ignored us. He stated that the By-Laws of the Committee of Karamlesh's Notables state that in order to excuse the chief (mayor of Karamlesh) then more than half of the eleven (11) members of the committee must agree on the suspension. In this case, only the three (3) mentioned above have forced the issue.

It is worth mentioning that the Chief of Karamlesh George Yacoub al-Kikhwa is additionally In Charge of the Assyrian Democratic Movement (ADM) office in Karamlesh as well. Furthermore, the Kurdish militias and the two Kurdish parties of the KDP and PUK have great influence on policy making in Nineveh and control the council since 2005 when the majority Arab Sunni boycotted the elections.

<http://www.ankawa.com/forum/index.php/topic.231398.msg3408312.html#msg3408312>

October 25, 2008

Baghdad

Iraqi Parliament member Younadam Kanna held responsible an Iraqi battalion that is predominantly Kurdish of committing 95% of the crimes that were directed against the Christians in Mosul.

<http://www.asharqalawsat.com/details.asp?section=4&issueno=10924&article=492173&feature=>

Meanwhile, Parliament member Usama al-Nujaifi from the Iraqi Slate stated that Iraqi Prime Minister Nuri al-Maliki presented to him evidence for the involvement of Kurdish militias (Peshmerga) in the latest crimes, threats against and forced exodus of Christians in Mosul. He asked for the investigation file to be published.

<http://iraqalaan.com/bm/Security/9697.shtml>

December 24, 2008

Aqra, northern Iraq

The body of Marina Awimalek Aziz was found by an American diver in the Khazir River in the area of Nahla on December 24, 2008 after 11 days of her disappearance. Marina was 19 years old; she was born in the village of Hizana in Nahla but lived and went to school in a compound called Azadi in Aqra where her brother Robert lived. Strong evidence to her disappearance and murder point to her abductor, however, investigation is on going but no information was released.

It is reported that a Kurdish man was stalking Marina for sometime and that he is the one who abducted and killed her.

<http://www.assyrian4all.net/akhne/index.php/topic.12425.0.html>

<http://www.ankawa.com/forum/index.php/topic.252761.msg3543401.html#msg3543401>

December 25, 2008

Ankawa

Reports from new residents in Ankawa indicate that the Kurdish KDP authorities in Ankawa are preventing Assyrians from raising Assyrian flags over their own private homes. An Assyrian who has just moved to Ankawa few months ago and who opted not to make his name public fearing KDP reprisal decided to put one up over his house. The following week, KDP officials began first to harass his family and finally a KDP worker trespassed over his house, climbed all the way at the top, and brought the Assyrian flag down.

March 2009

From a report compiled by Iraqi Turkmen Human Rights Research Foundation

As it is well known that the Kurdish political parties which benefit from the unbalanced political, administrative and economical condition between the Kurds and other Iraqi communities in the north of Iraq has recruited several groups from different non-Kurdish communities in return for promotion and wealth.

The Chaldo-Assyrian regions suffered from the same two major obstacles, which inhibited thousands of the voters from casting their ballots. First, the absence of voter lists and second, the large distance between the voter houses and election centers in the presence of curfew for vehicles. Being the Chaldo-Assyrian regions in Nineveh plain dominated by Kurdish militant Peshmergas and security services, it is highly possible that these obstacles in front of the voters introduced deliberately. The displaced Assyrians are accounted by tens of thousands who suffered also like Turkmen of Telafer from not finding their names in the voter lists. According to the only international observer of UNPO, the families who fled Mosul in November 2008 are accounted to 3500 families. The Chaldo-Assyrian Council representative in Brussels, who believes that important election fraud, took place inside election centers.

In addition to the election frauds, the collaborator Chaldo-Assyrian groups appeared to violate the election processes in favor of the pro-Kurdish Assyrian list. This can be concluded from the events during campaigns, voting processes and in the results of the elections in different regions.

The Chaldo-Assyrian candidates and independent election observers enumerates the major election frauds in Nineveh Plain as follows (The report of al-Rafidain list which is signed by Sami Habib Astipho, the candidate of the list, Imad Behnam Robil, the co-coordinator of the list, Ninos Gorgis Odisho, the authorized staff of the list, presented to the IHEC on Feb 2, 2009):

1. The pro-Kurdish Chaldo-Assyrian Sarkis Aghajan, minister of finance in the Kurdish government, has about 2,600 militants in the Nineveh province who were paid by Aghajan. These militants played an important role in directing the Chaldo-Assyrian voters to cast for the Ishtar list by intimidation and promises of cash pay or jobs.
2. The Christian religious representative Luwis Kassap used the Churches in Qara Qosh [Baghdeda] to campaign for the pro-Kurdish list. During Sunday religious ceremonies he asked the congregation to vote for a pro-Kurdish Ishtar list saying that it was the list of the Churches. Furthermore, Kassap waged wide slander campaigns against the candidates of the Rafidain list.
3. Getting large sums of money from Kurdish parties, the pro-Kurdish religious groups organized large numbers of activities during the period of election campaigning.
4. To frighten the voters and the Chaldo-Assyrian parties, which were not working with the Kurdish parties, an attempt to kill the director of election campaigns of the Rafidain List was foiled. Others were exposed to physical assault.
5. Christian students were threatened that the bus service allocated to bring them to schools and universities would be stopped if they did not vote for a pro-Kurdish list.
6. During the curfew which was applied to the Nineveh Province, cars from the Churches and the pro-Kurdish Christian groups were used freely to transfer specific voters to and from the election centers particularly from the villages.
7. The families in the three hundred flats of the churches, which were built by the Kurdish Regional Governments funds, were threatened so that they would vote for pro-Kurdish Chaldo-Assyrian list.

Other reports stated that:

1. The voters were strongly pressed in the election centers to vote for pro-Kurdish Assyrian list.
2. Names were omitted from the voter lists in the election centers.
3. In many cases, it was founded that people were given cash money and asked to swear to vote for specific lists.
4. As in other areas, the high turnout in the Chaldo-Assyrian regions under Kurdish militia control, is most probably due to the filling of unused ballots by the staff of the election centers in favor of Kurdish or pro-Kurdish lists. The abnormally high votes for those lists sometimes reached to 90%, and appear to support this possibility.
5. In some centers in Dohuk, where large numbers of displaced Chaldo-Assyrian voted, the center's staffs were almost all Kurdish and claimed that the ballot papers ran out.
6. The pro-Kurdish Ishtar slate has been accused by Chaldo-Assyrian in the Nineveh province of using the threat of loss of aid and security to force Chaldo-Assyrian to vote for them.

August 25, 2009

Dohuk, Northern Iraq

During the last campaign in the Iraq Kurdistan Regional Government (KRG) elections it was confirmed that officials of the Kurdistan Democratic Party (KDP) were instructing the Kurdish population to vote for Slate 68, i.e., the Chaldean Assyrian Syriac People's Council (backed by KDP and Finance Minister Sargis Aghajan). Slate 68 contained candidates/members from the (KDP). The "Al-Rafidain List" reported this misconduct to the Iraqi High Electoral Commission and the United Nations so the quota system that was provided to the Iraqi minorities can preserve its purpose. The reporting of these misdeeds was not well received.

During Ashur Satellite TV media coverage, a supporter of the Rafidain slate and a member of the Assyrian Democratic Movement (ADM) Mr. Nimrod Sheba revealed the KRG elections violations and cited an example that included the KDP 8th branch director Mr. Mohamed Mihsin in Amadiyah city. Mr. Nimrod Sheba was arrested for 14 days on baseless charges of defamation. The judge refused Mr. Sheba's lawyer's request to release him on bail, despite the fact that Mr. Sheba did not commit a crime or even a misdemeanor.

Mr. Sheba was released on bail for one hour on August 20th, 2009, only to be arrested again by the KRG Amadiyah security services (Asayesh) on false charges linking him to an elections fraud article that was published in a Kurdish Newspaper (Hawlaty) and on the Internet. The article was published while Mr. Sheba was detained the 1st time. After his 2nd arrest, Mr. Sheba was transferred to the Asayesh central prison in Dohuk without bail. The current accusation is based on political charges and does not qualify him to be released on bond, which has caused him to miss the secondary school mid-term exams on August 23, 2009.

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