

# End the Intervention into the Assyrian National Scene by the Clergy and Kurdish Puppets

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On June 18, 2021, a few self-described Chaldean groups met in Ankawa, Arbil and issued a statement, which was posted on ankawa.com by the Chaldean National Congress (CNC). The participants "... affirmed the adherence to the (Chaldean) appellation independently as a national label and a historical identity for our people, without any embellishment, additions, or grouping with distorted compound names that have no connection to history...". They asked the CNC president, Janan Jabbar Husaini, to follow up on the implementation of the meeting's decisions on both the parliamentary and political levels. They recommended that the people in the Kurdish region in northern Iraq (KR) be listed in the regional constitution as such: "Kurds and Turkomans and Chaldeans and Assyrians and Suryan and Arabs and Armenians and others."<sup>1</sup>

The three main "Chaldean" groups in attendance were:

1. Chaldean Democratic Union Party. Established by Abd al-Ahad Afram Sawa, member of the Kurdistan Democratic Party (KDP) of the Barzani clan. He has held the position of member of the Iraqi Parliament while running on the Kurdish slates during past elections.
2. CNC. Established in 2003 in San Diego, USA by Dhia Putros and Ghassan Hanna after the US invasion of Iraq. Dhia Putros is supported by the Barzanis, who assigned him later to the position of president of the so-called Independent Human Rights group within the KR. The group is led today by Janan Jabbar Husaini, a member of parliament who won his seat through a slate that was supported by non-Assyrians.
3. The Chaldean League. Established in Arbil with the blessing of the Chaldean Catholic Church Patriarch Mar Sako and the support of the Barzani and the KRG. It is under the leadership of Safaa Sabah Hindi.

A few days later, on June 21, 2021, Patriarch Mar Sako sent an official letter #130 from the Church patriarchate to the president of the Kurdish Regional Parliament, Dr. Rewaz Faiq. In his letter, Mar Sako asked for the reference to the "Chaldeans" in the KR Constitution to be completely separate. He stressed that "Chaldean" is a unique ethnic component.

Patriarch Mar Sako wrote:

"We Chaldeans, our name is in all Iraqi official documents, and our name Chaldean is in all international and ecclesiastical forums. Our presence in the land of Bet Nahrain as Chaldeans is before Christianity. Thus, it is our natural right to be known by our name and not by a hybrid compounded name that has no meaning."

Mar Sako rejected the compounded compromising names like Assyrian Chaldean Suryan (without the "and"). He also rejected the three names with the "ands" but in parenthesis (Assyrians and Chaldeans

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<sup>1</sup> Statement by the Chaldean National Congress. Published in Ankawa.com  
<https://ankawa.com/forum/index.php/topic,1019478.0.html?PHPSESSID=c2ee0e6deebc77021069298acf23df3e>

and Suryan). He asked that the names of people listed in the constitution be as such: “Kurds and Turkomans and Chaldeans and Suryan and Assyrians and Armenians.”<sup>2</sup>

The question here is: why? On June 12, 2014, Mar Sako said, “the national unity is, primarily, the responsibility of seculars whereas the church unity is our responsibility. Eventually, the unity of our nation will come.”<sup>3</sup> In 2014, Mar Sako stated, “There is no Chaldean nation. We are a church, an apostolic church, a church that has a cause that is separate from the nation.”<sup>4</sup> On May 19, 2021 during a conference titled “The Kurdistan Region of Iraq: Unity and Constitution,” organized by the University of Kurdistan, Arbil’s Center for Regional and International Studies (UKH CRIS), Mar Sako requested the separation of Church and State because of the necessity of creating a civil society and secular constitution. He stressed that the intrusion of religion in politics distorts it. He continued to say that in a civil society there should not be a religious majority and minority. If that was the case, why does Mar Sako point to the fact that 75% of Christians in Iraq are Chaldean as a reason to give them the power to dictate policy?<sup>5 6</sup> Why do bishops preach love and harmony during their sermons or when they feel like it but then turn around and call for boycotts, hate, and division?

Mar Sako has taken this path since his visit to Chicago where he met the late Patriarch Mar Dinkha, which did not bring any real hope of cooperation between the two churches. In fact, the issue has been mishandled from the early 1990s during Mar Dinkha’s leadership and the church rapprochement and negotiations with the Roman Catholic Church. Throughout the various Iraqi Federal and Kurdish regional elections, these Chaldean groups have failed to win any seat in the two Iraqi federal and Kurdish regional parliaments. The seats that the Chaldean individuals and those loyal to the Mar Dinkha (Romeo Hakari, etc) have won were secured with the Kurdish or Shi’aa votes or by campaigning under Kurdish slates. What does it take for the churches to understand what the people want? Why are the churches supporting the oppressive KRG at the expense of the future of their people and nation?

It is mind boggling that the various congregations of our people continue to support their corresponding churches blindly at the expense of our presence as ethnic Assyrians in northern Iraq (Occupied Assyria). It is frustrating that we do not appreciate, value, and honor the great Assyrian nationalistic minds who carried the national thought before, during, and post WWI. Nationalists such as Prof. Ashur Yousuf, Dr. Fraidon Aturaya, Yusuf Malek, Naoum Faiq, Dr. David Perley, Farid Nozha, Benyamin Arsanis, and many others belonged to different Assyrian denominations, faiths, and schools of thought, but fought as one for the Assyrian cause. Our people are committing a suicidal endeavor by supporting religious figures who submit to the oppressive regime of the KRG – a true patriot does not choose faith over nation. Have we become sectarian fanatics? When will the people end this reckless and fatal behavior?

Assyrians as a whole must get involved on the national level. They must not allow the questionable few, including patriarchs, bishops, and Kurdish puppets to dictate the Assyrians’ future in Iraq. People must defend and support the genuine nationalists and back up the truth. The truth is only present in archaeological remains and historical records, as they do not lie. Our enemy, such as the Barzani and

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2 Mar Sako letter published in the official Chaldean church website.  
<https://saint-adday.com/?p=44102>

3 Mar Sako visits Mar Dinkha, Chaldean Patriarchate of Babylon, June 18, 2014, <https://saint-adday.com/?p=6084>.

4 Read Aprim, Frederick, “The Betrayal of the Powerless: Assyrians After the 2003 US Invasion of Iraq”. Xlibris, 2021.

5 Statement of Mar Sako in a meeting in Arbil. <https://www.facebook.com/RudawArabi/videos/771020477114114>

6 <https://www.ukh.edu.krd/newsdetail.php?n=427>

the KRG, recognized this detrimental aspect of our people that is dominated by the church and have taken advantage of it.

I have been asked by a friend not to write about A because he is a patriarch. Another asked me not to write about B because he is a bishop. A third asked me not to write about C because he is his cousin. A fourth asked me not to write about D because he is his friend. Yet another asked me not to write about E because he belonged to his tribe. We are where we are because most of us are phonies, dissemblers, hypocrites, gutless, and care more about ourselves and our own interests rather than the future of our nation. It is not the intention of this writer to dwell in a past which we cannot change; however, we have the power to create a future that is different than that of the painful and devastating past. We do that by learning from that past.

The clergy's place is in the church preaching and practicing love, forgiveness, purity, kindness, and unity. It is time for the Assyrian people of all denominations to end the church's pervasive influence in society that we inherited from the middle ages. The churches have shown repeatedly that they are the Assyrians' Achilles heel. The Assyrians must demand that political and national decisions affecting the community at large to go through an inclusive national process, trusted to elected secular groups and individuals. I ask our patriarchs and bishops: how do you face your God when you stand on the altar, open your Bible, preach to the congregation about love, unity, forgiveness, and humbleness, then turn around and promote hate, division, egoism, and falsehood. How do you do it? Didn't you learn anything wholesome from the Bible that you read? Do you need to be reminded that the days of the dark ages and the church supremacy over the people have been long gone? My purpose from my latest articles is not to insult or demonize anyone, but as someone who cares about this nation, I just cannot sit and watch silently while a few non-elected individuals act like they have the God-given right to do what they wish even when their actions have direct ramifications on millions of people. We continue to repeat the mistakes of the last 500 years over and again. What solutions are our churches offering the Assyrian people as a nation, as one whole entity? The churches have given us endless, fruitless, and harmful debates.

The Assyrian people adhere to many beliefs, church denominations, schools of thought, sects; therefore, a certain patriarch, bishop, or head of an organization cannot speak for them all. Many Assyrians are not religious; therefore, the clergy have no right to speak on their behalf. Furthermore, the clergy are not elected by the people, they are selected. It is expected of them to give guidance, council, or advice to individuals that seek them out, and not impose their personal political thoughts or agenda on the people. The unethical interference by the non-elected leaders of the Syriac-speaking churches and the never ending desecration and lesion is decaying the holy Assyrian tree of life. The Assyrians have gotten to a hypercritical junction where our most dangerous enemy, the KRG and the Kurdish political machine, is usurping more land by the day to a level where we soon will have no stronghold on our historic lands in the countryside. We will soon become a Christian minority living in the big Kurdish controlled cities that were Assyrian at one time. The Assyrians must change the path of our history right here, right now, or it will be too late. It is time for the Assyrian people to get out from this pathetic state of apathy, carelessness, and irresponsibility. How did we become so desensitized towards all the tragedies and genocide that have been committed against our nation during our lifetime? The Assyrian people must transform from this state of national unconsciousness to that of Assyrian consciousness and prove that we are worthy to be called the descendants of the mighty ancient Assyrians.