

AssyriaSat: The Hope That Was

By Fred Aprim
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AssyriaSat had the opportunity to be instrumental in bringing the Assyrian question to the outside world. It had the opportunity to present to its audience the Assyrian sufferings in the Middle East through meaningful programming by notables, historians, politicians, and scholars. AssyriaSat had the opportunity to be the voice and the beautiful picture of the Assyrians to the outside world. Unfortunately, AssyriaSat have opted to become a cheap one-sided view and gossip station. Instead of concentrating on educating the non-Assyrians about the Assyrian predicament in the Middle East in general and Iraq in particular, AssyriaSat has wasted valuable time in the last three crucial years on gossip, undermining Assyrian leadership in Iraq because of personal vendetta, increasing division in Assyrian society, and thus weakening the Assyrians' position overall against their adversaries.

AssyriaSat's lies have continued for years. Recently, it went on a barrage of accusations against the only Assyrian representative in Iraqi National Assembly (parliament) who was elected by our own people through the independent Rafidayn Slate (#740). It made statements that Mr. Yonadam Kanna, the Secretary General of the Assyrian Democratic Movement, was a Ba'athist and that he was going to be apprehended upon his arrival in Washington and other very foolish and ill hearted statements. Mr. Kanna has been in the United States for about a week and have met with top American officials and is touring the United States to meet with our people in the Stanislaus County (Modesto/Turlock/Ceres/Manteca), Northern California (San Jose and San Francisco), Southern California (Los Angeles and San Diego), Arizona, Detroit, and Chicago to thank them for their support and other issues. What do Assyrians gain from such false accusations by AssyriaSat? Better yet, who gains from spreading such false accusations? Who else but our enemies!

Slate # 740 of the Assyrian Democratic Movement (ZOWAA) and ChaldoAssyrian Syriac National Council led by Mr. Kanna gained almost 48,000 total votes, which represents 83% of our people's total vote, despite the vote rigging process in Iraq. Meanwhile Nahrain Watani (#752) gained about 9,000 votes, for an under 14%, and the slate that AssyriaSat and Bet Nahrain lobbied and campaigned for (#800) gained less than 2,000 votes, representing about 3% of our people's votes worldwide. What does it take for AssyriaSat to understand what our people really want and whom they support?

AssyriaSat and Bet Nahrain must stop using the methods of bygone oppressive regimes of the Middle East; they must get rid of this unhealthy and negative mentality that is designed to weaken our people further by implanting doubts and suspicions in the minds of the simple in our nation. I need to remind AssyriaSat that there is always daylight after darkness. I wonder, how do AssyriaSat viewers perceive the station and its management when these foolish and false accusations are clearly proven to be false? How can the viewers trust what AssyriaSat declares after these accusations are proven time and again to be untruthful?

Some individuals on Internet forums wonder who supports AssyriaSat and keep it on the air. As an affiliate of Bet Nahrain Inc., AssyriaSat continues to broadcast due to perhaps financing from sources such as the bingo operations that take place at the Assyrian Cultural Center of Be-Nahrain hall in Ceres. The bingo profits are not necessarily from Assyrians but common non-Assyrians in the neighborhood of the club. Unless the city of Ceres (near Modesto) or the County of Stanislaus somehow bans gambling and bingo gaming in the county, monies for AssyriaSat will continue to support it. Another option is to open another club nearby Bet Nahrain building in Ceres and compete with it and attract its customers through a better bingo games and more prizes.

I am not advocating that everything that the ADM or Mr. Yonadam Kanna do are the right thing; they have made mistakes. Making mistakes is a natural process when someone does work; no one is perfect. The important thing is, do we learn from our mistakes? Obviously, those who do not work would not make mistakes. No person in his/her right state of mind would accept AssyriaSat's foolish, cheap, and continuous uncalled for accusations against fellow Assyrians in Iraq (mainly ADM leadership) who are in the line of death every moment. I believe that the educated Assyrians who do contribute to AssyriaSat (in general an annual \$120) should reconsider their contributions because if we really investigate the whole picture, we

would reach the conclusion that no decent Assyrian must accept these non-patriotic acts by AssyriaSat. What AssyriaSat does is not criticism but malice attempts to undermine the authority of the ADM in Iraq, which won in a landslide in two elections. In my opinion, the acts of AssyriaSat are unhealthy for our people and they must reconsider what they are doing. As we have stated repeated, patriotism is not to sit idle, attack those who make mistakes, introduce DJs and play videos. Patriotism is that when we, day after day and month after month, see something that we disagree with, we present a solution or an alternative through our own institution or organization, irrespective to what another does. By our own actions, plans, and executions, we prove to the people our worthiness. The more we attack fellow Assyrians without justification and without presenting serious and practical alternatives, the more the people get sicker of us and that is what is happening to AssyriaSat audience.

Recent poll indicated that AssyriaSat is already losing its audience to Ishtar TV. Many AssyriaSat viewers have been watching Ashur TV lately and after weighting what they witness on Ashur TV and AssyriaSat, they understand why AssyriaSat is being labeled "Charkhana d' Dojleh". Despite of its few volunteers, fact remains that AssyriaSat is a one-man enterprise that lacks the solid foundation, whether with its equipment or personnel. Unfortunately, many enterprises and projects that were run around one man, regardless to how dedicated that man was, are destined to collapse sooner or later; it is only a matter of time. The examples are plentiful in our society. How many groups and publications disappeared after the passing away of their founders? It is unfortunate that AssyriaSat has alienated itself from most of the community because of its unsound policies.

AssyriaSat must be an instrument of education and not a tool of attacking fellow Assyrians due to unsubstantiated rumors, false reporting, or personal grudges. Assyrians cannot afford that.