

The Planned Extermination of the Assyrian People and Culture

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As early as 2012, the Obama administration was discussing how to [assist Salafi Islamic groups](#) to establish themselves in north and eastern Syria in an attempt to isolate and topple Syrian President Bashar al-Assad. (1) Out of the several Islamic groups fighting the Syrian Government forces, the [Jihadists](#) of the Islamic State of Iraq and Syria ISIS (ISIL) emerged as one of the dominant forces in the region. From Syria, ISIS began to cross the borders into northern Iraq.

Only two weeks before the assault of ISIS on the northern Governorate of Mosul, the indigenous Assyrians of the Nineveh Plains and the Yezidis of Sinjar were disarmed by the Kurdish armed forces (Peshmerga) and by Kurdish security forces (Asayesh). The two indigenous communities argued with the Kurdish authorities that they needed their weapons to defend themselves in case of any attacks, considering the unstable and dangerous situation in the region. The Kurdish authorities assured the Assyrian and Yezidi leaders that the Peshmerga would protect them. (2) (3) That assurance was a lie.

The 2003 Gulf War handed the Kurds additional powers in northern Iraq in addition to what they had gained from the 1991 Gulf War. With the blessings of the US and the support of Israel, the Kurdistan Regional Government (KRG), which was created in 1992 post 1991 Gulf War, had carefully planned to extend its region. As more Kurds entered Iraq from neighboring Iran and Turkey, Kurds seized more lands. Kurdish apologists, paid historians and writers flooded the Internet with new arguments of what became known as the disputed territories and claims of ownership of those new regions. This became a wider political agenda. The Barazani Kurdish regime continued its illegal activities for the purpose and goal of absorbing more lands, including the strategic Nineveh Plains to extend the Kurdish borders further west to the Tigris River on the southern frontiers of the existing KRG region.

In June 2014, ISIS swept through Mosul and later the Nineveh Plains without any noticeable resistance and for the next three years, Mosul, Sinjar, Nineveh Plains and other regions previously under Iraqi control lived under strict Islamic rules as ISIS imposed the Islamic Law on the population. Many Assyrians and Yezidis were murdered, women taken hostages as sex slaves and places of worship were bombed and damaged. The Assyrian towns of the Nineveh Plains were destroyed and homes were plundered and robbed of everything. (4) (5)

The disintegration of Syria and Iraq into regions, based on ethnic or religious criteria, must be, in the long term, a primary goal for Israel, the first step being the destruction of the military power of these states.

— The World Zionist Organization,
circa 1970-1980.
[Israel: The Middle East Plan](#)

With the assault of ISIS, the world foresaw a tragedy in the making. With pressure from many human rights groups, NGOs and Diaspora Assyrians, certain US officials did warn that the situation for Iraq's lesser ethnic and religious groups threatened to become a "humanitarian catastrophe". The White House spokesman Josh Earnest stated: "We are gravely concerned for their health and safety," (6) but that concern did not turn into an immediate action to stop the genocide that was taking place. This is normal in the American foreign policy as lip service is all Washington serves when it has no benefit to gain in a specific situation, regardless how tragic. With the approach of ISIS to Mosul and later Nineveh Plains, the Kurdish peshmerga and Iraqi forces under the influence of Kurdish leadership withdrew completely without a fight leaving the armless Assyrian and Yezidi communities at the mercy of ISIS. (7)

The Assyrians' Khabor region in northeastern Syria has been subjected under Kurdish expansion for the last few decades. Assyrian observers have since issued reports that the Kurds who were constantly infiltrating the Assyrian towns had initiated several attacks from inside the Assyrian towns against ISIS that were camping near the mountains overseeing the Khabor region. Those attacks gave ISIS the excuse to invade the 35 Assyrian towns and villages despite the fact that the Assyrians were paying the Jizya (Poll Tax) to the Islamists, as dictated under Islamic Laws and as agreed upon between the leaders of the two sides earlier. On Feb 23, 2015, over 25,000 Assyrians fled their homes as ISIS initiated their assault on the Khabor villages. Meanwhile another catastrophic cultural and humanitarian crisis were shaping in the ancient Assyrian town of Aleppo in northern Syria as the fights between the US supported Islamists and other rebels against the Syrian government forces continued. (8) Almost all the [Christian](#) population vacated the city.

President Obama's main and perhaps only action throughout the horrible genocide was his commitment during a speech on August 07, 2014, where he stated, quote: "To stop the advance on Erbil, I've directed our military to take targeted strikes against ISIL terrorist convoys should they move toward the city," end quote. Meaning, the US was to start military strikes should ISIS strictly move towards Arbil. So, since ISIS did not threaten the Kurdish or American interests and installations in Arbil, Obama's only actions were to rescue trapped Yezidi refugees in the mountains and provide humanitarian aid, but would not protect or defend the [Christian](#) and Yezidis towns and villages. (9)

The fact is that ISIS had no interest or plans to invade the Kurdish region in Iraq. ISIS and the Kurdish peshmerga came many times very close to each other, but no clashes took place with the exception of few skirmishes the Kurds staged on Assyrian archaeological sites with perhaps an intent to make those sites targets. (10) Furthermore, one should consider the business dealings many Kurdish notables and relatives to Barzani and Talabani were making with ISIS. (11)

Assyrian officials had requested repeatedly from the American Embassy in Iraq to establish an Assyrian force similar to those of the Kurds, Sunni and Shi'aa in order to protect themselves and fight back. (12) After a long wait and many delays, the Nineveh Plains Protection Unit, or NPU, was created with the support of the Iraqi Government. Beginning in December 2016, thousands of Iraqi troops backed by a US -led coalition and accompanied by the NPU launched a massive operation to take back Iraqi territories from ISIS. After months of brutal clashes, government forces managed to drive ISIS militants out from Mosul, Nebi Younis in Nineveh and from Nineveh Plains. Nebi Younis shrine contains the tomb of Jonah, as known in the Bible, or Yunus in the Koran. The shrine sits on top of a mound in eastern Mosul - one of two mounds that form part of

the ancient Assyrian capital city of Nineveh. The shrine was blown up by ISIS soon after they seized Mosul in 2014. They destroyed it to get access to the undiscovered Assyrian palace underneath it. ISIS dug deep tunnels in the mound in their attempt to reach the undiscovered palace. It is worth mentioning that there have been very limited excavations previously during the Ottoman Empire rule and later by the Iraqi government in the 1990s. (13) Any wide spread excavations that could jeopardize the integrity of the mosque were prohibited under Islamic rule.

The destruction of the Assyrian palace and Nebi Younis mosque had three reasons: First, ISIS (and the international cartel behind them) were hoping to find priceless treasures in this palace similar to the 65 kilograms of gold that was found in Nimrud years back. Second, Islamists believe that nothing pre-Islam should stand. Third, increase the divide and hatred between the various Islamic sects, pin the Sunnis against the Shi'aas and deepen the political and civic unrest in the country. The destruction of Assyrian artifacts, monuments and palaces is also a goal of the chauvinistic Kurdish. The Kurdish leadership goal has been to deface the rooted Assyrian history of northern Iraq. The deliberate destruction of the Assyrian remains in historic Khenis by Kurds is a living example of how the Kurdish authorities have turned a blind eye to such orchestrated policy since 1992. (14) The Assyrian historic sites are an Assyrian thorn in the Kurdish flesh, which they could not escape. These sites defy the Kurdish empty historic claims to northern Iraq. The Kurdish leadership understands well that there is nothing that is historically or archaeologically coined Kurdish in the region. Therefore, they must destroy the Assyrian monuments, palaces, gates, walls, Lamassus in order to change the obvious Assyrian heritage of the cities in the region. While most of ISIS jihadists are challenged educationally, one must wonder how long bearded illiterate animals who want to apply the Islamic Laws of the 7th Century in the 21st Century would plan to use sophisticated machinery to dig those precise tunnels underground. ISIS was nothing but a tool in the hands of more powerful Kurdish chauvinist and Zionist organizations. The readers should consider the 70 years of the Israeli and Kurdish groups cooperation in northern Iraq that existed since Mulla Mustafa Barzani initiated the Kurdish revolt in the early 1960s. This was in-line with the vision of the Zionists to destroy Iraq by breaking it down to smaller states based on ethnic and religious criteria. (15) The Zionists' leaders have argued for a long time that breaking down Iraq and Syria is the corner stone for the security of Israel.

An Iraqi team that included archaeologist Layla Salih began documenting the damage at the Nebi Younis shrine, they reported that ISIS had dug tunnels deep under the holy site that led to an untouched Assyrian palace laying under the shrine. The palace was originally built for King Sennacherib (705-681 B.C.), renovated and expanded by his son, Esarhaddon (681-669 B.C.) and later by grandson, Ashurbanipal (669-627 B.C.). (16)

During ISIS control of the region, the most heartbreaking pictures broadcasted were those of the ancient Assyrian capital of Nimrud being ransacked and bulldozed and the Lamassu or the Assyrian Winged Bulls were turned into dust. (17) Other archaeological sites were destroyed. The Nergal and Adad gates in the Northern Wall of ancient Assyrian capital of Nineveh, the Eastern Wall Gate and one of the two Western Wall gate were completely razed to the ground. Only the gate of Shamash of the Western Wall survived.

In Nov 2017, ANB Sat conducted an interview with the Head of Gilgamesh antiquity section for preserving antiquity and culture Faisal Jeber. Geologist Jeber stated that there are no immediate plans regarding the Nabi Younis shrine and Esarhaddon Palace that were greatly damaged by ISIS.

However, he mentioned that there is a vision to have the four staircases of the Nabi Younis mount to form a new Zaqoor, have the palace of Assyrian King palace to make the four faces of this Zaqoor and the rebuild Nabi Younis shrine facade on top. Jeber has already made this statement with Reuters. (18) Since the fall of ISIS, billboards have gone up on a main road in Mosul hailing the city as the cradle of civilization and showing its landmarks of antiquity, including Assyrian. This is a unique moment to rebuild Mosul's multicultural identity and combat radical Islam. Furthermore, Maysoon al-Damloji head of culture and Information in the Iraqi Parliament visited Nabi Younis and the palace of King Assarhadon to give a report to parliament on the condition of the site and the possibilities of rebuilding it. (19)

The Assyrian people as indigenous people protected by various UN charters continue to face persecution and efforts to exterminate them or force them to flee and vacate their historic lands. What many Assyrian analysts fear of happening did happen. After Kurds began to fill the vacuum left by ISIS in the Nineveh Plains, the Peshmerga and Asayesh began to occupy those regions. That followed by orders to replace the Assyrian mayors of Alqosh and Telkaif with members of the KDP. Only the perseverance and courage of the Assyrians, several demonstrations, appeals to the Iraqi high court and the advances of the Iraqi Army, few of the Kurdish leadership actions were overturned. (20) (21) Assyrians expect that the democratic world would lend the Assyrians the hand to protect themselves and get the chance to live in peace and prosperity on their ancestral lands in Iraq and Syria. (22) However, these same powerful, democratic and civil governments support the oppressive governments that persecute the Assyrian people. Consider the fact that Washington supports the KRG that is imposing a well visible soft ethnic and cultural genocide against the Assyrians and Yezidis since 1992. Consider the fact that Washington under the Obama administration literally created ISIS. (23) The fact is that the US satellite system could easily detect and monitor the movement of any heavy equipment or armed vehicles anywhere in the world. Yet, Washington opted not to stop ISIS's armed vehicles that were roaming the highway between Raqqa in Syria and Mosul in Iraq. Washington also allowed the genocide against the Assyrian [Christians](#) and Yezidis to continue for three long years. Furthermore, when ISIS end was nearing in their declared capital of Raqqa, the US made a deal to have the Islamists leave safely from the city. (24)

With financing from Qatar, UAE and Saudi Arabia, logistic assistance and open borders from Turkey and blessings from Washington, the West was adamant to destroy Syria. Turkey initially allowed ISIS fighters to pass through its territories from the former Soviet Union southern Islamic Republics and from Europe to Syria. (25) The creation of the two new states of the Caliphate and Kurdistan to stretch from northern Iraq to the Mediterranean was well under way. The indigenous Assyrians, Yezidis and the other lesser ethnic and religious groups were to be considered as the casualties of the new Islamic terror. Despite the success of Assyrian groups and few friendly institutions to encourage some Western government to apply the term genocide to what befell the Assyrians and Yezidis, the declarations resulted in nothing tangible to save the indigenous people of Iraq and Syria. Some analysts argue that the July 15, 2016 coup d'état in Turkey awakened Turkish President Erdogan to the danger ahead. It was here that Turkey ended its support of ISIS and the relations with Russia improved despite the Turkish downing of the Russian jet over Syria on November 24, 2015 that caused serious rift between the two countries. (26) With the isolation of ISIS from the north by Turkey, the end of the Islamic group was only a matter of time.

While Iraqis in general suffered great atrocities that was coined as Genocide by many foreign governments, the Canadian liberal government had the audacity to plan to accept ISIS terrorists back into the country. The government of Justin Trudeau proposed the creation of a “reintegration program” and proposed to provide support services for the returnees (27). Adding insult to injury, Mr. Trudeau? The question to ask here is, would Trudeau dare to propose such act for those who committed genocide against the Jews during World War II? Of course not. When a group is weak and has no power to defend it, it is easily overlooked and neglected unless the super powers have defined interest in protecting it. Unlike Trudeau, US President Trump has blocked efforts by those Americans who traveled to Syria and Iraq and joined ISIS from returning to the US.

Being unique and different ethnically and religiously puts the Assyrians in a very unfortunate and dangerous front – they have no real friends. The West will not help the Assyrians despite the calls of some human rights groups and advocates to protect them. The Kurds have proven to be the biggest enemy despite the media lies and misrepresentation of the facts. (28) The Kurds needed to show that they protect the [Christians](#) and they have their agents in the West to ensure that such narrative is widely published to improve the Kurdish reputation and gain sympathy. However, ethnically, the Assyrians are living a never-ending genocide. The establishment of the NPU is a good start. Assyrians must rely on themselves for protection. The efforts to establish the Nineveh Plains governorate run by Assyrians, Yezidis and the other lesser oppressed groups is another step in the right direction. These measures are possible to accomplish because they are supported by the Iraqi Constitution. Assyrians must support these positive steps. Running after dreams that are not achievable while being forced to flee every two decades because of never ending wars will result ultimately to the end of the Assyrian presence in the region.

As Assyrian activist Michael Youash stated in his presentation during the Assyrian National Convention in September 2017, the [Assyrians](#) have been relying on the West for some 100 years to provide something for them. Such has not happened despite many petitions. Lip service is all the Assyrians have received from the US and Europe. It is time that the Assyrians rely on themselves, take those first steps in the direction of self-reliance and then work with the friendly governments to provide the necessary steps to ensure [self governing](#), peace and security for themselves.



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