

Consciously or Otherwise, the West Pushed Assyrians to Leave Their Ancestral Lands

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Some argue that despite the fact that Assyrians are the indigenous people of northern Mesopotamia (northern Iraq, northeast Syria and southeast Turkey) their population is very small, thus that indigenous status is insignificant. This is one main reason why, again they argue, the world powers chose not to help Assyrians rather the Kurds. They stress the issue is population and that the Kurds have the overwhelming majority in that region. This narrative has been around for a while. In the early days of the formation of the Kurdish self-rule region in northern Iraq, former Iraqi President Jalal Talabani, a Kurd, said it loud when he declared, “*You Assyrians have the history underground, but we Kurds today have the majority above the ground*”. It is hardly surprising that Talabani failed to explain that the rights of indigenous people is not contingent upon population count.

It is interesting that Kurdish nationalists or western academics who are sympathetic to the Kurdish national agenda spread a narrative similar to that of the late Talabani. This narrative unofficially exemplifies the policies of the West, led by the US, towards Iraq, Kurds and the indigenous Assyrians.

One should scrutinize the policies of the United States, Canada, Australia, and New Zealand regarding the Native Americans, First Nations, Australian Aboriginals and the Māoris, the original people of those four countries respectively. It is not strange that only those four countries [voted against](#) the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples ([UNDRIP](#)) that was adopted by the UN General Assembly on September 13, 2007. These countries always supported and empowered the Kurds in one way or another, publicly or privately, at the expense of the indigenous Assyrians. Statements of support for the rights of the Assyrians by certain politicians in these countries have been made; however, little has been achieved on the ground to sustain the UN declared rights.

Some analysts argue that the US military intervention in Iraq since 1991 was driven by pursuit of primacy, preserve and extend US hegemony and ensure Israel security. However, intertwined in that policy is to establish in time an independent Kurdish state which along with Israel will facilitate deeper US policies in the Middle East. This policy has become more apparent in recent years since the United States’ traditional ally Türkiye, under Recep Tayyip Erdogan, has slowly [turned from a strategic partner to a liability](#). These observers argue that the US is considering second thoughts regarding a continuous long term alliance with Türkiye and could seek new alliances in the region as the [Turkish president seems to be betraying the western interests](#).

However, the US does not need to complicate that Middle East policy with the presence of any human rights issues concerning lesser indigenous groups, specially Christian. Thus the West has been dealing with the Assyrians through two contrasting policies:

a) As Christians, the West has ensured that the Kurdish authorities in northern Iraq handled the Christians fairly since the 1992 creation of the no-fly safe zones in order to neutralize the voices of the powerful Christian lobbies in the US and Europe. Here, the Kurdistan Regional Government (KRG) allocated the Christians 5 seats in the Kurdish regional parliament, allowed International Christian groups to have presence in the region, built churches and empowered the religious leaders. The clergy became the [strongest supporters of the Kurdish leaders and region](#), which included as well the [positive remarks from Pope Francis](#) as he visited northern Iraq. When Chaldean Catholic Church [Patriarch](#)

[faced standoff with Babylioon Brigade](#), Barzani quickly took advantage and welcomed the patriarch's move to Arbil. Also, the KRG inaugurated a grand patriarchal compound in Arbil for the patriarch of the Assyrian Church of the East. These steps cemented the [propaganda that the KRG treats the Christians well](#).

b) However, as ethnic people, the US and certain countries under the British Commonwealth, have played a crucial reason for driving the indigenous Assyrians out from their homeland. These countries were principle participants in wars on Iraq that were [based on false pretexts](#). Furthermore, the support of those countries (and others) for the Kurds, [turning a blind eye](#) to the [non-democratic Kurdish policies](#) against non-Kurds and the Kurdish oppression and [persecution of the indigenous Assyrians](#) led historically to the persistent expansion of the Kurdish regions in Iraq, Syria, Iran and Turkey at the expense of historic lands and villages of the indigenous Assyrian.

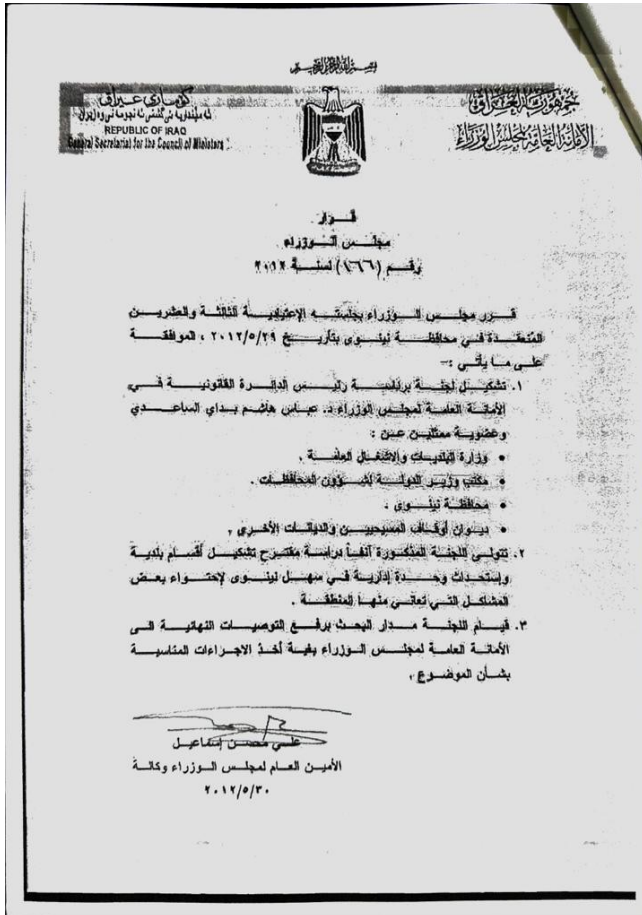
Meanwhile, the continuous decline of the population of the indigenous Assyrians versus the Kurdish population, stressed by the late Talabani, is a direct result of devastating Kurdish policies that continue even today in Iraq, Syria and Turkey. The decline is due to the instability created by the West in Iraq and Syria (and in Turkey due to PKK armed rebellion), lack of decent living opportunities which exists due to KRG's unfair employment policies, the [persecution of Assyrians](#) in Iraq in general and in the Kurdish region in particular and the KRG's plans of [undermining the Assyrian people](#) rights as a unique ethnic group and attempting to erase their history. The KRG has officially or not, directly or indirectly, encouraged the [persecution of the indigenous people or killing members of the community](#) by [not bringing any criminal to justice](#). The empowered KRG in Iraq and Kurdish authorities of the [YPG/PYD in northeast Syria fail to execute the rule of law](#) as they turn a deaf ear to fellow [Kurds' use of intimidation](#) to achieve what they want, [encroach on Assyrian lands](#), and [steal those lands](#). In addition, the KRG had facilitated the entrance of Kurds from neighboring countries and [offered these Kurdish newcomers much needed space](#) and environment to settle on Assyrian lands. Lastly, but not least, [the criminal role of the peshmerga in the Nineveh Plain](#) and the [2014 genocide of the Yezidis and Assyrians](#), induced further decrease of the Assyrian population.

The establishment of the [illusive Kurdistan](#) is a long-term plan pending ideal geopolitical conditions in the region, because Turkey, Iran and many in the Arab World [have shown either objection or great concerns](#) over such plan. Many Assyrian observers believe that one main objective of the West is to unofficially encourage the exodus of Assyrians, because with the indigenous Assyrians out, the Kurds will have easier argument to justify their creation of [Kurdistan over historic Assyria](#) despite the fact that the [Kurds are neither natives to Iraq nor to Syria](#).

The facts are that the US-led coalition bombed and invaded Iraq, later allowed ISIS to invade large parts of the country and destroy Mosul, Nineveh Plain and Sinjar where the indigenous Assyrians and Yezidis existed since time immemorial, but at the same time, President Obama [warned ISIS from entering the Kurdish region](#). This double standard is typical in the behavior and reaction of most of the western politicians who unfortunately prove that Machiavelli was right when he stated that political considerations appear to have a normative weight that overrides otherwise prevailing ethical obligations.

Why do you think that the [KRG has delayed or objected to the creation of the Nineveh Plain governorate](#) that was approved in principle in 2012 by the Iraqi council of ministers and initial steps were already taken into that direction? The efforts and communications continued into 2014, but halted with the invasion of ISIS.

Why do you think that the KRG has delayed any real plans to rebuild the Nineveh Plain [despite repeated claims by many within Iraq and the West](#) that the official large scale reconstruction will start? The reconstruction is dismal.



2012 and 2014 communications of the Iraqi council of ministers in regards to the creation of the new administrative units and three new governorates, including the governorate of Nineveh Plain.

Why do you think the US and the coalition countries protected the Kurds and the Kurdish region from ISIS (Obama’s Red Line), but allowed the destruction of Assyrian archaeological sites in Nineveh province, allowed the destruction of the Nineveh Plain Assyrian towns, allowed the destruction of the Assyrian quarters in Mosul, allowed the invasion of the Assyrian Khabor villages and the strong Assyrian quarters in Aleppo, but opened their doors quickly to thousands of Assyrians to settle in those four countries?

The KRG does not want the Assyrians and Yezidis to return to a reconstructed Nineveh Plain or Sinjar. The longer the towns are left destroyed, the larger are the chances that the displaced will lose hope and the lesser the probabilities that its original inhabitants would return. ISIS was created to destroy the Assyrian and Yezidi towns and villages so that [deserted regions would be easy for the Kurds to incorporate within the Kurdish region](#). Meanwhile, the West, including those four countries we mentioned earlier, have continued to open their arms, look virtuous and accept the Assyrians as refugees.

Points to ponder.