

What do the Assyrian people want?

Dr. George Habash

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1-Parliament in exile

The Assyrians are people and nation. These people and nation are not represented because they are stateless. A few millions population, one section still living in their land of birth-Northern Mesopotamia and with a considerable large section in exile. In their land, the land of their ancestors, there are at least **TEN** states recognised as UN members. But the Indigenous Assyrian people were neither given a nation status nor allowed power sharing within the current existing states.

There are many young Assyrian political parties and organisations, but these are either regionally confined, denominationally limited or just barely leaderships without Assyrian grassroots support. The existing political groupings, despite being partially supported or not supported at all by the Assyrians, compete with each others to lead the destiny of the nation without a proper programme that envisages the salvation of the Assyrian people. The majority of the Assyrian masses have no representation to speak on their behalf. Therefore, a call for the formation of a Parliament in exile is urgently needed.

The elected and representative body in the form of Parliament will be mandated by the Assyrian people according to a framework that will be defined:

- a. The Parliament will be the highest legitimate authority and power to speak for the Assyrian Nation and take actions in all levels internal, regional and international.
- b. Membership defined and proportionally represented both among individuals and organisations and political parties.
- c. The Parliament will represent all Assyrian people worldwide. Sections will be established within to deal with regional matters.
- d. The Parliament be based either in the US, being the main power or in any neutral western country such as Switzerland for example.

2-Autonomous region in Northern Mesopotamia

Our homeland is currently divided roughly into Northeast, regionally administrated by the Kurds, and Northwest still governed by the Arabs of the central government.

The Assyrians are people and nation but deprived of nationhood due to the betrayal of the former colonial power(s). Probably we are the only old people worldwide left without a single state.

We as individuals, organisations or political movements must declare unequivocally in our demands and our manifestos that the minimum we demand is an autonomous region that will be demarcated between the Kurds to the east and Arabs to the south. The autonomous region we demand be based in the land known as 'Mosul Province' defined prior to the creation of Dohuk and Aqra Provinces. This requires through negotiations, the demarcation of

boundaries along areas of Zakho, Dohuk, Aqra, Erbil, Hatra and Assur.

We as people will not live as slaves in our homeland and we as a nation will not live in exile forever. We demand our full rights to administer our own affairs, in a status similar to what will be granted to the Kurds. This autonomous region will naturally have other ethnic groups but the administration will be run by the Assyrians. All other ethnic groups will be democratically represented. Assyrians living in the southern parts and those around the world will return to their lands and once again they will become the major ethnic group.

This is our natural right to live free and secure a future and freedom for our coming generations. We all, Assyrian and non-Assyrian, will cohabit to live in peace and prosperity.

Our regional autonomous rights will grant:

- a. Autonomous region with executive and legislative bodies.
- b. Large Assyrian national police force.
- c. Assyrian language made official.
- d. Assyrian education and Assyrian university.
- e. Assyrian and Christian culture.
- f. Assyrian media control.
- g. Assyrianisation of the region by constructing new towns and villages to house those who return.

3-Action not inaction

The Assyrians are people and nation, and are the most united people on earth. Deprived of power for nearly 2500 years, this resilient nation lived and live in hope despite the buffeted blows of suffering, persecution and genocides intended to wipe them out from the face of the earth. Being out of power and suppressed made us unite and although exploited and manoeuvred the denominational sectarianism did not tear us apart. The nation persevered with strength and pride. Major nations, minor nations and peoples however civilised fought wars, civil wars, upheavals, revolutions and rebellions, but the unity of the Assyrians was formidable and has become a great asset that we all boast about.

There is no nation or people that is more united than us, because we share a common triumphant history, common language, unique holy faith and a common life of persecution. Although our ancestors were judged by the old covenant, the people of the new covenant are alive through faith in the Lordship of Christ and therefore united.

The outlined points of actions:

- a. The majority of our people are unaffiliated to any political front or movement, therefore they must come under an able and effective leadership. Our people should be made organised before they run out of steam.
- b. Our people in the homeland are oppressed, but when the time of liberation comes, we must be prepared and ready to quench their thirst for the cause of national liberation. Those who were lured under the past false slogans will realise that the world has changed and these slogans will no longer fit the Assyrian modality.
- c. Anyone who is indifferent to the Assyrian national cause is obliged to join the Assyrian ranks by affiliation and positive contribution otherwise does not serve it.

- d. We all should contribute from now to the welfare of the Assyrian nation according to the ability, and the wealth of affluent people should be used in promoting the building of the fledgling nation.
- e. Encourage our people at home to stay, they are the foundations of our existence as a nation.
- f. Encourage our people in exile to be ready to return, they are the treasured pillars for the new nation.

4-One identity-Assyrian

The aim of the Assyrian people must be based on the principle of reclamation of the Assyrian land as our homeland. Therefore, for this aim we all share one national identity. Our ancestors ruled over our land, and governed a nation called the Assyrian Nation and people called the Assyrian people. After 25 centuries without a kingdom, and without a unified authority it is natural consequence that, the once, one people, are presently classified by their ecclesiastical denominations. This classification is void and valid at the same time. We must reject and accept it at the same time.

We reject it because it is not our own invention. It was the byproduct of the alien invasions and their rule, Persian, Islamic and Ottoman. We accept it because it exists. The Assyrian land is the land of all who belonged to the old Assyrian people whatever they are currently classified, Assyrian, Chaldean or Syriac. You may theorise, these classifications, as national, denominational, or lingual but the reality is that all these groups do exist today and once represented one people lived in one land, that land is the Assyrian land and those people were the Assyrian people.

In this regard there are several points to consider:

- a. We the once, one people, Assyrian, Chaldean and Syriac must come together to reclaim our Assyrian land to re-establish our former Assyrian nation for all its present people.
- b. Our kings ruled one land and one nation of which we are the one descendant people-Assyrians.
3. Once in power, the nation through generational changes will produce new people unified in one identity and possibly with lingual and denominational parity and thus breaking the psychological barriers of denominational divide.
4. One identity will make us the majority but more than one identity will not produce a majority with other non-Christian ethnic groups.
5. We may use these three classifications for different purposes for a transitional period until they are done away.
6. We could use other names such as Mesopotamia, Beth-Nehrain, or even Nineveh but this may not meet the enthusiasm of the whole nation.

5-Assyrian and Christian culture

The Assyrian and Christian identities are synergetic. In Northern Mesopotamia the land of our ancestors not every Christian is Assyrian, but every Assyrian is Christian. This thesis is shared by other early Christian nations such as the Greeks, the Armenians and the Copts who are purely Christian. Conversion of all these people goes back to the dawn of the Christian

era and to the times of the first Apostles, the founders of the Christian Church in 33 AD. The Assyrians played a role in propagating the spread of the Gospel and contributed rabbis, scholars and theologians to the nascent Christian faith.

To the Assyrians as their co-religious, the Greeks, the Armenians and the Copts, the Christian faith has remained synonymous to their national identity and pride. Centuries of non-Christian occupation such as Islamic Arabs, Turks and Persian failed to dislodge that holy faith from their national identity. All these co-religious communities, the Assyrians among them suffered marginalisation, persecution and decimation past and present. Although the occupation, fostered the inevitable denominational segmentation but the Assyrians as a society and nation remained united despite an climate of loathe and calculated repression. As our homeland descent into chaotic climate dominated by political Islam, it is natural that the Assyrians learn the past mistakes and present situations that two such contravening cultures are not cohabitable especially when the majority does not respect the national and religious aspiration of the minority. Therefore, the Christian faith and Assyrian nationalism are inseparably intertwined, and be taken as the doctrinal backbone of the Assyrian Nation. There are some points to highlight:

- a. The de-Attomanisation and decolonisation process has diverted our people from their national and Christian causes to Islamic-led secular national ones at the expense of their existence as a separate identity. Their involvement in politics, paralleled the need to discard the lingual mother tongue and people's personal names to match the tide of secular nationalism. These must be reversed.
2. The imposed Arabisation, Kurdification and Turkification of our nationality must be fought and reversed. We are neither Arab nor Kurd or Turk but Assyrian Christians wherever and whenever we live.
3. The Assyrian Nation will be neither secular nor theocratic, because both are doomed to failure, but the Church will provide an ethical-spiritual guide for the society, while granting the freedom to those who remain secular and to other religious minorities.
4. In an Assyrian autonomous region, promoting Assyrian and Christian culture will be mandatory. The main Christian holy days will be observed as public holidays and Sunday will be the weekly Sabbath day of rest. Media organs will take their role in propagating the Christian faith. The Assyrian national days will be observed as public holidays such as the New Year and other new days which will be established. Wave of Assyrianisation will be unabated with renaming of all Assyrian village and town names and renaming all that accompany this process within each village or town. Socially, all non-Assyrian practices and way of life will be Assyrianised.

6-Recognition

Politically, to re-establish the Assyrian nation in our time, it requires obtaining wider recognition. This sought recognition is both regional, among our neighbours and wider, international. Regionally, any nation will not stand alone especially when that nation is surrounded by a sea of former tormentors who will not hesitate to destabilise it. Therefore, it is imperative that the Assyrians align and ally themselves to their nearest Christian

neighbours such as the Copts, the Greeks and the Armenians. This Christian alliance is mandatory for all, because history has proven its importance. We share one common faith and one common bitter history. This new alliance must be forged in good faith and with determination by promoting true unity based on our sacred beliefs and minimising our differences especially those related to the past. We must all contribute to rebuilding the strength of our nations in all areas. The present world is different than it was a half century earlier and the current regional and world affairs compel us to unite otherwise we will not stand alone and our presence and civilisations will only remain as history of antiquity. The details of this alliance are implicitly understood and its importance is real. There are two options, either we stand together or together we disintegrate . In this regards we take the following steps:

- a. Forging a solid, holy and strategic alliance with all our Christian neighbours. All our past differences or present misunderstanding are to be buried.
2. Regarding with our non-Christian neighbours and persecuters, we fully collaborate with those who adhere to secular tendencies, but avoiding those with darkened history to our nation and those whose beliefs contravene ours. We deal only with those secular states around us, who would live and coexist with us in peace.
3. We seek the recognition of the UN, as a supreme global body.
4. We seek the support of the most powerful nations in the global affairs such as the US, and the Russian Federation.
5. We seek the cooperation of the EU as one united European body.
6. We seek the support of the main global Church leaders such as the head of the universal Catholic Church.



