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Guest Editorial

Kurdish Official Denies Assyrian, Turkomen Land Claims Fred Aprim

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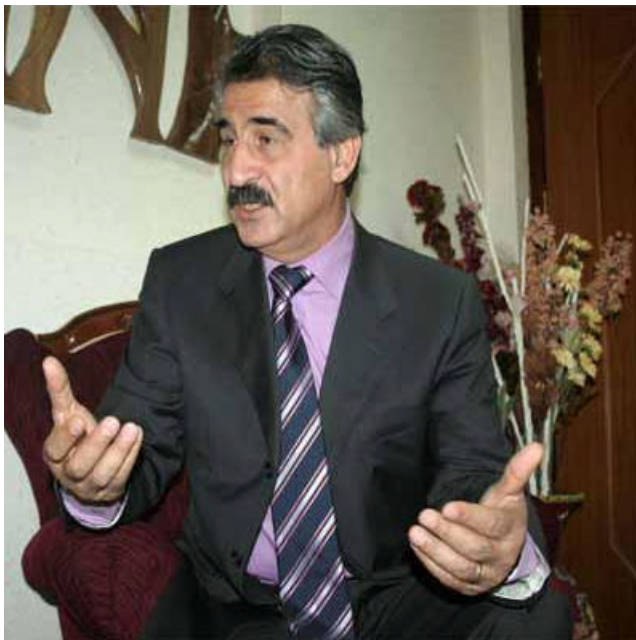
(AINA) -- On October 22, 2007, al-Malaf Press posted an [interview](#) with Mulla Bakhtiyar, In Charge of Foreign Relations Bureau in the Patriotic Union of Kurdistan (PUK) party under Jalal Talabani. The main topics of the al-Malaf Press interview were the actions by the Kurdish terrorist group PKK against the Turkish state, the Turkish state reactions and crossing into Iraq and the Iraqi Turkomen's rights in Iraq.

The interviewer, Ihsan Aziz, asked Mr. Bakhtiyar many questions. One question was about the PUK's official response to an earlier statement made by officials in the Turkomen Front, which referred to the rights of the Turkomen to establish a fourth Turkomen region in Iraq, if the purported American plan to divide Iraq into three regions went into effect. The Turkomen region would begin in Talle'far (northwest Iraq) and extend southeast through Arbil and Kirkuk, ending in Mandili. The interviewer also asked Mr. Bakhtiyar whether the PUK would recognize the Turkomen's claims to the above lands if documents beyond the Ottoman Empire documents proved those lands were Turkomeni originally.

In response to the latter question, Mr. Bakhtiyar responded by stating that there were investigations and international historic studies during the previous League of Nations regarding Kirkuk, Sulaimaniya, Dohuk, Arbil and Mosul that prove that those regions are Kurdistan regions and that those regions

were/are inhabited by the indigenous Kurdish people. In response to the prior question, Mr. Bakhtiyar stated: "...It is known that nations (peoples) have the legal right to establish their own states or regions if they had historic and geographical lands; however, the Turkomen and ChaldoAshur [Assyrians] are residing in Kurdistan and they have full citizenship rights in it, but they [Turkomen and Assyrians] do not own/have any Turkomeni or ChaldoAshuri [Assyrian] lands in Kurdistan and/or in Iraq."

There is nothing new in the tone or nature of Mr. Bakhtiyar's statements. Many Kurdish officials, politicians and writers continue to deny in a very methodical and consistent manner the Assyrian history in Iraq. These officials blatantly ignore tons of archaeological evidence that fill the world's museums, and continue to be excavated in northern Iraq, that prove beyond any reasonable doubt the strictly Assyrian origin of northern Iraq. These Kurdish officials continue to fail to point to one monument, stele, artifact unearthed in northern Iraq that reflects a Kurdish origin. The plan to rewrite the history of northern Iraq (Assyria) and change the demographics of the region continue by officials in the PUK and Kurdistan Democratic Party. Unfortunately, this methodical campaign of denying and usurping the history of northern Iraq and Assyrians goes on today in the supposedly new, free and democratic Iraq.



Mulla Bakhtiyar

*[Fred Aprim](#) was born in the city of Kirkuk, Iraq. He is a graduate of Mosul University with a B.S. in Mechanical Engineering. Fred's family, like many Assyrian families, experienced its share of oppression and persecution. While in Iraq, both his father and teenage brother were imprisoned and tortured. In 2003, he published a booklet titled **Indigenous People in Distress**. In December 2004, he published his second book [Assyrians: The Continuous Saga](#). His latest book, *Assyrians: From Bedr Khan to Saddam Hussein*, was published in 2006.*

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