



Assyrian Democratic Movement Protests ChaldoAssyrian Vote Lockout in North Iraq

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(AINA) -- The Assyrian Democratic Movement (ADM), the main political party that represents the Christian ChaldoAssyrians in Iraq, has issued a press release on Sunday's elections in Iraq. While congratulating the country on taking this step toward democracy, ADM also criticized election officials in North Iraq for the seemingly deliberate failure to deliver ballot boxes to the major Assyrian districts in North Iraq (AINA, [02-01-2005](#), [01-31-2005](#), [01-30-2005](#)), thus preventing up to 300,000 ChaldoAssyrians from casting ballots.

Here follows the ADM press release:

We congratulate our Iraqi people and ourselves for this important step and historical moment expressed by the Iraqi elections, which took place yesterday January 30 to elect the national coalition that represents the will of the people. A coalition that would create a national government that insures security to the civilians and provides the fundamental services. Also to finish its main mission of writing the constitution which guarantees equal rights to all Iraqis and the full rights for the different sections, ethnicities, denominations, and social classes, and finish the national tasks in maintaining the unity and liberation of the nation.

If the elections in itself had represented a defiance in the face of terrorism and expressed the will of the people to freedom, democracy, the respect of pluralism, and the concept of true government, then our ChaldoAssyrian Syriac people since it is considered as a part of the indigenous components of the Iraqi people was looking forward to these elections since it is considered a turning point in its national aspirations since the creation of the Iraqi State which cancelled our people's national and cultural identity that dates back to more than seven thousand years. Our people were supportive and content after the fall of the previous horrible regime, and the recognition of our people's identity in the Transitional Administrative Law (TAL). All of our people have proudly prepared to participate in the elections and have joyfully and with unmatched enthusiasm have participated in the elections in all of the parts of Iraq.

But what is upsetting is what happened in the areas of the Plains of Nineveh and mainly in the district of Al-Hamdaniya (Qaraqosh-Baghdada), Karamlesh, Bartilla County, in Bashiqa, Bahzani, and the district of Al-Shikhan (Ain-Safni). In these areas, the voting boxes, ballots, the supervisors, and other election necessities did not arrive. Despite the gathering of the people from the early morning hours in front of the voting stations and the continuous communications with the responsible authorities, but the situation was not solved until midnight. In addition, there were continuous promises that everything was solved and numerous promises and information were received from the higher election council that the election necessities have been arranged and sent to these areas. The big question is: How and where did these voting boxes get lost? And why did they not reach the areas that are living in a relatively calm security condition even in the past few weeks when compared to other areas in the Nineveh Governorate that have been facing major security tensions? But contrary to our secure areas and despite the tensions, those non-secure areas did receive the voting boxes and its inhabitants participated in the election process.

The region of the Plains of Nineveh with its historical and cultural identity, where our ChaldoAssyrian Syriac people still constitute a major presence in it and where our people live peacefully with the remaining other groups such as the Yezidis and Shabak. Our people were looking forward towards these elections to become a proof of our people's involvement in the national issues as they have always done in the past, and also to prove the continued existence of our national identity and people on our historical land for thousands of years. There have also been many illegal voting procedures in parts of the Tel-Keif district where the voting ballots were not enough and hundreds of voters in many areas remained without being able to participate in the voting process such as the towns of Al-Qosh, Tel-Sqof, Batnaya, and Tel-Keif, as well as the neighboring villages.

The sides that are responsible for this act, who wanted to deprive our people of this national right, are seeking to forge the votes and to deny the national and ethnic rights of our people in this region, where these irresponsible groups have known in the past that they do not have any support in this region. We would like them to know that our people who have preserved their cultural and national identity and remained attached to its historical homeland for thousands of years will remain here forever.

Despite our appreciation for the great efforts of the higher elections council with these elections, but we are calling on the Independent Election Council, the Iraqi government, the United Nations, and the Human Rights organizations to interfere quickly and open a comprehensive investigation for these transgressions and infringements that do not meet the standards of Democracy in the new Iraq. It

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is a duty to point out the responsible groups and the slackers and publicizing it publicly before the Iraqi people and the world. It is a duty to show fairness to the people of the region with all of its constituents and the fulfillment of their requests for which they have been demonstrating and those requests lie in their right to vote and to be represented in the Government Council.

Victory to Democracy.

The Political Bureau
Assyrian Democratic Movement
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