



Assyrian Testifies At the Congressional Human Rights Caucus

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(AINA) -- My name is Dored Shiba, I am an Assyrian American. I am not a member of any political group.

First, on behalf of thousands of voiceless Assyrians throughout the world, I would like to extend their sincere gratitude for giving me this opportunity to express their justified concerns and fear with regard to our government's plans for the future Iraq and the plight of the Iraqi Assyrians in the light of the anticipated future.

Shlama Allokhoun

I have just greeted you in the Assyrian language which translates: May Peace Be upon You.

Ladies and gentlemen as the elected representatives of the greatest democracy mankind ever established, I am assuming responsibility to speak on behalf of the remnants of, once, a great nation that ruled over the entire region of the Middle East, but at present, a rather small, helpless, and marginalized people who beg your necessary attention.

It is not in my capacity to brief you about the history of Assyrians; their rise and fall, their considerable contribution to civilization, and their unspeakable calamities. However, the following facts that I am about to state are historically well established and documented.

1- The Assyrians are the indigenous people of today's Iraq. 2- The cradle of civilization is being destroyed. 3- Demographic changes and genocide against my people is an on going occurrence.

If we divide Iraq into three parts, the South, the Center, and the North, and look into the Assyrian Christian population, with all its denominations, we hardly see any Assyrians living in Southern Iraq because of the sectarian fight and the Muslim fundamentalism.

In central Iraq, as you gentlemen know, many churches have been bombed and many priests have been abducted and a few beheaded.

Recently in Baghdad, in the Dora neighborhood, they have been offering protection for Assyrians, the "Protection Tax," to pay the jizya the poll tax demanded by the Koran, which all Christians and Jews must pay in exchange for being allowed to live.

We as Americans are creating chaos in the region. Mr. Akheqar Odisho was killed in cold blood last August in Northern Iraq, which has been under United States protection since 1991. His killer is free and walking the streets of Nohadra (Dohuk). It is very hard when the claimed oppressed becomes an oppressor. Our people in northern Iraq are being called Christian Kurds and are not allowed to write any signs in their language. They are being striped of their basic human rights. Our land, villages, fields, and properties are being occupied. Our heritage and history is being threatened. Not even in Genghis Khan times have we witnessed this much uprooting. The Kurds are trying to displace us from our ancestral homeland. They are intimidating our people and destroying our history. My People can not mutter a single word; they are scared, frightened, and threatened. When you see a killer walking the streets of your neighborhood, free and with body guards, you would not dare say any thing because you know your fate ahead of time. You will be killed and no one will be arrested. This is the democracy claimed in Northern Iraq. There are secret prisons and people are disappearing in mysterious ways from different parts of Iraq.

If you ask any Assyrian in Iraq if his/her life has improved after the fall of Saddam, they would definitely say NO. Assyrian people are disappearing from their ancestral homeland. Their numbers are dwindling and they are being targeted in northern Iraq. Some one wants Assyrians out of Iraq and they are working very hard and using our protection, the American presence, money and resources to accomplish these goals and to carry out their agenda. They are trying to divide Iraq and destroy the country. They want a referendum and normalization of Kirkuk, but they are forgetting about Nohadra, Zakho, and Arbel. We need to normalize all of Iraq, not only one city.



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Moreover, Nohadra (Dohuk) is an Assyrian city and we want the same constitution applied there as well. Normalize Dohuk, and let the Assyrians return to their homes, land and villages.

Today we see our Assyrian political parties experiencing intense pressure from the two Kurdish parties to support the idea of annexing the Nineveh plain to the northern part of Iraq.

I do support the call of the Assyrian General Conference, for an Assyria Region in the Assyrian Triangle. We have to be protected and saved just as other ethnicities are. We ask the United States Government to support the establishment of the Assyria Region in Northern Iraq. We are paying the price for being Christians and being supporters of the Coalition forces. The Assyrian, being Christians, are targeted by Islamic fundamentalist groups. They are persecuted for sharing a common religion with the American occupiers and for their alleged loyalty to the West. Indeed, the Assyrians have always been sympathizers of the Western democratic and cultural values. We need to have our own place to practice, protect, and live in peace with our neighbors.

We need to see one Iraq and one people. We do not want to see our country "America" as the cause of the third world war nor as a cause of division and not unity. We need to leave Iraq and the region in a stabilized condition, not in chaos. I plea to you to help establish the Assyria Region as mentioned by the Assyrian General Conference declaration on March 14, 2007. Please help our people to survive, to flourish and once more contribute to the good of humanity as our forefathers had. Thank you and may God Bless America and Bless Assyria.

Dored Shiba

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