

Declaration of the Ezidi's, Turkmen and Chaldean-Syriac-Assyrians of Sinjar, Tal Afar and Nineveh Plain

Call for the restoration of human rights and a new province consisting of Sinjar, Tal Afar and Nineveh Plain

We, Chaldeans-Syriacs-Assyrians, Turkmen and Ezidi Kurds have come together as peoples of Iraq, belonging to this country. Our peoples are original inhabitants of Iraq in equal rights with all other peoples composing our nation and living in Iraq.

Each of our peoples has suffered under the fact that our existence has not been adequately recognised in Iraq and in the international community for many decades. We all have experienced discrimination, persecution and ethnic and cultural cleansing due to this lack of adequate recognition of our ethnic, cultural and religious identity and the right to be as we are in our country.

Now we have been driven from our homelands in Iraq by the evil that is ISIS. This evil knows nothing else but destruction and death and has hit our peoples in ways unimaginable. Children have been decapitated, women raped and sold and men killed and tortured. The battle against ISIS is not a religious battle but a battle for the most fundamental notions of humanity.

In light of this current crisis we have united ourselves to work towards a common future in which each of our peoples are recognised as part of our country and will be able to preserve the existence of our ethnic, cultural and religious identities. It is our aim to maintain and contribute to the rich diversity of our land and to support in this effort those peoples who are our neighbours and share the same wish for a common peaceful future.

We do not want to be treated as victims, we want to be recognized as equal citizens of Iraq. We have come to the conclusion that in order to be recognised equal citizens of Iraq as Turkmen, Ezidi Kurds and Chaldeans-Syriacs-Assyrians we need to have recognition and self-administration in those part of the land which have been historically (and in present day) our lands where we have been able to be and live as we are without fear for our neighbours and without the need to hide our identities.

We Ezidi Kurds want to return and live in Sinjar, we Turkmen want to return to and live in our homelands in Tal Afar and across Iraq¹ and we Chaldeans-Syriacs-Assyrians want to return to and live in Nineveh Plain. We want to live there as citizens and recognised peoples of Iraq and not as tolerated minorities. It is this stigmatization that has lead to the situation that we are experiencing now. Only empowerment will end victimhood. The Sinjar Council and Ezidi self-defence in Sinjar and the Self-Defence forces of the Turkmen and CSA peoples in our homelands demonstrate our will to that end.

For this reason it is necessary that we will have local autonomy and self-administration in cooperation both with the Iraqi Kurdistan Regional government and the Iraqi central government.

This means in practice that we call for the creation of a new province (muhafaza) that will unite our homelands of Sinjar, Tal Afar and Nineveh Plain. Provisionally we will call our Province 'Upper Mesopotamia'.

With this wish we demonstrate that we seek both unity with all peoples and human rights for our respective peoples. We call that the existing and recognised three districts in Nineveh Plain will become one district and unite with the existing and recognised districts of Tal Afar and Sinjar in one new province. We also express our will that the districts of Sinjar, Tal Afar and Nineveh Plain will have a high degree of devolved powers insofar this is practical.

This means that we will elect our own councils in Sinjar, Tal Afar, and Nineveh Plain districts and we maintain our self-defence forces under responsibility of these councils. Under these councils we will govern our affairs². Each of the districts will have a fixed number of seats allocated at the level of the new Provincial

¹ Tal Afar, Bashir, Tazehurmatu, Tuzhurmatu, Biravcili, Amerli, Kara Naz, Kifri, Kara Tepe, Jalawla and Salman Beg etc.

² The CSA and Ezidi Kurds will work together with all peoples of the Nineveh Plain.

Council. The councils will allow that all living in these areas will have a voice and can be represented. All will have equal democratic and fundamental rights.

The creation of this new province does not mean that we give up the historical rights of our people in all their homelands in Iraq. This declaration has therefore an annex that mentions all our homelands where our people live and need restoration of their rights and status and empowerment.

Our homelands have been lagging behind in their development due to the discrimination of our peoples. A special investment fund will be needed for these areas via which our peoples will share in the wealth of Iraq. Furthermore, in light of the destruction caused by ISIS we call to the EU and US to create in the short term a joint reconstruction fund for these areas to rebuild where needed. Our peoples look forward to work together with this fund to rebuild our lands. Finally we call on the EU to monitor that existing EU- funding going to Iraq is shared with our peoples as well.

It is of the highest importance that note is taken that this declaration is signed by representatives of the peoples actually living in or been driven away by ISIS in 2014. We cannot be represented by people elected in the KRG as our areas were never part of the KRG. Nor can people represent us who do not come from and do not live now nor have any stake in our lands. By our signatures one can see and read that this is coming from our peoples who genuinely are from or live in the places concerned.

We also call very urgently on a special national and international focus at the rights of those who have been driven away. They need to be able to go back and reclaim their possessions.

When they can return we call for an international force that co-operates with our self-defence forces and our peoples to create a situation in which we can have a referendum to affirm the creation of this new province.

Notwithstanding the need to create this new direction we do not want to live in isolation from our neighbours. We seek to maintain our peoples in unity with our Iraqi Arab and Kurdish neighbours. It is our deepest wish to live together as unique and different peoples forming together the incredible mosaic of our world, the Middle East, the cradle of civilization.

We call on the EU and the US to work together with our peoples and the Kurdistan Regional Government and the Government of Iraq to realise this goal. We call to the Kurdistan Regional Government and the government of Iraq to recognise the necessity to achieve this result in order to preserve and let flourish the cultural richness of Iraq.

Signed as Common declaration by representatives of our peoples from our homelands:

Signed at the following date:

For Sinjar Council: _____

For the Turkmen people of Tal Afar: _____

For the Chaldean-Syriac-Assyrian people of Nineveh
Plain: _____

Ezidi, Turkmen and CSA organisations in Iraq who support this declaration :

Annex I : our homelands

Turkmen homelands

It is the wish of the Turkmen people that the Tuzhurmatu will be upgraded to the status of the 19th Governorate of Iraq and that the Kirkuk Province dispute will be solved in line with Article 53 paragraph (c) of Iraq's Transitional Administrative Law of March 8, 2004 (Special Status for Kirkuk) with equal power sharing between the three main ethnic communities.

CSA people

The CSA people do not accept that their homeland is only the Nineveh Plain and its three districts. It is the wish of the CSA people that the autonomy region will be from the 3 districts of the Niniveh Plain and starting from Alqosh within the Niniveh Plain along the Mosul Dam from Fayda to Simele till Fishkhaboor. Many CSA people live in Iraqi-Kurdistan; the district of Kanimasi (Berwari Bala geography), the district of Sarsing (geography of Wadi d'Sapna), as well as in the district of Aqra (Nahla Plain), in Erbil province (Shaklawa, Ankawa, Diyana and Hawdiyan) and in Suleymaniye province (Armota and Köysancak). These are their historic homelands.

Ezidi people

Ezidi majorities are living in Khanik in the Aqra district, in Shariya in the Duhok Province and in the Nineveh Plain (Shekhan district and Lalesh). These are their historic homelands.