

21 March 2015

Your Excellency,

We thank the UN for taking the effort to put its energy and focus at the situation of our peoples in the Middle East and we thank France for initiating this special UN meeting at 27 March next.

We welcome the MECHRIC letter which rightly emphasizes the need for protection in those areas that we call our homelands. In addition we note that the European Parliament reiterated with overwhelming majority at 12 March, the inalienable right of all religious and ethnic minorities living in Iraq and Syria to continue to live in their historical and traditional homelands in dignity, equality and safety, and to practice their religion freely". We note that the European Parliament called in the same resolution for safe havens for Iraq's minorities and that the European Parliament in this regard calls for the same measures as MECHRIC does. We agree that such safe havens can only temporarily be secured by UN or other external forces.

We therefore fully agree and actively support the MECHRIC statement for support to self-defense forces such as the Syriac Military Council (in Syria), the YBS of the Yazidi's and the Nineveh Plain Forces (Iraq) and others who have no other purpose than avoid further ethnic cleansing. We note that the mentioned European Parliament resolution calls the international community to co-operate with the Syriac Military Council. We note that these self-defense forces (as they are now) are a temporal solution that need to be embedded in a long-term political and security solution that ensures that we do not again become a voiceless and powerless minority delivered to others without a say over our own future.

Consequently in addition to the letter of MECHRIC we add that together with the Turkmen and Yazidi representatives we presented at 19 November in the European Parliament our Common Declaration in order to achieve a reasonable and needed degree of self-defense and self-government to secure our long-term existence in our homelands in Iraq. We ask the international community, UN and EU, to be our partner in negotiations with the Iraqi Kurdish Regional Government and Iraqi Central Government in achieving these political rights that are in line with the constitution of Iraq and the draft constitution of the KRG.

On Iraq we note that:

We need these political rights of reasonable self-government in our majority-areas to reverse this deadly process of powerlessness and discrimination making our peoples easy targets. Without this political settlement there is no long-term security for our peoples as recent atrocities against us have sufficiently proven.

There is no dispute that territories mentioned in our declaration (like Sinjar, Nineveh Plain, Tel Afar) are indeed the areas where Yazidi's, Chaldeans-Syriacs-Assyrians and Turkmen have a clear majority.

The majority groups already have these political rights (KRG) and that there is no objective reason to refuse these rights to our peoples in Iraq.

We do not strive for independence or isolation but for a reasonable European-style form of self-government as a balance between powerlessness and independence and as guarantee of our political rights.

On Syria we note:

That we have experienced in the Democratic Self-Administration (DSA) that we do have there our political rights as well as self-defense in the form of the Syriac Military Council and that the secular and inclusive nature of the Social Contract of the DSA provides all the needed political rights.

That the DSA acts already in reality as a protection zone in Northern and Eastern Syria for all the peoples living in it, including all minorities and the Yazidi refugees from Iraq.

It is therefore reasonable to follow the European Parliament in the mentioned resolution in supporting the DSA in Syria. We note that the EU Council of Ministers of Foreign Affairs in their latest meeting (16 March) explicitly mentioned and gave consent to further support to the DSA in Syria. In all of this the survival of the mosaic reality and many peoples of the Middle East is at stake. Without implementing political rights and connected long-term solutions there is no long-term security.

Allowing no political rights and long-term security in practice to our peoples now will show to the world that minorities worldwide can and may remain second-class powerless citizens.

We are however convinced that the UN is determined to give the world the clear signal that our peoples and all minorities are citizens in equal rights that can and should have political rights and security and the possibility to live and survive in their countries.

We the undersigned organizations commit to assist you in all these efforts.

Best regards,

Mr. Bassam Ishak, President of Syriac National Council of Syria

Mr. Echoue Gouriye, President of Syriac Union Party in Syria

Ms. Chamiram Chamoun, President of Syriac Women Union in Syria

Mr. Yousif Yaqoob Matti, President of Bethnahrin Patriotic Union in Iraq

Ms. Hanan Matti Toma, President of Bethnahrain Women Organization in Iraq

Mr. Ibrahim Mrad, President of the Universal Syriac Union Party in Lebanon

Mr. Evgil Türker, President of the Federation of Syriac Associations in Turkey

Mr. Lahdo Hobil, President of the European Syriac Union