

Cultural Rights and Democracy:
Iraqi Assyrians A Case Study for Government Intervention

“Nebuchadnezzar was, after all, an Arab from Iraq, albeit ancient Iraq.”
Saddam Hussein, during an interview.

“I always knew of Saddam’s efforts to destroy our Assyrian identity, but I knew it was real in April 2004 as I sat through a gathering where members of an Assyrian movement for democracy were formally giving talks to citizens of a Nineveh Plain town on their Assyrian ancestry and identity – these people suffered formal Ba’ath Arabization, and were caught in a state of flux.”

Michael Youash

1 Introduction

It is an understatement to describe the debates on federalism, resource allocation, human rights and democratization in Iraq today, as being of paramount importance. The leadership of constituencies defined along ethnic, sectarian, pan-Iraqi, and other lines are all struggling to secure the interests expected of them. During these processes, many sit, often bewildered, and watch the Assyrian community¹ fiercely debate how they will be named, at the expense of almost all else to be gained. What to others appears as inexplicable political suicide is in fact the public outcome of an extraordinary campaign of cultural genocide, which continues today.²

Cultural genocide as applied in this paper, occurs through deliberate activities seeking to alter, undermine and/or immediately destroy the Assyrian identity. In particular, are official activities that are seeking to exploit denominationally-grounded divisions in the Assyrian nation in order to encourage the formation of three separate ethnic identities.

This paper will explain this situation by identifying the causes but then extend its analysis to the present situation of this community and the important role of government in providing redress. The objective is not to test theories of cultural development or nationalism, however. This is an advocacy paper, with hopes of illuminating clear policy challenges, and providing practicable, necessary solutions – that generate insights into related theories on cultural development.

As a case study, the paper will focus on developments in northern Iraq; that is, area formally under Kurdistan Regional Government control, and lands bordering the KRG where its influence extends. The latter territories are presently seeing significant activity

¹ Assyrian is the term used here, but includes the Chaldeans and Syriacs, who all comprise one nation. In the Transitional Administrative Law, these people were identified as ChaldoAssyrian. The challenge faced by the author in using the term Assyrian throughout the paper is overcoming the problem of how it is necessary to be used today, but only in formats that indicate the ‘oneness’ of the Assyrian people.

² The objective of this paper is not to enter the technicalities of cultural genocide as a burgeoning concept in international human rights law and jurisprudence. It acknowledges that this concept is still developing and the issues raised in this paper will confirm the necessity of further concretizing the concept. Additionally, it may provide the basis for applying the concept of ‘ethnocide’, given the nature of the debate.

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by the Kurdistan Democratic Party. This activity provides current evidence of the sustained policy of cultural genocide and indicates the violation of key human rights. Concurrently, it illuminates the types of challenges this community continues to face. This also provides the basis for solutions, which constitute the remainder of the paper.

The choice of KRG treatment of this minority is based on it being the most organized government in Iraq today, and thereby reflective of deliberate policy development and implementation. In the future, with a more stable and functional government in Baghdad, the case study will extend to that sphere of government.

2 A Backdrop to Cultural Genocide in Iraq

Perhaps the single most perplexing question today in Iraq when it comes to its Assyrian population is the matter of population numbers. Indeed, the reporting of numbers by anyone is a matter of balancing past statistics that are dated, while acknowledging that previous governments worked assiduously to understate the size of the population. Past government policies and action decimated the physical Assyrian presence before enacting policies to eradicate or obscure the Assyrian identity as part of the Iraqi national fabric. This reality is essential to understanding the context in which cultural genocide was and still is occurring.

The following lays-out past and present phenomena that help understand the deliberate nature of efforts at destroying the physical Assyrian presence in Iraq as part of an effort to politically undermine this community.

2.1 Ethnic Cleansing

In the aftermath of a death sentence for Saddam Hussein justice for atrocities are seemingly within reach. As such, so are the names of locations, such as Halabja, a focal-point for those concerned with exposing the brutality of the previous regime. This is necessary, but for Assyrians, nothing surprising. The patterns and systems of governance that culminated in Halabja were in existence since the formation of the country – at that time, it was the indigenous Assyrians enduring mass slaughter.

Iraq's 'First Halabja' occurred in August 1933, at the town of Simele, where more than 3,000 Assyrians were slaughtered³ under Baghdad orders implemented by a Kurdish general and forces in north-western Iraq. The scale of the atrocity is extraordinary since at the time there were no weapons of mass destruction used, only conventional small arms. Yet almost as many died at Simele as at Halabja which took place almost 55 years later. As Gareth Stansfield noted, "The Assyrian massacre was a government instigated attempt to target a minority 'scapegoat' group, deemed to constitute an enemy to the state. During the course of the violence, Kurds, Arabs, and Yazidis found one common

³ International Federation for Human Rights and Alliance Internationale pour la Justice. "Iraq: Continuous and Silent Ethnic Cleansing—Displaced Persons in Iraqi Kurdistan and Iraqi Refugees in Iraq." <http://www.fidh.org/IMG/pdf/iq350a.pdf> (last accessed September 30, 2006). P. 17.

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cause in the persecution of the Assyrians. In the words of one commentator, ‘In short it was open season on Assyrians in Iraq in the summer of 1933.’”⁴

Today, Simele and the surrounding territory is a shadow of its former self. The destitution is complemented only by the paucity of people who are able to secure the land. A proverbial ‘ripple effect’ through time echoes at Simele; a reminder of the atrocity, where inhabitants still feel the impact. It is critical to note the political context of the massacre, however.

Assyrians, part of Britain’s levies in Iraq, were strong and efficient fighters, as noted by many British officials active in the region during the First World War and the formation of Iraq. They were also Iraq’s first irredentists. British promises of self-determination, autonomy and other rights motivated the Assyrians of the region to fight more for their national interests than British imperial designs. When Britain reconfigured its core interests, it left the Assyrians exposed to an existing hatred and animosity with their Kurdish and Arab neighbors.

It is in this way that the Simele Massacre is seen in Iraqi history as an exercise of sovereignty and nation-building, and not a gross human rights violation. Historian Charles Tripp outlines the ‘Iraqi’ outlook of the event, writing, “The Assyrians, despite the small size of the community, were represented in the Iraqi press as a threat to the national integrity of Iraq” ... [General] Bakr Sidqi was authorized to deal with them as ruthlessly as he wished. In August 1933 this led to the massacre of [...] Assyrian villagers by the Iraqi armed forces, joined by Kurdish tribesmen who took the opportunity to loot dozens of Assyrian villages at the same time.”⁵

Simele not only killed over 3,000 Assyrians, but obviously sent a shockwave of internally displaced fleeing the possibility of a similar fate. In this immediate aftermath, ethnic cleansing reached a new phase, that of driving people off their land.

Subsequent to the Simele massacre, the government of the day, and all proceeding governments affected a policy of demolishing Assyrian villages and churches *en masse*. From at least the early 1960s onwards, in various phases and to varying degrees, the government of Iraq engaged in programs emptying certain lands of their Assyrian population. The dataset in Appendix A puts forth a listing of over 180 village erasures and forced demographic shifts. It also contains a sample list of destroyed religious institutions.

The Anfal campaigns are of particular importance, as they describe the most recent phase of formal ethnic cleansing – cementing a common bond of hardship and struggle between Iraq’s Kurds and its Assyrians. Regrettably, empty lands soon became coveted by many taking advantage of the absence of any meaningful rule of law and the state of disorder. In this environment, a pattern of illegal land invasions and land seizures – on par with

⁴ Anderson, Liam and Gareth Sransfield. The Future of Iraq: Dictatorship, Democracy or Division. New York: Palgrave MacMillan, 2004. P. 24.

⁵ Tripp, Charles. A History of Iraq. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000. P. 80

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pre-Apartheid European land seizures of indigenous African owned land – has been the order of the day, often with government acquiescence or active involvement.

2.2 Land Invasions and Property Seizures

The ethnic cleansing of yesterday is becoming a basis for illegal land seizures and land invasions today. This is not taking place just on uninhabited Assyrian lands, but in areas where Assyrians presently live. The land invasions documented in a 2006 field mission to the region are most worrying since in most cases, there are title deeds and even court decisions affirming Assyrian ownership of the land and illegality of the seizures. The court decisions are not implemented, however. This signals to all Kurds seizing Assyrian lands that it can be done with impunity since the state will not enforce a return of land *even* when it has legally pronounced the need to do so.

In Sarsink today, town properties are being seized as a result of the town's prior support for hosting Kurdish refugee returnees. The town's charity in agreeing to host the refugees until refugee towns were rebuilt has been exploited to make permanent residence on Assyrian lands for the returnee Kurds. This is happening on broad swathes of the town's land and on a property-by-property, house-by-house basis.

In the three con-joined towns of Dere, Coumaneh, and Maristek, a local leader, Mohamed Mohsen Falah, who is the KDP regional leader in the 8th district and his father Mohsen Falah (Member of Parliament in the Kurdistan Assembly) and Father-in-Law to Hoshyar Zebari are implementing the land seizure. The town council of Amadiya is also involved in this illegal process – including the governor in Amadiya. Property has already been zoned and 600 lots are being sold for \$8000 USD each – this was reported in the Daily News (Rosh) paper, on KDP official radio and also on television.

This issue has gone before the courts in Kurdistan twice already, and in each instance, the village land owners won the court decisions. In effect, this action is illegal according to the courts of Kurdistan.

The value of this land is substantial in two respects. First, nominally, it is worth millions. Secondly, these towns are ancient and the people consider the land part of their cultural heritage. These illegal land invasions are at once a direct monetary attack, denying them justice and due process, while also being an attack on their Assyrian culture and heritage.

The most difficult aspect of this process is that the idea to re-zone and sell the land did not start with the Kurdistan Regional Government. Saddam Hussein's dictatorial Ba'ath regime intended to implement this plan long ago in a program of Arabization. The only difference is that the KRG is now implementing only those parts of the plan that deny Assyrians a right to the land.

In the town of Chakala Khtatha, residents of the town destroyed during the Anfal campaigns, are not seeing their village rebuilt as is done for surrounding Kurdish villages. Worse still, they are denied access to the water and electricity supplying their Kurdish neighbors. They manage to survive on the land farming thousands of trees

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provided by the Assyrian Diaspora and get water and electricity through aid efforts by the Diaspora community.

Despite these obstacles to their existence in the area, the people are determined to make a success of their village. As a result of this ardent commitment to their land, nearby Kurds are seizing the farming and village lands. Seizures began with tracts of farmland, but when residents refused to leave, land seizures escalated with property inside the village being taken. In this case the Kurds involved (Mr. Rashid Sadiq, Omar Karim and the latter individual's family) are known past body guards of the President of the Iraqi Kurdistan Region. Despite winning court decisions in their case, they are unable to reclaim their land.

Assyrian organizations are reporting land invasions and land seizures on a massive scale. A short field mission verified the existence of this process. In other areas, such as Chembre Bethkeh, Kori Gavana and many more, the field mission noted the same phenomena but could not explore each case.

While these cases indicate what is happening in areas formally controlled by the KRG, it is also being noted by external, international agencies in their relief work. In observing human rights violations and pressures driving Assyrians out of Iraq on a massive scale, the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights writes:

Political motives come into play in the numerous assaults against Christian individuals and facilities committed by members or supporters of the KDP and PUK in northern Iraq, in particular in the areas to the south of the former green line (as Kurdish parties aim to expand their areas of influence into parts of Nineveh Governorate). In this regard, the Iraqi Ministry of Displacement and Migration reported on the serious difficulties Christians displaced by the former regime face in reclaiming their properties in northern Iraq.⁶

2.3 Other Human Rights Violations

Other observable trends are cause for alarm, and are a part of a package of external variables which exacerbate the process of cultural genocide for the Assyrians.

In northern Iraq today, an innumerable amount of jobs, ranging from hotel staff to university professorships require KDP membership, at least for Assyrians, if not for all. This policy, greatly resembling Ba'ath-era requirements for employment, are considered by many as a process of 'Kurdification'; using such data to reduce the heterogeneity of the Kurdistan Region.

⁶ United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees. "Background Information on the Situation of Non-Muslim Religious Minorities in Iraq" (October, 2005). <http://www.unhcr.org/cgi-bin/texis/vtx/rsd/rsddocview.pdf?tbl=RSDLEGAL&id=4371cf5b4> (last accessed October 2, 2006). P.3.

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The process, as reported in individual accounts, is that when a job offer is finally made to an individual, they are told to go to the closest KDP office to their place of residence and register as a KDP member. Those refusing to do so are denied employment.

Disenfranchising a minimum of tens of thousands of Assyrians from the Nineveh Plain and surrounding areas during the January and December elections of 2005, as well as the October 2005 constitutional referendum was a denial of a most basic freedom. The following media reports describe the process of disenfranchisement:

In the January election, the Kurds dealt with the problem of being a relatively small minority in the [Ninawa] province by stuffing the ballot boxes, as recounted by Maj. Anthony Cruz, an Army reserve civil affairs officer assigned to work with the province's electoral commission.

The 1st Brigade, 25th Infantry Division ("Stryker Brigade") was responsible for getting ballot boxes and ballots to polling places on the Nineveh plain in January's election. But it relied on battle-hardened Kurdish Peshmerga militiamen to maintain security in the towns and villages, and did not know its way around the area well enough to deliver ballot boxes there with Kurdish help, according to Cruz.

So the Brigade agreed to send a U.S. convoy with the voting materials to meet a Kurdish delegation in the Kurdish town of Faida on the border of Kurdistan 50 miles north of Mosul, so that the convoy could be guided to the largely Christian and Shabak towns on the Plain of Nineveh.

When the convoy arrived in Faida the day before the election, however, the promised Kurdish guides never came. Instead, says Cruz, the Kurdish mayor of the town came demanding the ballots for what he called Kurdish towns on the list.

On election day, Cruz recalls, the U.S. military tried to find helicopters to carry the ballot materials out to the six remaining district towns on the list, but were able to get ballots to only one town, Bashiqa, which is almost entirely Christian, Shabak and Yezidi, before the 5:00 p.m. close of voting.

But according to Cruz, Kurdish militiamen stole the ballots boxes from the polling place, returning them later after obviously tampering with them and offering bribes to the election workers to accept them.⁷

In this climate, where KDP dominance is reaffirmed at all cost, Assyrians are being compelled to accept Kurdish *mukhabarat/asayesh*, secret police offices in their towns. This comes with extraordinary measures of intimidation against the community. Those appearing to reject KDP absolute control suffer serious consequences. The following taken from a Washington Post investigative report portrays a grave reality:

⁷ Porter, Gareth. "Voting Shenanigans Cloud Key Province". InterPress Service. <http://www.ipsnews.net/news.asp?idnews=30451> (last accessed October 16, 2006).

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Qaraqosh [Bakhdede], a town of 25,000 people about 20 miles southeast of Mosul, demonstrates how the Kurds apply their expanding power in the north. Kurds, by all accounts, make up no more than 1 percent of the population. But Kurd political leaders have not concealed their intention to dominate: "Under the parliament and government of the Kurdistan region, the Assyrians, Chaldeans and Turkmens will enjoy their rights," reads a banner outside the Kurdistan Democratic Party headquarters.

Luqman Mohammed Rashid Wardak, a senior member of the party's local committee who has the Kurdish sun emblem tattooed on the back of his right hand, said he hoped Qaraqosh would be ceded to the Kurds after the area "becomes normalized." In the meantime, he said, "we are presenting our political ideas to the people." Wardak said the Kurdish Regional Government has already distributed \$6,000 to poor families. "Because this area does not officially belong to the Kurdistan region," he said, the money "goes to the party and the party pays them." The party has set up a 700-man "protection force," paying the guards' \$150 monthly salary.

But when largess doesn't work, the party uses force. On Dec. 5, local party officials ordered the director of a regional land office, Bahnam Habeeb, to disobey a central government order to distribute parcels of land to former Iraqi army officers and soldiers.

Habeeb, who refused to be interviewed, told the party that he could halt the distribution only if he received an order from "a higher authority" -- either the provincial government in Mosul or the central government in Baghdad.

Fifteen minutes later, five pick-up trucks filled with militiamen pulled up, according to witnesses. The fighters dragged the paunchy, 53-year-old Habeeb from his chair and beat him with their fists and rifle butts, the witnesses said. The soldiers placed him facedown in the bed of a pickup, pushed their boots into his back and legs and drove him around "to show everybody what they had done," said a witness who asked not to be identified out of fear of retribution.⁸

It is in this context that cultural genocide must be understood. The issues outlined to this point serve largely as intervening variables that further compound the difficulties of the Assyrian nation in confronting efforts to alter and ultimately undermine their history, and thus their culture.

3 Applying Cultural Genocide

Article 7 of the 'UN Draft Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples' states,

⁸ Shadid, Anthony and Steve Fainaru. "Militias Wresting Control Across Iraq's North and South: Residents Tell of Growing Climate of Fear", Washington Post, August 20, 2005. <http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/content/article/2005/08/20/AR2005082000940.html> (last accessed October 15, 2006).

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Indigenous peoples have the collective and individual right not to be subjected to ethnocide and cultural genocide, including prevention of and redress for:

- (a) Any action which has the aim or effect of depriving them of their integrity as distinct peoples, or of their cultural values or ethnic identities;
- (b) Any action which has the aim or effect of dispossessing them of their lands, territories or resources;
- (c) Any form of population transfer which has the aim or effect of violating or undermining any of their rights;
- (d) Any form of assimilation or integration by other cultures or ways of life imposed on them by legislative, administrative or other measures;
- (e) Any form of propaganda directed against them.

In this paper, particular concern regarding KRG activities arises in relation to Art. 7(a) and 7(d). The former, because, as will be outlined below, the KRG is engaging in practices that deprives Assyrians of their identity, by specifically encouraging the formation of other identities – mainly based on denomination. The latter, because the KRG is proposing legislation that would make certain elements of the Assyrian nation separate ethnicities – thus denying those peoples a chance to reconnect to their Assyrian identity. At the same time, this policy deprives Assyrians of the chance to heal artificial divides and thus realize their full potential socially, cultural, politically and economically in Iraq. Indeed this policy, in weakening Assyrians to the extent it does, actively promotes their demise by reducing their capability to defend themselves in all respects necessary in Iraq today.

The gravity of this situation is all the more real when one considers the statement of Iraq’s Human Rights Minister, an Assyrian, when she said, “in twenty more years there will be no more Christians [Assyrians] in Iraq.”⁹

3.1 The Denominational Divide at the Core of Cultural Genocide

To most scholars moderately *au fait* with this subject matter, it will seem puzzling that this section of the paper should be so brief. Experts and activists alike are dedicating extraordinary efforts to promote either the ‘oneness’ of the Assyrian nation, or to tear it apart principally along denominational lines. Brevity here arises from the core premise that the two main divides being exploited in the cultural genocide of Assyrians (the Syriac and Chaldean divides) are not organic developments in identity, but rather artificial divisions exploited by others (in this study, the KRG), to weaken the people.

Of the two, the most virulent divide, carrying with it great enmity between polarized factions, is that of the Assyrian—Chaldean identities. For those who believe Chaldeans are a separate people, with a separate history, disconnected from Assyrians, it requires a

⁹ Lattimer, Mark. “In Twenty More Years There Will Be No More Christians in Iraq”. The Guardian. October 6, 2006. <http://www.guardian.co.uk/Iraq/Story/0,,1888848,00.html> (alst accessed October 17, 2006).

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dismissal of the Vatican's own insights on the matter.¹⁰ A seemingly innocuous Vatican document entitled, "Guidelines for Admission to the Eucharist Between the Chaldean Church and the Assyrian Church of the East", dealing with the taking of holy communion for members of one church in the church of the other, provides a historical background to the two bodies. That historical account is all the more relevant since it was produced in agreement with the Congregation of the Doctrine of the Faith, then headed by Cardinal Ratzinger, who today is Pope Boniface the XVI. It states:

Since the very early times of Christian missionary activity, a flourishing local Church developed in Mesopotamia or Persia. As this Church was situated outside the eastern borders of the Roman Empire, it became commonly called the "Church of the East". In 1552, after a series of individual conversions of bishops or provisional unions, part of the "Church of the East" entered into full communion with the Apostolic See of Rome. Since then, the particular Church in full communion with Rome has usually been called the "Chaldean Church", while the other particular Church took the name of "Assyrian Church of the East". Both particular Churches, however, still share the same theological, liturgical and spiritual tradition; they both celebrate the Sacraments or Sacred Mysteries according to the East-Syriac tradition.¹¹

Anyone espousing the notion that Chaldeans are a separate ethnicity from the Assyrians, must explain how those who separated from the Church of the East were discernibly Chaldean before 1552, and prove that only those whom were racially/ethnically Chaldean joined the newly created Chaldean Church. The facetious standard set by the author is only meant to accentuate the preposterousness of the assertion that Chaldeans and Assyrians today are distinct ethnic groups.

With respect to those espousing a separate Syriac ethnicity, completely disconnected from the Assyrian nation, it is simply a matter of reminding all that this denomination within the Assyrian nation removed the name "Assyrian" from its official title as recently as 1952. For an Assyrian nation celebrating its 6756th New Year, this is an extraordinarily current development. The reasons for the split are not the subject of this paper, but what is the focus, is the actions of outsiders to exploit denominational divisions and reinforce separate, artificial ethnic identities; effectively, cultural genocide.

Both instances of division being turned into separate ethnicities arises from denominations. Chaldean *Catholics* on the one hand, and Syriac *Jacobites* (in the main) on the other.

¹⁰ The emphasis on the Vatican is the author's, since the distinct feature of present Chaldeans is their union with the Catholic Church of Rome.

¹¹ Vatican. Pontifical Council for Promoting Christian Unity, "Guidelines for the Admission of the Eucharist Between the Chaldean Church and the Assyrian Church of the East." http://www.vatican.va/roman_curia/pontifical_councils/chrstuni/documents/rc_pc_chrstuni_doc_20011025_chiesa-caldea-assira_en.html (last accessed October 9, 2006). Rome, July 20, 2001.

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What are described below are efforts under Saddam to do away with the Assyrian identity, and current efforts by the KRG in supporting separate Syriac and Chaldean ethnic identities. Each of these phenomena, in turn, are indicative of cultural genocide and demand further recognition of how programs of cultural genocide manifest themselves so they can be identified and stopped, and the damage done remedied.

4 Cultural Genocide – Past and Present

It is with this backdrop in mind that a simple description of cultural genocide in its past and present form is described, before moving to the forward looking aspect of this paper, which examines the most essential solutions.

4.1 In the past

There are conflated accounts about whether Saddam Hussein and his Ba'ath regime were good to the Christians. That subject is not worth treating; the list of destroyed churches and villages alone should relegate anyone entertaining the subject to the category of misguided at best, and deliberately maligning at worst.

In the context of this paper, the concern is in the area of cultural genocide, however. In this respect, the evidence is singular, and stark. It begins with one of the first ever public interviews with Saddam Hussein as the leader of Iraq. His opinion on historical leaders and figures is sought, one of which being the ancient Mesopotamian King Nebuchadnezzar. The following is taken from that interview:

Nebuchadnezzar stirs in me everything relating to pre-Islamic ancient history. And what is most important to me about Nebuchadnezzar is the link between the Arabs' abilities and the liberation of Palestine. Nebuchadnezzar was, after all, an Arab from Iraq, albeit ancient Iraq.¹²

Saddam Hussein's reply is telling, as he twists history to make Nebuchadnezzar an Iraqi-Arab king, in the context of the Arab Israeli conflict. In taking this figure and making him an Arab, decoupling him from his Assyrian/Babylonian, Mesopotamian roots, Saddam Hussein is signaling the absorption and transmogrification of key elements of Assyrian history into an Iraqi Arab perversion.

The ultimate Iraqi policy manifestation of this cultural genocide couched in historical revisionism is the denial of Assyrians' right to be enumerated in the national census. This policy, furthermore, was carried over from previous regimes. In pre-liberation Iraq, one could only be Arab or Kurd. Thus, one thing separating the Kurdish experience of persecution and horror, from that of Assyrians, is that they had a right to exist as Kurds, albeit within Iraq. Assyrians did not even have that right.

It is difficult to find an Assyrian who does not know, or is not connected to someone that knows of at least one individual punished for indicating 'Assyrian' as their ethnicity in the national census. In this instance, it is worth providing personal accounts. Two

¹² Fuad Matar, *Saddam Hussein: A Biographical and Ideological Account of His Leadership Style and Crisis Management* (London: Highlight Publications, 1990 [originally published in 1979]) 235.

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individuals, during an April 2006 field mission to the Nineveh Plain recounted their imprisonment and torture for not writing Arab or Kurdish. The two persons, Abd Salam and Abu Sargon (Father of Sargon), were imprisoned for indicating they were ethnically Assyrian in the 1976 census. The former for three days and the latter, due to being in the military, for one month. Beatings and the denial of any semblance of human dignity were part of the detainment experience.

Combined with the full weight of other forms of Arabization, such as school curricula, popular state media and outright official denial of one's existence as a people, many Assyrians were dislocated from their Assyrian identity.

This explains the “awareness campaigns” observed by field missions to Iraq. In April 2004, while in the Nineveh Plain, an area targeted extensively for Arabization, a team discovered cultural education programs, seeking to reconnect people to their Assyrian identity, reversing the impact of cultural genocide. The events in particular were being held during the period of celebrating the Assyrian New Year, on April 1, referred to as *Khab Nissan*.

This program of removing “Assyrian” from Iraq's national fabric was a stark indication to Assyrians of their second-class citizenship. It explains the phenomena of those Assyrians who consciously rejected their ethnicity in order to conform to the regime's requirements. Tariq Aziz (whose actual name is Mikhael Youkhana, an Assyrian of the Chaldean Church) is perhaps the highest profile example of such a case. This individual could rise to prominence – becoming Foreign Minister and Deputy Prime Minister – but only by renouncing his Assyrian ancestry.

While the policies described above arose from Baghdad, it is the present that concerns the remainder of this paper. The focus is on policies driven by the Kurdistan Regional Government due to it being a far more functional sphere of government. This presumes deliberateness in policy development and implementation. When Baghdad demonstrates the ability to develop and implement policy, this case study should be extended to the whole of the country. What follows, is an examination of Kurdistan Regional Government performance in this respect.

4.2 In the present

Although certainly not architects of the original designs and machinations of cultural genocide against the Assyrian nation, Kurdish authorities today have exploited the damage done to the Assyrian identity for reasons which demand accountability. Evidence of this trend arises from the following observable policies, patterns of governance and intervention in the community's affairs.

4.2.1 Key Draft Kurdistan Legislation

The Kurdistan Regional Government's draft Constitution and draft petroleum legislation are arguably two of that region's highest profile pieces of legislation.

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The Draft Constitution of the Iraqi Kurdistan Region, in Art. 6(1), states that, “The people of Iraqi Kurdistan are composed of Kurds and other nationalities (Turkmens, Chaldeans, Assyrians, Armenians and Arabs) who are citizens of the region according to the law.

The draft Petroleum Act of the Kurdistan Region of Iraq mandates the allocation of special funding for ethnic and religious minorities in the Kurdistan region. According to Art. 19(e), Funding is to be:

distributed annually, in an amount or amounts to be recommended by the Parliamentary Committee, for any elected bodies of citizens of the Kurdistan Region who are members of an ethnic or religious minority, including Arabs, Turkmens, Chaldeans, Assyrian, Syriacs, Armenians, Sabaeen-Mandaeen, Yezidis, Shabak, Kakai, Jews, Baha’i, and other minorities, to support the special, cultural and governmental needs of the Kurdistan Region’s minorities within the Kurdistan Region.

This is stark evidence of the agenda if left unchanged. Treating ‘Chaldeans, Assyrians, and Syriacs’ each as separate in such high profile pieces of legislation is seeking to cement these two into separate identities and thereby destroy the fullness of the Assyrian nation. Ultimately this agenda relegates all these identities to religiously defined peoples as opposed to allowing Assyrians to be identified ethnically as one, which is their fundamental human right. This latter point raises concerns of whether the agenda is not to ultimately ‘Kurdify’ these peoples, since there is no objection to being a ‘Kurdish Christian’ – something alarmingly close to Saddam Hussein’s Ba’ath agenda for Arabization.

4.2.2 Supporting Ethnically Divisive Civil Society Institutions

Joseph Schumpeter, once stated, “The spirit of a people, its cultural level, its social structure, the deeds its policy may prepare—all this and more is written in its fiscal history, stripped of all phrases.” It is fitting then to see what the KRG is doing with its funding in areas of the Nineveh Plain.

The KRG, in strategic areas, is funding organizations with the explicit agenda to undermine the unifying efforts of existing Assyrian civil society institutions.

Three disparate instances of this KRG program serve to exemplify this alarming trend of active cultural genocide from just one town in the Nineveh Plain, Bakhdede – making it indicative of broader trends.

In the aftermath of liberation, Iraq began producing a plethora of diverse civil society institutions. For minorities such as Assyrians, these institutions are vital since they must compensate for significant political weakness. In one case, a remarkable institution developed called the “Nineveh Center for Research and Development’. This institution brought not only Assyrians of all denominations together in the Nineveh Plain, but also other minorities, such as Shabaks, and Yezidis, among others.

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It was not long before the KRG funded the creation of the ‘Syriac Center for Research and Development’, with funding channeled through religious institutions and leaders. It is vital to understand the significance of this development. The Nineveh Center for Research and Development identifies the unifying commonality of the Assyrians, respecting the right to self-determination of all, but working to maintain the idea that they are all part of one nation and have a process of national healing to undergo in order to reverse the legacy of cultural genocide.

The Syriac Center for Research and Development extols only the Syriac Church’s identity, however. It works to further rewrite the history of these people by further invigorating efforts to separate Syriacs from Assyrians. This cynical exercise in historical revisionism, with the real-world impact of further dividing the Assyrian nation directly links the KRG to actively endorsing and facilitating a process of cultural genocide.

In another instance, the Nineveh Plain region to the east of Mosul city, where Assyrians and other minorities predominate, produced the Syriac Writers Union. Soon after, once again with KRG funding, a new institution emerged, called the Syriac and Chaldean Writers Union. This situation may seem confusing to the lay reader of these matters. The former institution, the Syriac Writers Union, uses the term in its identification of Syriac as the Assyrian people’s language. The newly formed, KRG-funded, ‘Syriac and Chaldean Writers Union’ once again seeks to create the two into ethnicities, distinct from the Assyrian nation by referring to them as equal peoples dislocating them from the commonality of the shared language.

The objective here is to ensure that bodies such as the Syriac Writers Union cannot build unity through the one shared language. It is an effort purely driven to reinforce divisions in the Assyrian nation that will produce entrenched, newly formed, ethnicities. It is worth repeating, once again, that funding for these efforts is channeled through religious leaders and religious institutions who appear to share in the desire to prevent any organic process of surmounting the divisions in the Assyrian nation.

The last example is a generalized set of incidents where one observes, throughout Assyrian communities, newly established internet café’s cultural clubs and centers along explicitly Syriac and explicitly Chaldean lines, leaving to languish others such as ChaldoAssyrian Syriac Student Unions, their existing internet cafés and cultural clubs falling into disrepair without financial support. This is evidenced throughout the region.

Interestingly, monies are channeled principally through religious leaders and religious institutions. At a minimum, the spending takes place along lines reinforcing the ‘Christian’ part of the Assyrian identity. This is the case with new cultural clubs and internet cafés, and student associations which receive their funding from the KRG via religious institutions.

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4.2.3 Khinnis

Khinnis represents a vital landmark for the Assyrian nation. Elaborate, massive engravings in the cliff sides of Assyrian kings and deities provide a stark reminder to all of the Assyrian ancestry in the region. This location, cut-through with a river, is where many of the famous winged bulls and other Assyrian symbols were developed. Taken together, it is a tangible symbol of the one Assyrian nation that is indigenous in that land.

Khinnis, today, is in land claimed by the Kurdistan Regional Government. The Khinnis site today serves as a park ground for picnics and other activities. Catering to the picnickers, the KRG is now dynamiting the cliff side in order to create areas of shade for them.

A media report best summarizes the gravity of the situation:

Located northeast of ancient Nineveh on the eastern bank of the Tigris River in modern-day Mosul, the almost 2,700-year-old Khinnis site, also known as the Bavian site, highlights the geographical start of an impressive engineering feat of ancient Assyrian culture. It remains important to the Assyrian Christian people of Iraq, historically traceable to the Mesopotamian cradle of civilization.

Khinnis was part of a large-scale construction work initiated by King Sennacherib, who founded Nineveh as the new capital of the Assyrian Empire in 705 BC. It comprised an aqueduct system by which water could be brought down to the fields and the city of Nineveh.

During the recent trip by ISDP -- a special project launched by the Chicago-based Assyrian Academic Society, with members worldwide -- the delegation not only observed the damage caused by tourism, including visitors having chipped off pieces from the rock carvings, but also noted bullet holes, indicating that the reliefs have been used for target practice.

ISDP further reported that the site faces the threat of dynamiting. According to Firas Jatou, a member of the delegation, Kurdish authorities have ordered a small construction company to use dynamite to carve out caves in the sun-spotted rocks to create shade for the picnickers.

Jatou said the work has been sanctioned by Jarjis Hasan Khinnis, a member of the central committee of the Kurdistan Democratic Party (KDP) led by the president of the Autonomous Kurdish Government in Iraq, Massoud Barzani.

"One of the workers told us that he was simply doing his job -- that he was contracted to blow out the side of the cliff to create shade," Youash said. "For the workers, it is just a public works project rather than an act of cultural genocide."¹³

¹³ Soderlindh, Lisa. "Priceless Assyrian Relics Used for Target Practice". InterPress Service. <http://ipsnews.net/news.asp?idnews=33601> (last accessed October 16, 2006).

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In threatening the structural integrity of the cliff in order to make shade, and in allowing picnickers to use the massive engravings as a jungle-gym, for climbing and recreation, the KRG is removing part of the physical Assyrian identity. Once again, it is engaging in policies of cultural genocide.

4.2.4 Not Supporting/Respecting the Outcome of the October 2003 Conference

In October of 2003, a substantial element of the Assyrian nation (including civic organizations, religious leaders along with political leadership) gathered in Baghdad. Establishing a unified political front was a critical element of the gathering. A critical outcome of this conference was the coining of a term not seen for decades, which was the compound, “ChaldoAssyrian” name, acknowledging “Syriac” as the language of the nation.

The term, “ChaldoAssyrian” did not mark the formation of a new ethnicity, or people. Its purpose was defensive in a chaotic political arena. The hope was to present a unified political name to keep the community counted as one, while their problems of divisions and historical challenges were dealt with internally. Regrettably, some of the fault lines created by years of persecution and policies of divide and rule proved too great and cohesion behind the term collapsed.

While the community itself bears a great responsibility for this outcome, it is worth noting that important political actors ignored the outcome, maintaining the divisions. Principally, actors such as the Kurdistan Democratic Party, arguably the group with the closest geographic ties to Assyrians appears to have encouraged the splitting of the names such that in Iraq’s Constitution today, Chaldeans and Assyrians are counted as separate peoples.

This is consistent with KDP policy as reflected in the draft Kurdistan Regional Government legislation cited above (section 4.2.1).

By not respecting the finding of the conference or the pursuance of the matter from the most dominant Assyrian political party, the Assyrian Democratic Movement, the KDP revealed its pursuit of an agenda maintaining divide and rule. In this respect, it is sustaining policies of cultural genocide.

5 Solutions

Clearly the beginning of any solutions to the termination of and redress for programs of cultural genocide, begins with those issued described in this paper. These demand elaboration.

5.1 Iraqi Kurdistan

The KRG’s legislative culture must always seek to classify Assyrians, Syriacs, and Chaldeans as one people – even if recognizing each of the groups. Ideally, the KRG

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would become truly progressive, and mindful of the damage caused by past policies, that it would create a legislative framework for promoting Assyrian unity and protecting it from any state resources ever being used to promote division.

This is, admittedly, an extraordinarily complicated matter, however. Syriacs and Chaldeans are entitled to the right of self-determination. The distinction being sought here is that state resources and policies that seek to artificially generate or exploit these divisions are illegal, and exemplify what draft international legislation on cultural genocide and ethnocide are concerned with preventing.

For state resources to be used in the fashion observed today demands not only an immediate cessation, but monetary redress. Supporting explicitly divisive civil society institutions, whose sole distinguishing characteristic from existing, organically developed civil society entities, is their denominational identity, is a cynical manipulation of a vulnerable people in a process of healing.

As a result, it is essential for KRG programs to explicitly target those civil society bodies that are working to heal existing divisions within the Assyrian nation. These entities are being allowed to go through a process akin to the atrophy of suffocating limbs, while those of the divisive nature are being provided all necessary resources for their operations. A financial process of redress must account for damage already done and consequently demands even greater funding to the Assyrian ‘unifiers’ than was provided those institutions promoting division and disunity.

An immediate budget must be set aside for protecting the Khinnis site. Appropriate authorities, in consultation with Assyrian leaders, must institute a program for undoing the harm caused to the site and making it a truly honored location of the region’s Assyrian ancestry.

5.2 US and Multi-National Actors

American resources, by far the dominant sources of funding on the ground, play a substantial role in developing Iraq. To date, it is proving difficult to determine where and how US resources are being used in this policy environment. It is clear, however, that there is great potential if the US could see the benefit of redress for the Assyrian nation and begin promoting civil society institutions that would make Assyrians, natural allies of the US, a stronger people overall.

In a climate where US resources are shrinking, while challenges grow, this is an unlikely eventuality. The critical role the US must play is in how Iraqi resources are used. This is demanded under international law, since the agreements which dissolved the Oil-For-Food-Program and created the Development Fund for Iraq require US accountability for ensuring Iraqi resources are used appropriately.

Requiring the US to fulfill its international obligations in this respect would allow it to demand the KRG cease all such activities that constitute cultural genocide, such as those programs described above.

5.3 Internationally

The official activities of the KRG to date constitute a basis to return cultural genocide and ethnocide to the forefront of international human rights jurisprudence.

The process of developing such sensitive legal concepts is iterative. Often, the need for such legislation is spurred along by actual manifestations of the reprehensible act. In this case, the KRG has been engaging in the abhorrent act for too long and provides enough impetus to document the phenomenon; allowing it to inform the development of a more robust international legal regime on cultural genocide and ethnocide, and have it adopted as a convention or declaration.

This process must begin immediately.

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Appendix A

List of ChaldoAssyrian Villages Destroyed & Their Residents Deported by the Ba'athist Iraqi Regime

| Name of Village | Region | Province | Notes |
|---------------------|---------|--|----------------------------|
| 1. Feshkhabur | Zakho | Dohuk | destroyed in 1976 |
| 2. Deraboon | = | = | = |
| 3. Qarawola | = | = | = |
| 4. Bedar | = | = | = |
| 5. Shkaftmara | = | = | = |
| 6. Bahnona | = | = | = |
| 7. Dashtnakh | = | = | = |
| 8. Yarda | = | = | = |
| 9. Dershish | = | = | = |
| 10. Sanat | = | = | = |
| 11. Be nakhre | = | = | = |
| 12. Alanish | = | = | = |
| 13. Sheranish | = | = | = |
| 14. Estavlane | = | = | = |
| 15. Behire | = | = | = |
| 16. *Bersve | = | = | demography altered in 1976 |
| 17. Avgani | = | = | destroyed in 1976 |
| 18. Levo | = | = | 1987 |
| 19. Mullaarab | = | = | 1986 |
| 20. Mergasur | = | = | 1976 |
| 21. Piraka | = | = | 1986 |
| 22. Nafkendala | = | = | = |
| 23. Sooriya Sliwane | Dohuk | all civilians massacred 1969 village destroyed | |
| 24. Bajedabaraf I | Sliwane | = | destroyed in 1976 |
| 25. Afzrook Hamo | = | = | = |
| 26. Upper Afzrook | = | = | = |
| 27. Eshkafdal | = | = | = |
| 28. Bakhlooja | = | = | = |
| 29. Sliwane | = | = | = |
| 30. Hawresk | = | = | = |
| 31. Badaliya | Semele | = | 1983 |
| 32. Hejirke | = | = | 1986 |
| 33. Shiyes | = | = | 1986 |
| 34. ** Maryako | = | = | 1976 |
| 35. Maltaye | = | = | 1986 |

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| | | | |
|--------------------------------|---|---|-------------------------|
| 36. Karrana | = | = | 1976 |
| 37. Mawana | = | = | = |
| 38. Bakhetme | = | = | 1987 |
| 39. Kherbasale | = | = | = |
| 40. Khrabkulke | = | = | = |
| 41. Nerwakteta Nerwa – Amadia | = | = | 1976 |
| 42. Qaru | = | = | = |
| 43. Bash | = | = | = |
| 44. Weala | = | = | = |
| 45. Maidane | = | = | = |
| 46. Hish | = | = | = |
| 47. Estep | = | = | = |
| 48. Kanimase Barwar - Amadia | = | Dohuk regional center destroyed in 1987 | |
| 49. ***Doore | = | = | destroyed in 1978 |
| 50. Challek | = | = | 1976 |
| 51. Chakala | = | = | = |
| 52. Tashish | = | = | 1987 |
| 53. Bequlke | = | = | 1976 |
| 54. Jidede | = | = | 1987 |
| 55. Maye | = | = | = |
| 56. Derishke | = | = | 1987 |
| 57. Beshmeyaye Barwar - Amadia | = | | Dohuk destroyed in 1978 |
| 58. Eyet | = | = | = |
| 59. Bettanore | = | = | = |
| 60. Butara | = | = | 1977 |
| 61. Khwara | = | = | = |
| 62. Malekhta | = | = | = |
| 63. Makhrabiya | = | = | = |
| 64. Iqra | = | = | = |
| 65. Sardashte | = | = | = |
| 66. Halwa | = | = | = |
| 67. Chame Dosdina | = | = | = |
| 68. Hossarek | = | = | = |
| 69. Betbaluk | = | = | = |
| 70. Kani Balawe | = | = | 1988 |
| 71. Bas | = | = | = |
| 72. Toothe Shemaye | = | = | = |
| 73. ChamMike | = | = | 1976 |
| 74. Moosaka | = | = | 1988 |
| 75. Hayes | = | = | = |
| 76. Margajia | = | = | = |
| 77. Dehe Sarsank - Amadia | = | = | 1987 |
| 78. Dawoodiya | = | = | = |

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| | | | |
|----------------------|--------|------------------|----------------------------------|
| 79. Ten | = | = | = |
| 80. Araden | = | = | 1986 |
| 81. Sekrine | = | = | 1987 |
| 82. Tajika | = | = | = |
| 83. Boobawa | = | = | = |
| 84. Bardarash | = | = | = |
| 85. Duhoke | = | = | 1986 |
| 86. Eineshke | = | = | = |
| 87. Aqdesht | = | = | changed to refugee camps |
| 88. Bet Anatha | = | = | destroyed in 1987 |
| 89. Hamziya | Amadia | = | destroyed in 1963 |
| 90. Blejane | = | = | = |
| 91. Banasora | = | = | = |
| 92. Hawendke | = | = | 1988 |
| 93. Betbade | = | = | 1987 |
| 94. Meristic | = | = | = |
| 95. Dere | = | = | = |
| 96. Komane | = | = | changed to refugee camps |
| 97. Mahudle | = | = | destroyed in 1987 |
| 98. Derigne | = | = | 1988 |
| 99. Chamsene Nahla - | Aqra | Nineveh villages | destroyed 1963 by Baghdad regime |
| 100. Dawriye | = | = | = |
| 101. Gearbish | = | = | = |
| 102. Upper Gearbish | = | = | = |
| 103. Kashkawa | = | = | destroyed in 1987 |
| 104. Cham Ashrat | = | = | = |
| 105. Chamchale | = | = | 1963 |
| 106. Essen | = | = | 1987 |
| 107. Argen | = | = | = |
| 108. Atoosh | = | = | = |
| 109. Meaze | = | = | = |
| 110. Derke | = | = | = |
| 111. Alolen | = | = | = |
| 112. Chamrabatke | = | = | 1963 |
| 113. Merooke | = | = | 1987 |
| 114. Belmend | = | = | = |
| 115. Hizane | = | = | = |
| 116. Takhed turkaye | = | = | = |
| 117. Jolea | = | = | = |
| 118. Khalilane | = | = | = |
| 119. Khurpaniya | Atrosh | = | demography changed |
| 120. Chavrike | = | = | = |
| 121. Averik | = | = | = |
| 122. Boboze | = | = | destroyed in 1987 |
| 123. Deralosh | = | = | = |
| 124. Koradeare | = | = | 1963 |

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| | | | |
|---------------------|-----------|----------------------------|----------------------|
| 125. Bedole | = | = | = |
| 126. Dizze | = | = | 1987 |
| 127. Kalinu | = | = | = |
| 128. Derakhidr | = | = | = |
| 129. Azzakh | = | = | = |
| 130. Armash | = | = | = |
| 131. Bellan | = | = | = |
| 132. Tellan | = | = | = |
| 133. Beere | = | = | = |
| 134. Besare | = | = | = |
| 135. Baskadeare | = | = | = |
| 136. Haroona | = | = | = |
| 137. Babelo | Zawita | Dohuk | = |
| 138. Gondkosa | Mangeashe | = | 1988 |
| 139. Geareqawra | Semele | = | 1976 |
| 140. Derke Barwar | Amadia | = | = |
| 141. Bazibe | = | = | = |
| 142. Kaftewmardinea | = | = | = |
| 143. Zuinke | = | = | = |
| 144. Hurke | = | = | 1963 |
| 145. Rekan Rekan | Amadia | = | = |
| 146. Lish | = | = | = |
| 147. Spe | = | = | = |
| 148. Belembase | Nahla | Nineveh | = |
| 149. Dawide | = | = | = |
| 150. V. Saura | = | = | = |
| 151. Lower Saura | = | = | = |
| 152. Rasul Ain | Aqra | = | = |
| 153. Kherpe | = | = | = |
| 154. Gundek | = | = | = |
| 155. Hazar jute | = | = | = |
| 156. Merga | = | = | = |
| 157. Maghara | = | = | = |
| 158. Bedial | = | = | = |
| 159. Ardel | = | = | = |
| 160. Betas | Harir | Erbil | = |
| 161. Henaruk | = | = | = |
| 162. Darbanduk | = | = | = |
| 163. Sedar | Nahla | Nineveh | = |
| 164. Bendwaye | Alqosh | demography altered in 1976 | Assyrians forced out |
| 165. Badriya | = | = | = |
| 166. Jarwana | = | = | 1963 |
| 167. Almaman | = | = | = |
| 168. Meristeg | = | = | 1976 |
| 169. Ummairi | = | = | = |
| 170. Beboze | = | = | = |

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| | | | |
|------------------|--------|---------|-------------------------|
| 171. Qasrune | Alqosh | Nineveh | demography altered 1976 |
| 172. Ainhelwa | = | = | = |
| 173. Jamboor | = | = | = |
| 174. Taftian | = | = | = |
| 175. Nassiriya | = | = | = |
| 176. Salehiya | = | = | = |
| 177. Dostaka | = | = | = |
| 178. Telkhish | = | = | = |
| 179. Greapan | = | = | = |
| 180. Khoshaba | = | = | = |
| 181. Beristeq | = | = | destroyed in 1963 |
| 182. Khersheniya | = | = | 1976 |
| 183. Reqawa | = | = | = |

* Bersve: The village was changed to a big “Refugee Camp” for Kurds and Assyrians deported from the surrounding region. The lands of the village were changed into a military sector and villagers were forbidden entry. This pattern applies to other villages thus altered as shown on the list.

** Maryako : The village was destroyed together with the historic Mar Yako Monastery and its Chaldean Catholic Parochial School

*** Doore : The historic monastery of Mar Quayoma and the church of Mar Givargis (St . George) also were destroyed .

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Sample List of Churches and Monasteries Destroyed

1. Mar Zaya Cathedral: Baghdad (Karradet Mariam area).
The biggest eastern church.....*Destroyed in early 1985.*
 2. Mar Yousip Khnanishoo Church: Arbil (Harir).
May have dated from the 6th c. CE*.....*Destroyed 1976 to “widen the main road” in the town.*
 3. Mar Yaqoob Monastery of the Chaldeans Catholic Church: (Mar Yaqoo village).
Built 1400 years ago.
.....*Destroyed in 1976.*
 4. Mart Maryam Church: (Sardashte village).
Built 50 years ago.
.....*Destroyed in 1977.*
- Dohuk Governorate, Upper Barwara District
5. Mar Moshe Monastery: Upper Barwara (in Lower Jakalah).
Built ca. 800 AD year ago.
.....*Destroyed in 1977.*
 6. Mar Gewargis Church: Upper Barwara (Dooreh village).
Built ca.800 AD.
.....*Destroyed in 1977.*
 7. Mar Qayoomah Monastery: Upper Barwara (Dooreh village).
One at the most venerated monasteries. Built ca. 900 years ago.
.....*Destroyed in 1977.*
 8. Mart Maryam Church: Upper Barwara (Mach village).
Built this century.
.....*Destroyed in 1977.*
 9. Mar Younan Church: Upper Barwara (Aqreh village).
Built recently.
.....*Destroyed in 1977.*
- Dohuk Governorate, Nerwa district
10. Mart Maryam Church: Nerwa (Welah village).
Recently built.
.....*Destroyed in 1977.*
 11. Qadishtah Shmoneh Church: Nerwa (Welah village).

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Built recently.

.....*Destroyed in*
1977. 12. Mar Khnana Monastery: Nerwa (Qaroo village).

Built 7th c. AD.*Destroyed by Iraqi*
bombers in 1977. 13. Mar Qoryaqos Church: Nerwa (Qaroo village).

Built 1300 years ago.

.....*Destroyed in 1977.* 14.
Mar Zakka Church: Nerwa (Bash village).

Built recently.

.....*Destroyed in*
1977.