

Nineveh Plains after ISIS:

Most of Nineveh plains region was liberated on October, 2016 and the completion of liberation of its last part (Tilkef town) in February, 2017. But, new realities are being faced by the Assyrian Christian, which are the indigenous people of this land. Their homes, properties, businesses and even Churches has been completely and deliberately burned and destroyed, some beyond recognition, by ISIS militants or their enablers and sympathizers from the neighboring areas. The destructions and the pillage and plunder of the Christian properties is much, much colossal that the damage to the properties of the other groups in the region. This is causing a sense of hopelessness to the Christians of the area; when they see that the destructions of the Christian properties is much colossal than that of the other people. It is also preventing the Christians from returning back home as they had hoped after spending almost three years dispersed in different parts of Iraq. This is also pushing many of them to pack and leave to the neighboring countries seeking shelter and hoping to be resettled in the diaspora.

What caused the previous feeling too is the new sad military and political reality that came up as one of the military operations outcomes, which is the division of the region into two different geographical areas occupied by two different military powers. The northern sector (Alqosh, Batnaya, Tilisqof, Shekhan and others except Tilkef) are under the control of the Kurdish forces. Southern sector (Bakhdeda, Karmlish, Bartela, and Mar Behnam Monastery) are under the control of the Iraqi forces and the Nineveh Protection Units.

This situation and its prospect future consequences are raising many questions by Nineveh plains residences regarding the future of their region. They do not want their region to be a field for the sectarian tensions between bigger factions in Iraq to settle their differences.

The preliminary survey of destruction that took place in the indigenous people towns and villages was as follow; Bakhdeda 60%, Bartela 50%, Karimlish 40%, Basheqa and Bahzane 50%, Batnaya 80%. Even the villages that ISIS did not occupy for longtime like Telisqof and Baqofa, people cannot return in the current situation because of lack of public services and high percentage of the damage of the private and public building in addition to the pillage and plunder that these areas were subjected to, which the security forces cannot prevent till now.

The Iraqi parliament has declared Nineveh Plains region a disaster area and as such it is eligible for a government fund for reconstruction, but it is a long way for this declaration to be implemented. Nothing has been done to at least help the people to return to their homes. Therefore to help the people of Nineveh Plains return to their homes and businesses a few steps have to be considered including, but not limited to:

- The people of the region have to be responsible of their own security, and the removal of all the security apparatus that are not from the region.
- The immediate removal of the military and geographical division of the region.
- Hasten the creation of self-administrative area in the region, in line with the Iraqi constitution, guaranteed by international forces and the United Nations.
- International support for the construction of the infrastructure in the region and fair compensation for the people who lost their homes, livelihood because of ransack of the region.

And the most important challenges that face the people of the region is the natural resources in the area which should not be used by anyone without consultation with the people of the region for this has the utmost importance effect on the future of the region for generations to come.