



ASSYRIA COUNCIL OF EUROPE

09 January 2012

Press Release

KURDISH REGIONAL GOVERNMENT HAS LOST CONTROL OVER ZAKHO – EU MUST ACT NOW

Member of the Kurdistan Parliament, Mr. Amir Goga from the Chaldean Syriac Assyrian Popular Council, raised his strong concerns on Ishtar TV regarding the unstable state of Assyrians (also known as Syriacs and Chaldeans) in Zakho, a city in North Iraq. He emphasized that the situation in Zakho following the December 2011 attacks of Kurds on non-Islamic properties is far from stable. Mr. Goga states that the attacks caused considerable damage to businesses and service facilities. The citizens of Zakho are worried that this continuous tension could lead to more attacks.

On December 2nd, 2011, immediately after their Friday prayers, hundreds of Islamic Kurds in Zakho were mobilized by the preaching of an Imam to attack businesses and properties owned by Christian Assyrians. At least 20 shops in the predominantly Assyrian business area were attacked in front of security officials who did not intervene. The continuous violence against Assyrians has since spread to numerous places across Northern Iraq.

The way in which the attacks were carried out confirms that there is a clear strategy to frighten non-Kurdish citizens by destroying their businesses, to eventually force them to leave their homeland. This discrimination against Assyrian and other non-Kurdish citizens should not be tolerated.

The Kurdish Regional Government is not making efforts to normalize the situation in Zakho, punish the perpetrators, or compensate the victims of the attacks; therefore the Assyria Council of Europe **asks for a full investigation of the incidents in Northern Iraq by NGOs and European Institutions.**