

## Aug. 2017 Official Alqosh Protest Statement Signed by Thousands of Alqosh Residents

To the Honorable Administrative Court of Justice

Protest Statement.

The people of Alqosh District, comprising our Chaldean Syriac Assyrian people in the homeland and diaspora, expressed their rejection and indignation regarding the decision made by the Alqosh District Council after questioning and then dismissing Mr. Faiz Abed Mikha Jahwareh, the rightful mayor of Alqosh, from his duties. We have expressed this rejection by organizing peaceful protests including a large number of our people together with NGO's in an observer capacity and with the support of our people's representatives in Iraqi and KRG Parliaments. On Thursday 20<sup>th</sup> July 2017, we presented a protest statement that described the illegal and illegitimate dismissal to the head of Alqosh District Council, and that this decision issued from the Alqosh District Council was political in nature and not based on any legal material that authorizes an obligation or necessity to dismiss him. It represented an imposition of de facto policy and exploitation which benefited individuals and groups outside of Alqosh, namely by subjugating the area to KRG rule to accommodate the referendum which is planned to take place on 25<sup>th</sup> September 2017. This policy is also clearly being imposed on the other towns of the Nineveh Plain for the same purpose.

After the head of Alqosh District Council received the protest statement, he promised to deliver it to the Nineveh Governorate Council with a view to respecting the will of Alqosh residents. What happened was exactly the opposite of what he promised and was an affront to democracy and the will, culture, and dignity of the people of Alqosh. They proved their true intentions by imposing this de facto policy: to take possession of political power and confiscate our freedom of speech. The decision to appoint to the post of mayor, Mrs. Lara Zara, a member of the Kurdistan Democratic Party (KDP), was voted by the District Council and signed by the governor of Nineveh Governorate. This appointment contributes to completing the task of obtaining total administrative power over Nineveh Governorate: the Director of Alqosh District, the head of Alqosh's District Council with the majority of its members, the head of Nineveh Governorate council and the first Vice Governor of Nineveh now all belong to the same political party: the KDP.

We must mention that the head and majority of members of Alqosh District Council are politically affiliated with the KDP and that they are illegally implementing the directives and policies of the Kurdistan Regional Government (KRG). These affiliations provide evidence of the illegitimacy of Alqosh District Council and illegality of their decision to dismiss Mr. Jahwareh who had been elected legitimately. We hope to return this administrative right to the people and prevent such illegal procedures and directives in order to avoid a recurrence of any sectarian or political conflicts, when we are living the joys and triumphs of victory and the ultimate elimination of the terrorist group ISIS.

Despite that, the Alqosh District Council abused the will of Alqosh masses by appointing a new mayor. The head of Nineveh Governorate Council and the Vice Governor of Nineveh violated many administrative laws, including:

1 – Ratifying the decision to dismiss Mr Jahwareh had been taken by the Alqosh District Council and by the head of Nineveh Governorate council, Bashar Al-Kiki, without holding a formal meeting with the council members.

2 – Announcing for the appointment of the new mayor on 16<sup>th</sup> July 2017 two days after exercising the decision to dismiss Mr. Jahwareh from his position.

3 – Appointing of the new mayor, Mrs Lara Yousif Zara occurred on 27<sup>th</sup> July, before the end of the period of legal court appeal, followed by the issuance of administrative order from the Nineveh Governor on 31<sup>st</sup> July to accept Mrs. Lara Yousif Zara for the position of mayor.

4 – Stipulating that the nomination that the new candidate for the position of mayor "must be Christian and from the center of Alqosh District (Alqoshian) exclusively", despite that stipulation not being contained in any law. Putting this point in this form may raise sectarian and racial prejudice among the people of Alqosh town and the villages that belongs to Alqosh District among our (Chaldean Syriac Assyrian) people, as well as the neighboring components of Yezidis and Arabs. This stipulation is made to win the hearts of Alqoshians, even though the seat of mayor of the district is an agreement reached by the people of the district as a share of Alqosh's administrative participation. This is not present in any legal text so this declaration casts the administrative court of Iraq as racial and sectarian in nature.

5 – Not fulfilling their duty towards the demonstrators by depriving us of our constitutional right and not addressing our demands. They instead continued with their own political plan and elected a new mayor for the district.

We demand all relevant authorities to cease these actions by revoking the decision issued against Mr. Faiz Abed Mikha Jahwareh, the rightful mayor of the district, and to enforce the rule of law and respect the will of Alqosh district people.

Attachment:

- Signatures of thousands of Alqosh district residents.

Copy to:

- Iraqi Parliament.
- High Commissioner for Human Rights.
- Nineveh Governorate Council.
- Governor of Nineveh Office.
- Alqosh District Council.
- United Nations Office in Baghdad.
- The Ambassador of the United States of America in Baghdad.



