



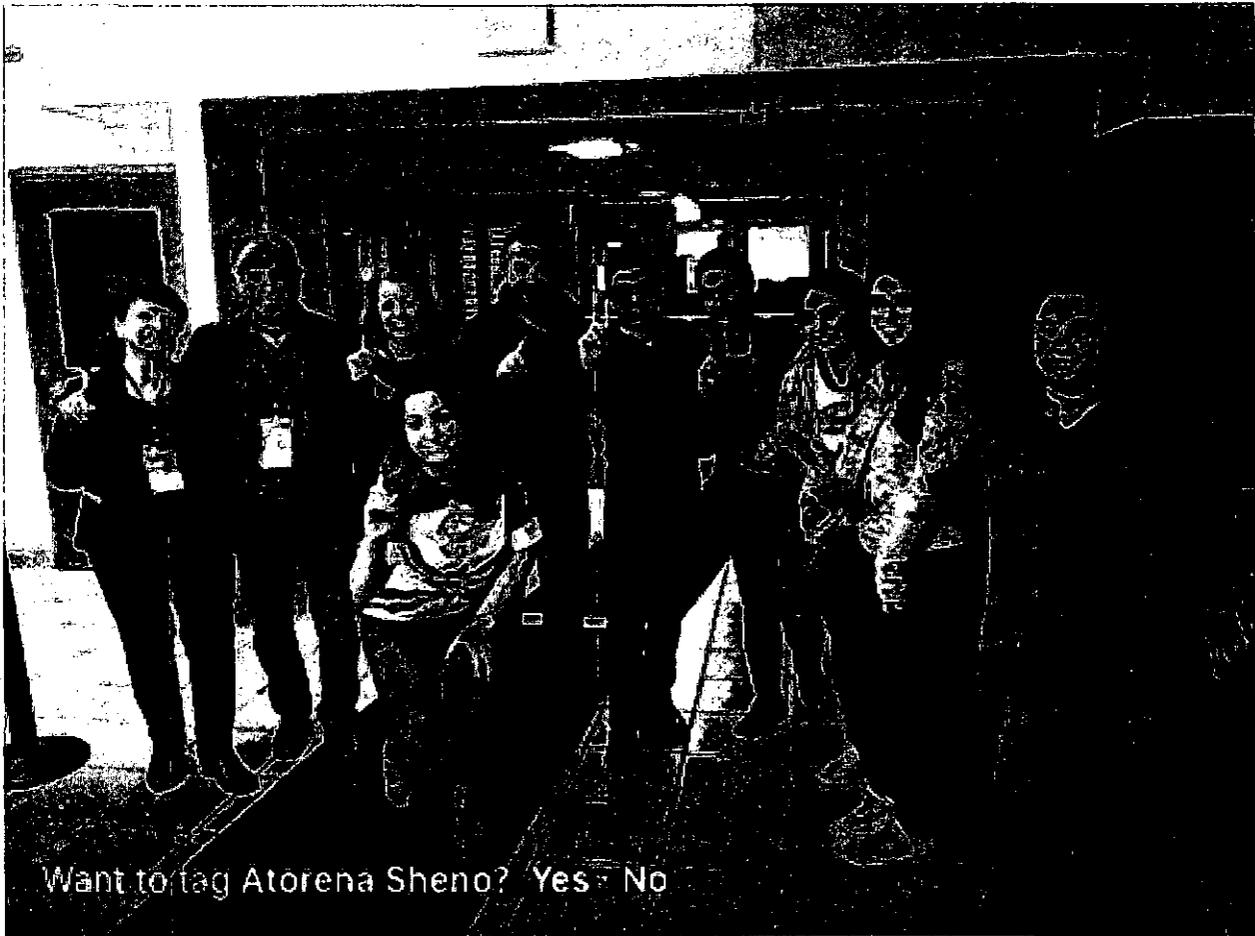
Elmer Abbo



Yesterday at 10:05am · 🌐 ▼

Proud to have voted in Iraq's elections, and proud to have voted for the Assyrian Democratic Movement. The ADM is the only independent Assyrian political party pursuing and actually capable of achieving Assyrian rights as equals with others in Iraq, including the right to defend ourselves with our own local security force, the Nineveh Plain Protection Units.

When it mattered after ISIS invaded Nineveh, no other Assyrian party stepped up to support our own self-defense with t... See More



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dispelling some myths and lies sold to Assyrian activists: please read before you vote and discuss with others

1 message

Michael Youash

Thu, May 10, 2018 at 4:19 PM

(apologies, resending with NPDF disclaimer)

Shlamaloukhun,

I am sharing my thoughts with you even as many of you on this list have already voted and as many other prepare to vote. There is so much to discuss and I intend on analyzing the impact of these elections as fully and formally as I possibly can, later. However, this email is being sent because I am deeply concerned and also disgusted by a very specific myth, even a lie, that has been created in order to sell the idea that some lists and candidates are the agents of "Change".

For weeks now, you may have been hearing from candidates from other parties regarding their promises and ideas. Prospective candidates have come from Assyria (Iraq) our homeland and even places like London, England. Many of these candidates, like the ones running on a list with former ADM members, are telling Assyrians that nothing has ever been done and nothing has ever been demanded. The goal of such statements is to imply that the ADM has never actually done anything and seeks nothing. Statements like these intend to create the impression that the ADM is only interested in seats and not real results. This myth-making is necessary for them to convince you that they represent "change".

My goal here is to point out how the grand promises and plans being presented are being built on a story that is simply untrue. As you come to understand the profound lack of truth used by others as a foundation to make their grand promises and claims you will need to ask yourself as a responsible Assyrian activist and voter how you can vote for those who seek to mislead you so badly.

To keep the argument simple I will use security policy as the main focus to illustrate my point (and my insights stem from decades of experience, including my current membership on the board of the NPDF). Without security and without some security presence almost nothing is possible and grand promises are impossible. Anyone who makes promises and claims without having a detailed security strategy is hoping you don't dig a little deeper. American experience in Iraq fully justifies my focus on security. After Iraq's second 2005 elections, President George Bush said his immediate, short-term legislative priorities in Iraq were for an Iraqi oil law, federal budget law and provincial elections law. At that time the U.S. had between 120,000 to 130,000 troops on the ground. Those laws did not come into proper existence until almost three years later, during the surge with as much as 165,000 troops on the ground. If the U.S. had to

increase force levels from 130,000 to 165,000 to try and meet its highest legislative priorities in Iraq, what can be said of someone who promises Assyrians everything they want to hear but says nothing about the security strategy to make that happen?

As you all know, the ADM made the Nineveh Plains a legislative policy priority in terms of Iraq's federal system in October 2003. A key step to creating a province is establishing a locally legitimate, federally-mandated security force. In June 2006, the ADM helped secure an Iraqi Ministry of the Interior and U.S. forces-backed order to begin establishing the necessary security force in the Nineveh Plain. The KDP used its power in Ninawa Governorate to block implementation of the order. But, the ADM persisted along with support from Assyrian activists in the U.S. and managed to overcome the KDP blockage.

On April 10, 2008, Congressman Mark Kirk told U.S. Ambassador to Iraq, Ryan Crocker, in a congressional hearing, that the Assyrian community provided, *and I quote*: "detailed planning of the police force to protect themselves" and then he went on to say: "I don't think we have detailed planning like this for any other [...] villages in Iraq, but we certainly have them for these villages [in the Nineveh Plain]." That was a plan developed by the ADM and provided to Assyrian activists in the U.S. who provided it to Congress. Ambassador Ryan Crocker informed Congressman Kirk that he spoke with U.S. forces in Mosul and they were proceeding with Nineveh Plain security force implementation per that original order ASAP.

Sadly, the KDP did as much as possible to undermine the force as it was being developed. It reached about 450-500 before the KDP successfully pulled it apart eight months later. When the Nineveh Plain security force the ADM was trying to build was destroyed, the KDP brought in the Peshmerga and security guards funded by the KDP's Finance Minister Sarkis Aghajan, who also created Mejlis Sha'bi as political opposition to the ADM.

Just imagine if this Assyrian force was allowed to develop to its full potential, so that by August 2014, when ISIS attacked the Nineveh Plain, it had six-plus years of experience and came close to the 5000-strong force structure plan the ADM envisioned. We can only imagine now because the force was destroyed by our oppressors. Instead, when ISIS attacked, the KRG's Peshmerga and Sarkis Aghajan-funded, Mejlis Sha'bi-supported, security forces abandoned the people of the Nineveh Plain to ISIS.

After the KRG undermined our Nineveh Plain security force in 2008, the ADM established enough authority with the central government to overcome KRG efforts to annex the Nineveh Plain. It took several years, but by January 2014, Iraq's Council of Ministers took a decision to create a Nineveh Plain Province (along with three other new provinces in Iraq). The ADM had a Minister as part of that Cabinet after years of being shut-out of the Cabinet by KRG-based opposition. The executive authority decision to create a Nineveh Plain Province came about because the ADM worked with the highest authorities, against all odds, to create enough strength to push through such a decision. The ADM was preparing to continue the plan to create a province which is a necessary step to creating a region, but the invasion by ISIS put a dramatic halt to that agenda.

Again, the ADM did not give up. The ADM helped support the creation of the Nineveh Plain Protection Units (NPU) and is the only party fully and completely supportive of the NPU. The NPU is not simply a demand or a proposal, it is a reality. The NPU's existence

is an action that speaks a thousand times louder than words. Part of its founding mission includes: (1) actively participating in the liberation of the Nineveh Plain; (2) enabling the safe return of our people to the Nineveh Plain; (3) providing the prerequisites to once again pursue the agenda to create a new province in the Nineveh Plain. The NPU fulfilled its first purpose as the only official force from our Nation recognized as an ally in Operation Conquest and actively helped liberate the Nineveh Plain. Today, the NPU is the core security force in those towns and areas that are liberated and free from illegal occupation by the Peshmerga. Finally, the NPU is serving as our active force preventing the complete conquest of the Nineveh Plain by the Peshmerga.

Candidates have come and spoken to you in the U.S., Europe, Canada and elsewhere in Diaspora on other lists saying nothing has been done and no party up to now has demanded anything. These are lies explicitly meant to undermine the ADM. Even worse, these lies build directly on the successful actions of our oppressors, whether KRG political leaders or genocidal Islamist extremists.

Opposition to the ADM, especially those calling themselves 'independents' running on the lists of others, say the ADM has demanded nothing and achieved nothing. These are lies and the people making such statements are unethical. But there are some things you can trust the ADM to never do and this is based on my experience of working on specific policy issues with them (I am not, and have never been a member of the organization - I simply support policies where I have the capacity to provide support). My experience has shown me that the ADM will not lie to you. The ADM will never try and sell you false hopes. The ADM will never seek to exploit your lack of knowledge to paint a self-serving picture. The ADM will never insult your intelligence. Lastly, the ADM will never stop struggling and because of that our opposition will use every means to undermine us.

Once you see the illusions being created by others you need to ask yourself what that means for the promises and claims they are making. Then ask yourself how you can trust anyone except for the ADM, the only movement and party working responsibly with real policies that take real shape through real policy action. The false hopes being sold on the basis of a series of lies is disheartening and disgusting. I hope those of you on this list who can vote will consider this factor as you make your decision and those of you who can influence voters through reasoned deliberation will take the time to do so and ask them to consider the argument I am making - to empower Assyrian activists in their decision-making.

**Raba Bshena ou Eqara,
Michael**

This material is distributed by the Nineveh Plain Defense Fund on behalf of the Nineveh Plain Protection Units and the Assyrian Democratic Movement. Additional information is available at the Department of Justice, Washington, DC.