



# Assyrian American National Federation

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[www.aanf.org](http://www.aanf.org)

Established 1933

August 16, 2017

## **AANF Statement of Condemnation on the Removal of Tel Keppe Mayor**

The Assyrian American National Federation condemns the unlawful removal of Tel Keppe Mayor Basim Bello on August 3, 2017. This egregious act facilitated by the Nineveh Provincial Council violates the rights of the local inhabitants of Tel Keppe, and by extension, the residents of the Nineveh Plain. Mr. Bello was dismissed just two weeks after the removal of the Mayor of Alqosh Faiez Abed Jahwareh and replaced with a member of the Kurdistan Democratic Party (KDP). He is the second Assyrian mayor removed by the KDP-dominated council without just cause. These actions by the KDP are part of a pattern of undemocratic behavior, and contradict Kurdistan Regional Government (KRG) claims that Kurdish authorities honor the free will of the people of the Nineveh Plain.

AANF questioned KRG Representative to the US Bayan Rahman on this matter earlier this month. In response, Representative Rahman denied the KDP's involvement in the decision, and claimed the decision to remove the Mayor of Alqosh was not politically-motivated, despite overwhelming evidence to the contrary.

The residents of the Nineveh Plain were forced to flee when left unarmed and unprotected by KDP Peshmerga in August of 2014; the majority of whom have yet to return home. In the three years that have passed, they have been living in horrible conditions, while their homes and villages were looted and destroyed.

We reject the KDP's blatant attempt to exploit the suffering of Assyrians and other minorities, taking advantage of victimized communities when at their most vulnerable. We believe all people in Iraq have the right to live with dignity and without fear.

We are proud to stand with the Assyrians of Alqosh and Tel Keppe to fight this injustice. While the challenge before us remains vast and complex, our priorities have not changed: We will continue to advocate forcefully for the rights, aspirations and hopes of our people in the homeland.

Martin Youmaran  
President  
Assyrian American National Federation