

Interview with Mr. Basheer Saadi , chairman of Assyrian Democratic Organization's (ADO) political bureau

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Q-First of all can you give the readers a historical background about the circumstances that led to the establishment of your Organization and the major phases it went through since its existence ?

- The establishment of Assyrian Democratic Organization on the 15th of August 1957 in Qamishly - Syria , came to fill a political vacuum and a response to a political need that existed in the Assyrian political arena in the homeland and Diaspora and among all our communities , and further it was a challenge to the national frustrations and despair of the usefulness of any political activity in the aftermath of the first world war where about 500,000 of our people were massacred and many others were displaced of their homes at the hand of the Turks and their allies .

The pre-foundation period in Syria in the fifties is characterized with a great deal of democracy and political freedom . The conditions prevalent then gave opportunity to our people in Syria , particularly in AlJazire , to reorganize and establish its religious and cultural institutions following the massacres and the displacement . Hence , churches ,with all their adjoining organizations, like sporting clubs , scouts , and cultural societies were founded . Moreover, some literary magazines were published , and others arrived from overseas. These publications ,which came from North and south America, were imbued with the spirit of nationalism and called for national uplifting . Most important of these were The Syriac Assembly (Aljameha) Magazine from Argentina published by Farid Nazha , and before it, the Union and Beit Nahrein magazines published by the Master Naoom Faiek . Furthermore , the contributions of our pioneers , people like Naoom Fayek , Ashoor Yousef , Bashar Helmi Boraji , Sanhareeb Bali , Boaiel Warda , Fredoun athoraia , the martyr Patriarch Mar Beiamen Shamoon , added to this , the heroic struggle of our people in the beginning of the 20th century against the tyranny of the Ottomans , to mention but few : The Movement of Hikari Assyrians who joined the allied forces for the sake of establishing an Assyrian entity ,and later on ,the political struggle fought in the corridors of Peace Convention in Paris in 1920 , and the efforts of Bishop Afram Barsoum in Paris and London during the Peace Convention , as well as the participation of six Assyrian delegations from Syria , Iraq ,Iran , Russia and America to demand the allies , in the Peace Conference in Paris , international guarantees for our people's national rights on their homeland followed by the attempts exerted by the Assyrians in Iraq between 1920 and 1933 for the sake of our national rights in Iraq , all these efforts played great role in shaping up a national political awareness amongst our young and educated people and prepared the political and ideological ground for them . This ideological ground paved the way for the formation of the first political national body in our modern history , based on ideas derived from the reality , the ideals and culture of our people . Our Organization (ADO) has declared since its inception, democracy as a method, ideology , and practice , in its political process and internal activities. At a time when the political arena was swept by totalitarian ideologies and big

projects that proved failure , the ADO demanded the recognition of the indigenous rights of the Syriac , Assyrian and Chaldean people , as well as their language and culture , and further the safeguarding of the political and cultural rights of these people within the framework of a sovereign national and unified state , it has moreover stressed the importance of building bridges between our people in the homeland and in Diaspora .

Q -Why did you call yourself an Organization and not a party ?

-It was called an Organization because it is a literal translation from Syriac language. In Syriac we say “ mttakso” which exactly means the current meaning of a party , so there is no difference between the two and the Organization fulfills all the objectives and the requirements of a party .

Q -What is the nature of your struggle , and what are you struggling for ?

-The nature of our struggle depends on the power of dialogue and language , rejecting all forms of violence , extremism , it further depends on the policy of burning the phases .The goals that we strive to attain are : a democratic , secular and diversified system based on justice , equality and human rights, a system that guarantees the right of all minorities , recognizes our rights as aboriginal people including the language and culture . Moreover we aim at securing the political and cultural rights of our people within the framework of the unity and sovereignty of the state . We further work to build a bridge between the homeland and Diaspora and utilize this in the national interest of our people . On the other hand the Organization views the genocide perpetrated against our people by the Turks during the 1st World War and caused the death of half a million and the displacement of another half and the permanent loss of lands and property as well as religious and historical monuments , a crime against humanity and that Turkey should recognize this genocide and compensate our people for the losses , as well as guaranty their right of return to their lands with an apology from the Turkish government for the atrocities committed . Besides , we demand the European Union to make Turkish recognition of the Armenian Genocide as a prerequisite for its joining the EU .

Q-How far do you think that your Organization represents the various components of your people, the Chaldeans, Assyrians and the Syriacs ? Do you represent only the Assyrians or the others as well ? Is your Organizations the only operating one amongst the Assyrians ?

-Our Organization since the foundation was always made up of all the components of our people Syriacs, Assyrians and the Chaldeans , not only this , our founding fathers were of various communities , and we believe that this representation is a source of pride and a criteria of credibility for any Assyrian national party .

As I have said our Organization was the first political party and its ideology and experience prepared the ground later on for the formation of other parties that currently outnumber the need of national arena , and owing to the problem of denominations among our people , many parties with different Syriacs , Assyrians and Chaldeans names have emerged recently . As to us ,

we have tried hard since the mid- seventies to cooperate with the Assyrian parties . We called for the creation of a common national front policy , but it didn't work out because of the differences of visions . Nevertheless , in the beginning of the nineties we succeeded in concluding a common work program policy with the main Assyrian party operating in Iraq , the Assyrian Democratic Movement . Then, in late nineties , in coordination with the Assyrian Democratic Movement , we formed an Assyrian Alliance with another three Assyrian parties : the International Assyrian Union , the Beith Nahrein Democratic Party and the National Assyrian Organization , which unfortunately did not last long . There are many other Assyrian parties with different Assyrian Syriac or Chaldean names operating currently in the homeland and the Diaspora .

Q -It's known that most parties in Syria whether inside or outside the Front (except for the governing AlBath party) have suffered splits . Did your Organization go through such an experience? In your opinion, what are the direct and the indirect causes for such divisions ? How do you deal with phenomenon such as this ?

-I think this is a natural phenomenon, it may happen to any party or sect , they are the result of differences of opinions and ideas that emerge in the course of time , as well as the change in political , economic and social circumstances and how these changes are viewed by people . Moreover , they come as a result of the conflicting interests of the members of a party , a party , in the end , represents the overall interest of its members, political , economic and social . The important thing here is , the ability to deal with such differences and how to contain and find solution for them within the framework of the party's mechanism and constitution . Generally speaking , whenever there is democracy and wisdom in a party, divisions decrease and vice versa . Instances of dissent increase when the party is in power and in cases of stability and calm, and becomes less in times of secret struggle and threats . As far as our Organization is concerned , we have gone through such dissents because some of our comrades in the leadership of various councils have put forward programs influenced by revolutionary and unrestrained ideas, and consequently they were not able to propagate these ideas among the members, neither the Organization could take in such radical and extremist views , so they quitted and formed another political group which was doomed to failure . Furthermore , in the seventies an extremist nationalist group emerged, but again they soon quitted and formed another political entity . Once again , In the mid-eighties a condition of split emerged but lasted for only 2 years and the Organization could contain it through dialogue and wisdom. Since then the Organization has not suffered any serious splits , off course there are always problems now and then especially in our branches in Diaspora , but these are solved within the mechanism of the party ,though they sometimes take much time and pains .

Q-Most splits are the results of conflict on power in the party . How does the transfer of power takes place in your Organization ? Does it take place smoothly ?

-Conflicts on positions is found everywhere and every time and this is something inherent in the human being ,it happens even in the oldest democracies in the world and this is justifiable, because the person striving to seize power should bring with him his new vision and better programs for the party. Nevertheless, he should be ready to accept others as well with him in the top echelons , so long as he reached there legally the opportunity would still be there waiting for him in the next elections if he is able to convince the others of the soundness of his policies . As for us , we are used to transfer of power legally, and this takes places according to the constitution and the election mechanism within by- and general conventions ,regular and exceptional ones . By the way , our Political Bureau has gone through %100 change , and the Central committee 90% , this change has affected the general secretary's position following the two last conventions . Furthermore, in the 10th convention we have decided that the secretary general should hold his position only for 2 successive periods then step down .

Q :What kind of relationship do you maintain with the political parties working in Syria , whether inside or outside the governing Front ?

-We have friendly relations with most Syrian patriotic democratic parties and we are further trying to promote this relationship. We think that the best way for creating a real political life is by further strengthening this relationship on the basis of mutual respect, and acceptance of others who are different from us in their views and ideologies etc... . At present we have good relations with the Democratic National Assembly , with Kurdish parties , whether Kurdish alliance parties or Kurdish Front parties , with the Syrian National Party , Committees for the Defense of Civil Societies, The Syrian Committee for Human Rights and with most independent politicians and intellectuals ; besides we are in good terms with both sections of the Syrian Communist Party and are trying to forge good relations with the ruling AlBaath Party . Regrettably , the later has not opened up windows of dialogue with us so far , it is still following the policy of disregard and arrogance , the single positive attitude was sensed from their Hassake branch , was their representative's participation in the seminar held by us entitled " Problem of national identity in Syria . "Nevertheless , unofficial dialogues are being conducted from time to time between us , and we understand from messages we receive that there is possibility of opening up on the other patriotic parties and that a new law regarding these parties will be put forward at AlBaath party's coming convention in June this year .

Q-What is the role of the church in the political life of your parties ? Is it a kind of guidance and guardianship or sort of consultation and completion?

-The church exercises a great influence on our people , and this is due to the fact that the church throughout the ages has been a source of secular and spiritual guidance for our people . During the Ottoman rule it was the legal representative of our people through “ the religious sects’ (Mella) law “ , and the Eastern Church “Nestorian“ played a major role in political , spiritual and military life of our people , especially when the seat of the patriarch was in “Kojans” in the mountains of Hikkari ; but this role relatively diminished in modern times as the power of the state , political parties and institutions emerged . At present , the church does not interfere with politics , but the relationship between the church and the parties is generally positive . Our Organization maintains good relations with all churches and further considers them as cultural, social and religious institutions , it is the receptacle that contains our people’s cultural , musical and linguistic heritage and we view it with respect and veneration .

Q-Until recently , your Organization relation with most Kurdish parties was rather very limited , and characterized with some apprehension and irritation , but in the last few years this has changed , and the relation between you and some Kurdish parties reached a state of alliance during parliamentary elections . How did this relaxation happen ?

-The feeling of apprehension has been built up throughout the history and was fed up by a condition of isolation and disconnection owing to the political stagnation , persecution and absence of democracy in the society , all the parties suffered from this condition until 1990 parliamentary election , when president H.Assad created a democratic opportunity for the independent candidates to run for the election without interference of the state , the result was , the Organization’s candidate and three other Kurdish candidates from Hassake won seats in the parliament . This was a good opportunity for our Organization and the Kurdish parties to get to know each other better . This cooperation was further strengthened between us in the successive local and legislative elections in 1991 , 1994 and 1994 , and we always try to keep it active and good .

In this connection our Organization sought hard , during Qamishly’s events of 12 March 2004 , to calm down the situation and reach a solution based on national political dialogue rather than on security one . This stance by our Organization and its initiative of forming a delegation made up of Christian community representatives , or calling for a common dialogue gathering with the participation of various components of the society helped a great deal to pacify the trouble in the region .

It is worth mentioning here that we view the Kurds as one of several components of the Syrian diverse society , they have the right to exist alongside other components : Arabs , Assyrians , Armenians and others .

It’s particularly important to note here that since the arrival of president Bashar Al Assad there has been a policy of relaxation and reform which has positively affected the progress of political movement in Syria and this, in turn , has influenced everybody, including us .

Concerning the last part of the question ,the best means of maintaining good relations between the Assyrians and Kurds is , by possessing the political will and readiness to accept one another , not merely by uttering empty and false slogans and meaningless words but by turning them into action . The two sides must adopt moderation and keep away from extremism , they should realize that they are partners in this homeland which is the property of all its

people . Further , they should not lock themselves in the past , but take lessons from it to build their present and future .

Q-Concerning Qamishly's events on the 12 March 2004 . In your opinion , who was to blame ? Where they planned ? And how do you assess the role of the Kurdish front , on one hand , and the authorities on the other , in dealing with the events ?

-To me , the main reason lies in the inability to grasp the causes behind the tension in the football match played in Deir Azzor two weeks before the events between the football fans of AlJihad and AlFootwa . The authorities in this two cities should have closely followed the circumstances that triggered the frictions . We all know the impact of the situation in Iraq on both teams . The cheers reiterated by Footwa's fans along the streets of Qamishly before the match were portentous , so the authorities should have taken sufficient measures . Secondly , I think the firing of live shots by the police was not justified and was a grave mistake the responsibility of which falls on the authorities . Further , I totally reject the theory of outside conspiracy , or that the events were preplanned . On the other hand , many mistakes were made by the Kurdish fans during the funeral procession the next day , by lifting Kurdish flags , chanting extremist Kurdish slogans , and sabotaging government buildings which triggered adverse reaction by the security forces . Generally speaking , the role of the Kurdish Movement was moderate they tried to calm down the situation , as we have noticed . Similarly , we felt the same thing on the part of the security forces . As we have pointed out earlier , our Organization played a constructive role in pacifying the situation .

Q-What is your opinion on the general situation in Syria and the prospect of , democratization , human rights , and the establishment of civil society institutions?

-I think the process of peacefully transformation from one system to another without crises or losses , takes time . We believe in gradual changes towards democracy according to a scheduled program of reforms that will involve all forces of the society including the state , or rather, let these reforms be administered by the state , if it truly believes in the democratic transformation process . The initiative of President Bashar Alassad in his inauguration address about reform and development in Syria, sent strong messages regarding the respect for diversity and for other people's opinions ,this was encouraging and built up an atmosphere of optimism and high hopes that paved the way for a broad dialogue everywhere in Syria . But regrettably , this openness, which was named the Spring of Damascus , was called off , this was a grave mistake which created frustration in the political life . Nevertheless , I am convinced that despite of the slowdown in reforms , they are coming , because the regime has no other option , things can't go on like this forever : the continuation of emergency and martial laws , marginalization of the major political forces working in Syria , denial of minorities' cultural rights , the state of governing Front's political parties) some of which have posts that outnumber their members) all these can't go on eternally . The country is badly in need of a law regulating political life within the framework of legality . For all these reasons , I say that reforms will be coming soon , although we have to admit that some have already started but are far from expected . AlBaath party's convention is to be held in June 2005, and reforms is one of the main points on the agenda I suppose , so let's wait and see .

Q-Much have been said about the conflict on power in Syria between the old guards and the new generation represented by president Bashar alAssad as regards the implementation of reforms . It is said that the president is doing

hard to implement these changes, but this clashes with the personal interests of those who may eventually lose their positions or influence . what do you say about that ?

- What is said in this regard are mere conjectures in my opinion . The president is on top of the political system . There are people whose interest run counter to the general reforms , these may be from old or new generations or both , they try to hamper any step in the direction of reforms , but I think that the regime's overall interest lies in pushing forward the process of reform without hesitation or cessation .

Q-What is your party's stance concerning pressures exerted on Syria by the US ,France and others regarding Syria's policies in Lebanon , Iraq and the Palestinian issue , as well as issues of human rights , terrorism and others ?

-As a political patriotic Organization , we oppose all kinds of pressures on our country from whatever sides they may be , we further consider these interferences in Syria's internal affairs and this is against the international law stipulated by the UN charter . Irrespective of our stance towards the regime and the internal policies , we think it is the duty of everyone to stand by the homeland against the outside pressures . But , at the same time , it is incumbent on the state amidst these difficult circumstances, to take the initiative and consolidate the internal front through involving all the political forces in the national worry , and opening up windows of dialogue with all the a/m forces with an aim of reaching a common vision for the present and the future of the country .

Q-How do you assess the situation in Lebanon especially after the extension for president Lahood and the issue of withdrawal of Syrian troops as per resolution 1559 . In your opinion , what is the outlet for this impasse ?

- The situation in Lebanon , as a matter of fact , is connected to the civil war in Lebanon , and the Syrian troops went there in response to the request of the Lebanese government then . The political future of Lebanon , the withdrawal and redeployment of the Syrian troops have been decided in Altaief Agreement . The Syrian presence in Lebanon played a great role in safeguarding the security and building up the institutions and the army there . Nevertheless, this was not without political and administrative mistakes that made a good number of Lebanese feel great resentment . Only a year ago, there was a general feeling of satisfaction both internationally and regionally about the Syrian presence there, but the American presence in the region , on one hand , and the isolation of France on the other has changed the equation . Now ,the situation is completely different . I think , the best solution for this dilemma is holding a convention between the Syrian and the Lebanese side with the participation of all political forces in Lebanon , with an aim of reaching an agreement and drawing up plans for the withdrawal of Syrian troops in order not to give the Americans an excuse for interference in our affairs .

Q-What is the nature of relationship between your Organization and the Democratic Assyrian Movement) zowaa ? (

- The Democratic Assyrian Movement is a major Assyrian organization in Iraq and our Organization has signed a policy of mutual work program with it that

depends on cooperation and coordination in all political and national aspects, with exception of the internal policies . This program is still working and getting stronger through involvement in the national issues . This does not mean that there are no mistakes , but by and large , this policy is considered a model of cooperation among Assyrian national parties .

Q-How do you view the patriotic and the national struggle and the linkage between them ? What is your position regarding the viewpoints that oppose and criticize the cooperation between two parties belonging to the same ethnicity but operating in different countries?

-I think there is a dialectical relationship between the patriotic and national struggle .As to our Organization, the relationship between the two was stressed in the 90ies. We think that people of the same ethnicity that due to political , historical and geographic factors were dispersed and spread over several countries, have the right to communicate and to sympathize with each other . In general , any two parties of the same ethnicity operating in different countries have the right to communicate provided that this wouldn't contradict with the policies of the country they are operating in , on the contrary , it should be in the interest of that country .

Q-How do you see the condition of the Assyrians , Syriacs and chaldeans in Iraq in general , and in the Kurdistan region in particular ?

-the number of our people in Iraq has greatly shrunk due to the repression and tyranny they have suffered throughout the ages . Currently , they constitute only 5 % of the overall population in Iraq . They , like others , have tasted the bitterness of Saddam's dictatorship . As a matter of fact , they tasted double bitterness , the political, ethnic and religious ones. As for those living in the Kurdish areas North of Iraq , they have enjoyed relative political , cultural and religious liberties , nevertheless , many encroachments upon the properties , villages and arable lands of our people have taken place during this period , some of these are new, some old and date back to the Kurdish-Iraqi war in the 60ies . There are still 185 villages in the hand of the Kurds . Of course , demands to claim these properties back have not stopped , there are some promises made by Kurdish officials to return these properties to their owners , the last ones it is said , was made by Nechirvan Barrazani and Mr. Barham Sallah , we hope this will come true soon

Q-why so many of your organizations, especially those operating outside Iraq view the achievements the Kurds have accomplished with dissatisfaction and animosity , although the ChaldoAssyrians in the Kurdistan region have had many advantages and rights , such as : teaching in their national language , celebrating their national and religious holidays , political freedoms , freedom of forming parties , Unions , of representation in the government and the parliament etc ? ..

-I don't think there is animosity , but dissatisfaction , yes , and this has a historical background. Firstly ,the genocide perpetrated by the Turks in which the Kurds acted as an instrument since they were in a state of alliance with the Turks through their tribal semi-official system . Secondly , as we have mentioned above, there is still encroachment upon the properties of our people in North Iraq , in addition to the extremist tendencies among some Kurds who are trying to implement a "Kurdification" policy in the region . On the other hand, there is a general widespread tendency now amongst our people including Assyrian Democratic Movement and many other

AssyrioChaldean parties , which favors building good relations based on mutual, trust and respect between the two nations .

Q-Concerning the name Iraqi Kurdistan , in your publications as well as in many other organizations , it is still called North Iraq although Iraqi Kurdistan has been included in the Iraqi interim administration law . Will you keep on denying this fact or things would change for you when this new reality will be included in the permanent Iraqi constitution ?

-We , in our Organization view the history and facts then read and call the things accordingly . The region that our Kurdish brothers call Kurdistan or the Southern part of Kurdistan ,we do not view it likewise . Off course, this is not meant a denial of their rights, but as a matter of fact, it is our interpretation of history, geography and facts . This region , except for the northern part of it , north of Shahrzour river , has been the center of historic Mesopotamia and the cradle of the Assyrian civilization and state , besides , the major cities here like Kerkuk , Arbeel , Zakhoo and others are historically Assyrian ones, and until the beginning of the 20th century the area was called (alMousel province) and our people constituted 30% of the population. Moreover ,the Syriac sources called the area (Land of Athoor) and sometimes (Nineva Plain) , whereas the Persians called it (Marzbanet Athoor) . In addition to this , the neutral geographers did not call it Kurdistan . The well-known geographer“ Yacout alHamoui ”called it“ AlJazire” or “Akor” . So based on what we have shown , we don't call the region Kurdistan because it isn't so , not because of a prejudice against our Kurdish brothers as some may think , but because we see it in its real historic perspective . It is correct that Kurds form the majority of the population now , but that is because of: firstly , the immigration of our people for very well known reasons and secondly , the high population growth rate among the Kurds . So Kurds have the rights to these areas owing to their population ratio, as part of Iraq politically, culturally and administratively , guarantied by international conventions .

Similarly , we view the rights of Kurds in Syria and particularly in Jazira . Some Kurdish intellectuals and parties call the area as Kurdistan or a part of it , but we say the opposite , historically it was a part of Mesopotamia, the stage for the great Assyrians , and today it is Syrian territory where Kurds, Arabs, Assyrians and Armenians live , it belongs to all of them and all have equal political, cultural and administrative rights in it as their homeland . As for the possibility of changing our mind when the permanent Iraqi constitution is issued and the area officially is renamed Kurdistan , we say , our stand will not change as regards the name , and I think, the same applies to Kurds who still call some villages and towns whose names had been changed by the authorities , by their old names , we think they have the right to do so , and this is the right thing .

Q- Now my question is about the ongoing argument among the different components of the Christian people ; Chaldeans , Assyrians and Syriacs etc... about the naming that would satisfy every body and unify them amidst current difficult circumstances in Iraq . Do you think that a unified name would eventually fulfill the expected union? Are the differences amongst the various factions bigger than a common name would unify ?

-First of all , it is wrong to call our people in Iraq Christians . There are more than one billion Christians in the world spread over hundreds of nationalities . Our people is the descendant of Sumerian , Babylonian , Assyrian , Chaldean and Aramic civilizations .

As a matter of fact , our people with their various denominations, know well that their national origin is one ,and the name of their common language is Syriac . They further know that all these names whether Assyrian , Chaldean , Chaldean or Aramic are historic ones which are shared by all of them and belong to everyone . Furthermore , what happened last year in Iraq before elections illustrates clearly that the unity of our people is more important and urgent than the problem of names . On the 22-24 /10/2004 representatives of all political , cultural and ecclesiastical institutions of our people met in a conference in Baghdad and agreed upon one composite naming “ ChaldoAssyria”, and the “Syriac” for language and tradition, and this name was officially approved in the Iraqi Administration Law . Of course there are exceptions to this rule especially those who do not want to see our people unified or those who don't know the history of their people .

Q-No doubt , the mass immigration of your people from their homes in the middle Eastern communities , due to policies of religious and racial persecutions , has considerably reduced its presence especially in Iraq , Syria and Lebanon , consequently, its influence on the political life and elections has weakened to a certain degree . Doesn't this hamper its ambitions and greatly diminish its political representation and influence in the respective countries ?

-You are right we have lost a lot of our electoral power due to mass immigrations , for instance our presence in Iraq is currently not more than 5% of the overall population. In Turkey , the situation is more tragic, only two thousand live in the South-East , out of one million before the I World War , this no doubt , constitutes a real problem for us whether in Iraq , Syria , Lebanon or Iran .

On the other hand , our people in the different countries of Diaspora feels strong affinity with the homeland and that he is an inseparable part of it and further , dreams of the day that he would be able to return again .

Q- How did you deal with the murder incident of two Assyrians in Hassaka committed by the sons of Fawzi alRadee and its aftereffects: burning of some stores , demonstration in front of the governors place and the arrests made by the authorities of some Assyrians? Are there any similarities between this incidence and the one that happened on 12 / March /2004 regarding the causes , and the reactions of the authorities ?

-the atrocious crime committed by the sons of Fawzi alRadi in Hassaka on 16/10/2004 that led to the death of two of our people , the first one Ibrahim Nassim Abed Alahad , murdered by Raad and his brother Mudar , a major in the public army , against the backdrop of a very simple argument , the second one was Yalda Youkhkana ,who was at home and upon hearing the shot

came to the scene of the murder to help the injured but was killed cold-bloodedly too , this atrocious crime shook everybody– both Muslims and Christians - in Hassaka and was condemned by everyone . This in itself was a true spontaneous reaction . The public opinion was that the murderers should be brought to justice and no effort should be made to excuse or mitigate the crime throughout intermediaries and pressures . Moreover during the meeting held on 25/10/2004 at the Orthodox Syriac Bishopricks center headed by prelate Hanna Rohem and included beside representative of all Christian communities, delegates from Shamar , Jeboor and alBAkara tribes , this meeting reached a conclusion that the murderers' family should be moved from the quarter where the murder took place and where the families of the victims live . Regrettably , the authorities did not carry out what had been agreed upon by the a/m council and this (murderers) family keep on inciting and provoking the feeling of the two families as well as the neighbors till now , not only this the governor has assigned guards to protect the assassins family day and night . This action by the governor led to great frustration and resentment amongst our people and a feeling that the authorities are not serious in dealing with this problem , added to this, the false statement made by the governor to "alHayat" newspaper in which he intentionally falsified the facts and described the murder as an accidental incident , as though trying to find excuses for the heinous crime , this distortion further deepened the feeling of frustration and bitterness amongst our people . As for our organization, we issued a statement summing up our position and calling for calm . We further held the authorities responsible for the after effects of the incident, and called for the release of our young people put in jail on charges of setting fire to the murderers' house and taking part in the demonstration .Regrettably these young people were beaten in the police custody and their testimonies –which they later denied in front of the judge -were extracted under torture, besides, they are being held in a military prison and tried in a military court .

As to your question, whether there is similarity between this incident and the one that took place on 12 March , 2004 , I think yes , there is . There has been administrative and security mistakes. The governor declared that he gave orders to fire live shots on the demonstrators if they dared to come closer to the Governrate's building , so , if one or two angry demonstrators went closer, a tragedy would have happened . Nevertheless, we think that it is everybody's duty to contain the aftereffects of the incident which left deep scars behind . Moreover, the authorities should derive lessons from it and learn how do be fair and deal with such incidents with wisdom and farsightedness rather than delay and leave matters for the time to heal the wounds .