



**ASSYRIA COUNCIL OF EUROPE**  
**21 July 2011**  
**Press Release**

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## **CONTROVERSIAL STATEMENT BY IRAQI PARLIAMENT SPEAKER DISAPPOINTS ASSYRIAN COALITION**

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Uthama al-Nujaifi, speaker of the Iraqi Parliament, was welcomed on 12 July in a parliamentary foreign affairs committee meeting in the European Parliament in Brussels. Mr al-Nujaifi, who was heading a delegation of ten Iraqi MPs on the visit to the EU, stated that everything must be done to ensure that Christians remain in Iraq. The European Union needs to support Iraq in this, he said.

Mr al-Nujaifi failed however to acknowledge the constitutional right of Iraqi minorities to form administrative units in areas inhabited by them. In an interview with the Assyrian journalist Santa Essa, al-Nujaifi said there have been many voices calling for the Nineveh plain area to form a new province, however, he claimed, he has neither received any request on it by the five Iraqi Assyrian parliamentarians, nor has there been a discussion on it in the Iraqi parliament.

The Assyria Council of Europe regrets this claim by Mr al-Nujaifi as it is very clear that all relevant political bodies in Iraq have received official requests on the proposed Nineveh plain solution. This is also evident by the written response issued by the Assyrian coalition in Iraq to shed light on the controversial statement made by Mr al-Nujaifi. The Assyrian coalition is a gathering of all Assyrian political groups in Iraq which is spear heading the Nineveh plain proposal.

Minorities in Iraq continue to suffer and are denied their constitutional rights of administering their own areas according to article 125 of the Iraqi constitution.