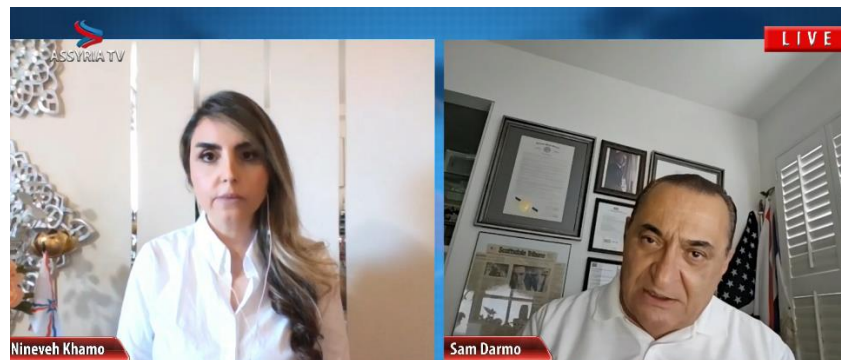


Assyria TV (Nineveh Khamo) Interview with Sam Darmo

Fred Aprim

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On September 26, 2025, Nineveh Khamo interviewed Sam Darmo on her Assyria TV's program "Nineveh Khamo Live Show" to talk about Mr. Darmo's recent visit to northern Iraq, which began on September 10 and extended for 7–8 days.¹



I have selected the following points from the interview to address:

1. Minute 5. Darmo admitted that the issue of land dedicated to the Simele massacre was brought up in 2019 when a one-quarter (0.25) acre of land was dedicated for the project, but he said that this area was too small and that he (they) demanded 1.5 acres for the monument and exhibition.

FRED'S NOTE: In 2019, several Assyrian organizations and institutions, including: Beth Nahrin National Union Party, The Bet Nahrian Democratic Party, Assyrian National Party, The Assyrian Chaldean Popular Council, The Assyrian Cultural Center, Assyrian Women's Union, ChaldoAssyrian Students and Women's Union, ASSYRIAN CHARITABLE ASSOCIATION, Assyrian Democratic Movement have initiated this process and it was anticipated that by 2026 this project be completed. In fact, this issue has been addressed and presented to the Kurdish authorities by others as well and earlier than 2019. However, the Kurdish leaders kept delaying. The question to ask, why is Barzani bringing an individual 7,300 miles away, giving him legitimacy and publicity now?

2. Minute 8. Nineveh asked whether the Kurdish authorities have recognized the Simele massacre. Darmo stated that this recognition must first come from the central government in Baghdad. After that, it goes to northern Iraq, where the officials will recognize it. If it starts in Arbil (the Kurdish region) first and then in Baghdad, Darmo added, it will not be as powerful. Then he stated that the officials in the Kurdish region have recognized the Simele massacre verbally and that approving the land for the monument is like a proof that they have recognized it.

¹ See Interview, accessed September 28, 2025 <https://www.facebook.com/AssyriaTv/videos/2251403122038473>

FRED'S NOTE: The fact is that a monument erected by a non-governmental agency (an Assyrian group, for example) does not necessarily mean an official recognition by the Kurdistan Regional Government (KRG) of what that monument was erected for. If a specific Simele Monument was erected in front of an official KRG building, then it clearly becomes an official monument about Simele recognized by the KRG. Additionally, an official recognition is a written order issued by a government, parliament or the president. The Assyrians must learn from their past experiences that verbal agreements with the Kurdish authorities are worthless and meaningless. Only written and officially published recognition by the KRG, Kurdish regional parliament and the president of the Northern Iraq Kurdish region is considered as an official recognition.

3. Minute 10. Darro said, quote: *"as far as we are concerned, martyrs are holy men, this is how we think. Martyrs are holy men who in turn have connection to God. With the power of those holy men and the power of God, we made this happen."* Unquote. Then he criticized those who have worked on the Simele massacre recognition previously and bragged about it in their statements.

FRED'S NOTE: Darro is playing on the emotional string here by bringing the religious sentiments to win support. Darro is in no position to discuss the theological concept of holiness. While the designation of holiness is subjective and depends on individual beliefs and religious teachings, it is in general associated with individuals who dedicated their lives tirelessly to serving God or to individuals who dedicated their whole lives to serving, protecting, and promoting their peoples, religions or nations. Innocent people who are massacred (became martyrs) or people who died for their religious beliefs and national identity could not be identified as holy. Martyrdom and holiness could not be used interchangeably always.

4. Minute 12. Darro stated that in June 2023, we (a coalition that he talked about) brought the Simele resolution to US Congress. At the same time, he said that he met with the Iraqi ambassador in Washington and with Bayan Abdul-Rahman, the former KRG representative in Washington. Darro stated that he presented different demands or requests to the two sides. He mentioned that he (they) presented the case for the recognition of Simele massacre to the Iraqi ambassador, who stated that he needed to send the file about the issue to the Iraqi prime minister in Baghdad. The ambassador also said that the Assyrians needed to have contacts in the Iraqi parliament to present this matter. Darro then stated that they presented the issue of land encroachment, seizing Assyrian lands by Kurds, to Bayan Abdul Rahman, which in time led to the invitation from Brazani to visit northern Iraq.

FRED'S NOTE: Regarding HR 472 of June 2023 in US Congress. US citizens have the right to meet with their representatives in Washington to discuss issues of interest to them. Darro misled some 60 Assyrians by promising that a resolution about Simele was going to pass in US Congress so they tagged along. He stated in a statement on June 6, 2023 in one of the conference rooms of the US Congress building and in the presence of two US Congress people that while other attempts to recognize the Simele massacre failed, this one [HR 472] will "go all the way". He misled the people and the listeners. HR 472 did not pass. In fact, it never went to an official

vote. It remained as introduced and became a dead document.^{2 3} Bragging about introducing a resolution in US Congress is foolish since it means very little and is a very simple process.

5. Minute 23. Darmo stated that he met with KRG Prime Minister Masroor Barzani in Arbil, where he presented the land encroachment file (mostly the cases that already have ruling in favor of the Assyrian land owners). Darmo added that Barzani immediately appointed two lawyers to look into the issue and to take an action immediately. Darmo stated God willing, the people will hear soon a ruling for the return of these lands to the Assyrian owners. Darmo also stated that we have our own lawyer Alex Karana who is now organizing cases that have not been argued in the courts, which amount to about 80 cases, will look into them one by one and will have direct contact with the prime minister, Masroor Barzani about them.

FRED'S NOTE: The encroachment by Kurds and Kurdish officials on Assyrian lands has been discussed with, and presented to, the Kurdish authorities and US officials for many decades by several Assyrian political groups and individuals, including the Assyrian Democratic Movement, the Assyrian Aid Society, William Khlapel Bnyameen, and many others. Darmo cannot insinuate that he initiated this step or take credit for anything in this regard. The question that begs an answer is, what are the real intentions of Barzani to agree to make this issue public by dealing with an individual. It is obvious the Barzani's intent is to undermine the Assyrian elected or political leaders in northern Iraq and to win some votes from the naïve people as the November 11 elections are approaching.

6. Minute 33. Darmo justified not going to Baghdad by saying that our planned demands were related to issues with the Kurdish region, not Baghdad.
Darmo played propaganda for the Kurds by claiming that all Kurdish leaders including Masoud, Nechervan and Masroor have declared that Assyrians must not leave Iraq and that they should stay. They said that Assyrians are the original people there and that the Kurdish leaders will solve all the issues presented to them.
Darmo also stated that he asked Masroor, do you accept if Kurdish students were forced to read in schools that Saddam Hussein was a hero. Masroor responded in the negative. Then Darmo asked him, why then are you forcing Assyrians to read that Simko was a hero. After the proof of such case was presented, Masroor Barzani personally called the Minister of Education and advised him to take care of that. Darmo said, I believe that this statement about Simko will be removed from the curriculum starting next year. BUT, Darmo added, I don't know; Hopefully this will happen.

FRED'S NOTE: Many Assyrians have addressed this issue with the Kurdish leaders in the last 30 years. The interesting part is that Darmo wanted to cover up for his uncertain assurances by stating that he hopes that the curriculum will be changed, that he was not sure, but he hoped

² Aprim, Fred. Accessed 9/28/2025. The Simele Resolution HR472 and the Kurdish Imprint. Published October 6, 2023. <https://www.fredaprim.com/pdfs/2023/Darmo,%20KRG%20and%20Washington%20b.pdf>

³ H.Res.472 - Expressing the sense of the House of Representatives regarding United States policy recognizing the Semele Massacre of 1933. Accessed 9/27/2025 <https://www.congress.gov/bill/118th-congress/house-resolution/472/all-actions?s=1&r=83&overview=closed>

so. Why is Darmo mentioning something that has been addressed in the past repeatedly, but still is unable to provide guarantees that it will happen? Additionally, why are the Assyrians leaving northern Iraq Kurdish controlled region? The Kurdish leaders try to show that the Assyrians who are leaving are those living in rest of Iraq and not within the Kurdish region. That is a lie. Hundreds, if not thousands, of Assyrian families are leaving the northern Iraq Kurdish region. Wonder why?

7. Minute 46. Darmo stated that he did not meet with Rayan al-Kaldani and that he does not recognize him, because of the US sanctions [US Treasury]⁴, what al-Kaldani had committed, and because al-Kaldani's group did not win seats based on votes from our people. Darmo then said that anyone who works for Babylioon [al-Kaldani group] does not work for the Assyrian nation, but for Iran.

FRED'S QUESTION: If that is Mr. Darmo's stand, why is Darmo supporting and in talks with all the Assyrians who have won their seats in the Kurdish parliament via empowerment from the Barzani? We know that Dr. James Hassado won his seat from Dohuk against William Khlapel Bnyameen through votes from Kurds and not strictly Assyrian votes. Why did Darmo then describe Dr. Hassado as an enthusiastic and zealous fellow and communicated with him (minute 4:20)⁵. And, are the individuals who are members of Barzani's Kurdistan Democratic Party (KDP) that Darmo sat and negotiated with working for the Assyrian nation? Is the powerful Fawzi Hariri working for the Assyrian nation while being an official in the KDP as he inherited the special status from his late father Franso Hariri? It is obvious that the invitation to visit northern Iraq received from northern Iraq's Kurdish region President Nechervan Barzani, which Darmo spoke about, was organized by Fawzi Hariri, Advisor to the President of the Kurdistan Region.⁶ Has Darmo forgotten how the Barzani regime illegally removed the Assyrian mayors of Alqosh and Tekepe and replaced them with loyalists Kurds? Furthermore, if Darmo has issues with Babylioon then it is very strange that he does not have the same feelings towards the KDP and the Peshmerga and their dirty role in 2014 ISIS invasion of Nineveh Plains, killing of many Assyrians and the displacement of 100,000 Assyrians.

8. Minute 51. Darmo stated that those Assyrian groups that previously had seats in the northern Iraq Kurdish parliament have taken the oath to guard Kurdistan and the people of Kurdistan, but he has not taken that oath.

FRED'S NOTE: That was a low blow by Darmo who is obviously referring to the Assyrian Democratic Movement (ADM). I guess since the Assyrians in the Iraqi Federal Parliament take

⁴ The U.S. Department of the Treasury's Office of Foreign Assets Control (OFAC) designated two militia figures, Rayan al-Kildani and Waad Qado, and two former Iraqi governors, Nawfal Hammadi al-Sultan and Ahmed al-Jubouri, pursuant to Executive Order (E.O.) 13818, which builds upon and implements the Global Magnitsky Human Rights Accountability Act and targets perpetrators of serious human rights abuse and corruption.

⁵ This article is not about my views about Dr. James Hassado's personality, life or political views. This is strictly about what happened in the said elections as Dr. Hassado as a prof. at the University of Dohuk he was forced by the Barzani regime to run against William Bnyameen.

⁶ Kurdistan Region Presidency. Accessed September 28, 2025. Fawzi Hariri <https://presidency.gov.krd/en/fawzi-hariri>

the oath of serving Iraqis and the Republic of Iraq, its members are committing some sort of a crime according to Darmono's standards. In almost all parliaments of the non-democratic states, the oath of parliament members serves the best interest of the host country/region and its majority people and religion of the majority. Should the Assyrians not participate in any parliament because of the imposed oath? What oath did Romeo Huziran Nisan Hakkari, member of the Kurdistan Parliament (multiple terms, including the 2nd and the 5th terms), take as he won his seat being part of the Democratic Patriotic Alliance of Kurdistan Coalition? What oath did the KRG Christian Minister of Transport and Communication Ano Jawhar Abdoka, take as part of the oath of ministers? Does Darmono dare to criticize the KDP men Hakkari, Abdoka and others?

9. Minute 56. Darmono said we promise that on November 1, his group will put the foundation stone for the martyr's monument and exhibition.

FRED'S QUESTION: Is this monument a general "martyr's monument" that belongs to the martyrs of all the people, including Kurdish, or "Simele martyr's monument"?

Final Remarks

Nineveh Khamo asked a few good questions in which she tried to highlight the Kurdish authorities' unfair treatment against the Assyrians. However, Darmono ensured that the interview served as propaganda for the Kurdish leaders and government. Darmono's style of misleading his listeners continues. However, Khamo also used the one-hour interview to praise Darmono for what she referred to as the great deeds Darmono has accomplished during this period for the Assyrian nation. She told Darmono, "We believe in you; we believe in your pure and truthful activities."

It is important for the Assyrian people to analyze the actions taken by Kurdish leaders. Why does the Barzani regime address critical Assyrian issues with a non-elected Assyrian who represents only himself? Logical people cannot avoid asking why the Kurdish leadership refuses to engage with the elected Assyrian political parties in northern Iraq regarding the critical issues and grievances the Assyrians have faced, and continue to face, since 1992. Many observers view this as marginalization and belittlement of the Assyrian political parties and elected Assyrian representatives by empowering an individual, a pattern that has recurred throughout Assyrian history. Also, remember that the November 11 Iraqi Federal and Kurdish Regional elections are approaching, and the Barzanis will take advantage of such propaganda.

Throughout the interview, Darmono avoided to bring into the discussion the person of HH Mar Awa III Royel, patriarch of the Assyrian Church of the East. However, Darmono and the other three members in his delegation attended the breakfast organized in celebration of HH Mar Awa III 4th Anniversary of Consecration. It is obvious that the patriarch and the rest of the Hariri family members elected to remain in the background during the visit.

Finally, the problems facing the Assyrian nation in northern Iraq are not about having 1.5 versus 0.25 acres set aside for a monument, but rather about the actions of the chauvinistic Kurdish regime, which, in addition to seizing their lands, marginalizes the role of the Assyrian people through their elected leaders, ignores their rights, distorts their identity as indigenous people on their historical land, and identifies them strictly as a religious minority.