

## **A Call for a Russian recognition of the Assyrian genocide**

Dear Sir,

We are writing to urge the Russian Parliament to recognise the Assyrian Genocide of 1914–23.

While the Armenian Genocide is rightly becoming more widely recognised, the tragic events of the Assyrian Genocide remain largely unacknowledged. Hundreds of thousands of Assyrians died during the Genocide, which occurred in the same period, at the hands of the same perpetrators – Turkish nationalists and their Kurdish conscripts – and for the same reasons as the Armenian genocide: to cleanse the emerging Republic of Turkey of its Christian inhabitants. Many thousands of those Assyrians fleeing the genocide sought refuge in Russia, and are today proud Russian citizens.

We applaud the Russian Parliament for recognising the Armenian Genocide. We point you to the fact that Armenia has this year rightly recognised the Assyrian Genocide as a distinct event. There is a correspondence between these two events, and it is only natural and right that Russia should follow suit.

It is not only important that Russia recognise the Assyrian Genocide for historical reasons. Today, we see that the same ideology of violent Jihad and its adherents and sponsors are unleashing another genocide against Assyrians in the region.

As the director of the Seyfo Center, an internationally recognised center for the study of the Assyrian genocide, observed in a recent Gatestone Institute article: "There is a great parallel between 1915 and what is going on in the Middle East today -- in terms of destruction of non-Muslim civilizations and the continuity of Islamic jihad."

We saw this in the Syrian town of Kessab, populated by descendants of the Armenian Genocide who in March witnessed Turkish army units being replaced by terrorists who would soon force them out of their homes and ransack their town and deface their churches. And we saw it across Iraq and Syria, where the Islamist terrorist organisation 'The Islamic State', facilitated and supported by Turkey, decimated the Assyrian populations of Khabur and the heartland of Assyrian continuity, the Nineveh Plains. Over 250,000 Christian Assyrians yet again fell victim to the forces of Islamist persecution in these events: destruction, abduction, sexual slavery, murder, dispossession. These

events have followed a decade of Islamist persecution so vast that the Assyrian population of Iraq, which numbered a million in 2003, now stands at 400,000.

The non-recognition of the Assyrian genocide enables, morally and politically, the Republic of Turkey and other nations to continue to advocate Jihad as an instrument of warfare and violent dispossession against Assyrians. The desperate situation facing Christians in the Middle East has been acknowledged and discussed by Russian officials.

We believe that it is just, wise and necessary for Russia to follow the examples of Armenia, Belgium, the Netherlands, the Swedish Rikstag, and Austria -- as well as expert NGO bodies such as the International Association of Genocide Scholars and leading genocide scholars such as Hannibal Travis and David Gaunt -- in recognising the Assyrian Genocide.

The only way to honestly address the problems of the present is to be truthful about the past. It is our sincere hope that Russia moves forward in friendship and cooperation with the Assyrian people: seeking justice for the crimes of the past, and seeking restitution in the present.

Best

### **The Assyrian Confederation of Europe**

Assyrian federation of Germany and European sections

Assyrian federation of United Kingdom

Assyrian federation of Sweden

Assyrian federation of Belgium