

Statement: Call to end Turkish bombings in Assyrian areas

On the morning of Sunday, January 17th, Turkish Air Force bombardment forced 80 Assyrian families to flee the village of Sharanish in Nohadra (Dohuk), northern Iraq.

This latest attack is part of an intensified campaign of bombardment, ongoing since late August 2015, waged by the Republic of Turkey against PKK militants who often hide in and around Assyrian villages in Nohadra. These attacks have led to the displacement of Assyrians from their homes and lands. In Sharanish, the bombings have led to widespread damage to homes and the destruction of a local water tank and other infrastructure essential to life in the village, making the prospect of Assyrians returning to their village far more difficult. More broadly, Turkish bombardment in and around Assyrian villages has led to a constant sense of fear and further exodus.

The Assyrian Confederation of Europe is distressed and outraged that innocent Assyrians are again paying the price for murderous regional rivalries and those between Kurdish parties that have nothing to do with Assyrians.

We call upon the Republic of Turkey to cease its bombardments of the Assyrian territory of Nohadra, most of whose Assyrian population has already been forced out due to decades of harassment, violence and land grabbing.

We also call upon PKK militants to cease occupying Assyrian land and coercing Assyrians into providing them with support and shelter, thereby forcing Assyrians to pay the price for the PKK's own political project as they did in the 80s and 90s in Tur Abdin, leading to the mass exodus of Assyrians from another crucible of Assyrian continuity.

In the Middle East today, borders have proved entirely porous when political and imperial interests emerge across them. The Turkish bombings in Nohadra have once again exposed the illusion of Iraqi and KRG sovereignty. Assyrians are not a mere adjunct to Kurdish and Turkish power struggles. Their suffering is not a by-product of these affairs. They are the indigenous people of occupied Assyria. Today, this land is subject to vicious games of political and military competition without Assyrians having any say over its future. These events have only made even clearer the need for direct international support if Assyrians are to survive in their ancestral homelands.

Assyrian Confederation of Europe

Assyrian federation of Belgium

Assyrian federation of Germany and European sections

Assyrian federation of Sweden

Assyria federation of the United Kingdom