



Dear readers,

Our Syriac people (Assyrians-Chaldeans-Arameans) is one of the ancient peoples of the Middle East. Since WW I, however the Syriacs have been brought to the brink of extinction by genocides and in conflicts of interest between different regional and international powers.

In and after the civil war broke out in Lebanon in 1975, hundreds of thousands of Syriac-Maronites were forced to leave their homeland behind. The war between Iran and Iraq in the 1980s unfortunately had the same result. After the military coup in 1980 in Turkey, intensive fascist repression and unsolved, extrajudicial killings forced the Syriacs of Turabdin (Southeast Turkey) to flee their homeland. After the removal, in the name of democratic transition, of the Saddam-Regime in 2003 our people in Iraq suffered from oppression. Hundreds of thousands Syriacs from Baghdad, Basra and the Nineveh Plain fled from oppression to the West. And it didn't stop there. After the people's uprising in Syria in 2011, the subsequent civil war turned Syria into a quagmire. Attacks against Syriacs by barbaric jihadist groups and ISIS atrocities, forced Syriac-Assyrians to leave their Khabour region in northeaster Syria and the Nineveh Plain – again Syriacs had to flee their ancient homeland of Bethnahrin (Mesopotamia).

Due to the racist, jihadist and ethnic-cleansing mindset of status-quo countries, millions of Syriacs have, since the 1980s, migrated from the Middle East to countries all over the world. Tens of thousands more have been sacrificed to other people's war of interest. Their properties and possessions have been confiscated. Their monasteries, churches and businesses burned to the ground. Syriacs were deprived of their ancient homeland by the politics of

demographic change. Syriacs who survived the 1915 genocide and the following wars in the Middle East, are now again in danger of extinction from their homeland with the Turkish invasion of NE Syria. As European Syriac Union (member of Bethnahrin National Council it is our national, moral and human duty to oppose attacks and massacres on our Syriac people.

As a Syriac movement, we oppose all politics of extermination from our homeland. When will international powers and institutions stop this conscious policy of extermination of our people and all Christians from the Middle East? The wounds of the Syriac people are still fresh and continue bleeding from 1915 to the present. Turkey's invasion into NE Syria accelerates this bleeding and puts the future of Syriacs in existential danger. Therefore, we urge and call upon our people to stand up and raise their voices. To stand together with our brothers and sisters in Syria to stop Turkey's war policies and to ensure future existence in our homeland. We trust that our people of the Gozarto (Jazeera) province of Syria will resist by not leaving. ESU stands with our people in all circumstances unconditionally.

It is of vital importance that our people all over the world mobilize themselves to defend their identity by coming together in national unity. It also requires international powers as the UN, EU, USA and Russia to take immediate action to take away the clear and present dangers to the Syriac people and to ensure their survival in their ancient homeland. We demand that they stop and reverse the Turkish presence and push for a pluralistic and democratic Syria.

ESU Co-Chairs Hulya Gabriel & Tony Vergili

Q&A with Nazira Goreya (SUP) on the current situation in NE Syria



Q: The Syriac Union Party (SUP) is co-founder of the Democratic Autonomous Administration of North & East (DAA) Syria. As a representative of the SUP, what is the role of your party and your role?

Nazira Goreya: we as SUP are co-initiator and full partner in the DAA. I am the Co-President of the Gozarto (Jazeera) region of the DAA. Our party holds seats in all political, legislative and representative bodies of the DAA.

Q: And in the Syrian Democratic Forces - SDF?

Our military arm is the Syriac Military Council - MFS (Syriac-Aramaic: Mawtbo Fulhoyo Suryoyo). Our policing arm is called Sutoro. The Syriac Military Council is co-founder of the SDF.

Q: So, you blame the US for the Turkish invasion?

No. Turkey is first to blame. But we had a military agreement with the US and, again, the US should keep to its promises. The withdrawal of the US gave Turkey the de facto green light to march into northeastern Syria although the DAA has neither been a danger to nor in any kind of serious encounter with Turkey. So, there is no justification at all for the Turkish military invasion. We were always very transparent in our relations with our neighbors. The Turkish army and its Islamist Syrian National Army, which in my opinion is nothing more than jihadi-influenced infantrymen used by Turkey to attack and occupy Tel Abyad and Rish 'Ayno (Ras Al-Ain). Turkey trained them, financed them and provides them logistical and air support. This makes Turkey in the end responsible for all killings, looting and war crimes perpetrated by this radical group.

Q: But there is a ceasefire? The US brokered a ceasefire,

maybe only after massive international media attention and protests, but still a ceasefire.

True but the ceasefire is not upheld at all by Turkey. At this very moment, its Islamists are attacking our Christian villages in the Khabour area around Tel Tamer (Christian villages, which were established by Syriac-Assyrians after the 1933 Simele massacre in Iraq). And Turkey continues providing them logistical and air support. So, what ceasefire? A ceasefire on paper...

Q: Why did the DAA turn to the regime and Russia?

The alternative was massacre and total destruction.

Q: But you will have to work with the Syrian regime then?

We have always wanted the regime to come to the negotiation table. Our counterpart has always been the regime. We are part of a unified Syria and want its borders to be respected. Our demands were and are directed to the regime. But in our recent negotiations with the Syrian regime, the regime has requested the dismantlement of the DAA and everything to return to the pre-war era. This is not negotiating; this is not rapprochement. Have we fought so hard, come so far, suffered hardship and lost so many martyrs to simply hand everything back to the regime? We agree on an integrated and unified Syria, but the regime so far has made no advances towards free and fair elections, incorporation and inclusiveness, towards cultural and political rights for all peoples. If the regime is really serious about reconciliation it should come to the negotiation table and really put something on the table for the peoples of Syria.

Q: You have been traveling Europe the last weeks. What is the goal of your visit?

We have been meeting with members of parliament of different European countries, the European Parliament, NGOs and Christian organizations. We had meetings with the UN in Geneva, with MEPs, representatives and delegates of foreign affairs and human rights committees of different European governments. The European Syriac Union, as our sister organization arranges and accompanies us on our meetings. (ed. visit the ESU FB and Twitter accounts for Nazira Goreya's meetings in Europe).

Read the full Q&A: <https://www.european-syriac-union.org/news-reader/q-a-with-nazira-goreya-on-the-current-situation-in-northeast-syria.html>

We call on the International community and the public opinion to stand up for the Syriac people!

The European Syriac Union organized and participated in several demonstrations in October and November to denounce the Turkish invasion and to draw the attention of the world to the threat Syriacs are under. Protect Syriac Christians from Extinction from their Homeland!

Freedom for Said Malke

On August 12 we remembered the fact that 6 years ago the Vice-President and Co-founder of the Syriac Union Party, Said Malke, was arrested in broad daylight, by government forces in the airport of al-Qamishli, Syria. The Syrian regime has so far not given any plausible reason whatsoever for his arbitrary arrest. During the past six years, the regime has kept silent about the real fate of Said Malke. Although the regime has been asked explicitly and several times to be open about the fate of Said Malke, it does not provide any concrete information about the why of his arrest, his whereabouts, the circumstances under which he is detained or even whether he is still alive. Only evasive answers.

As a Co-initiator of the Democratic Autonomous Administration of North and East Syria (DAA), we are a strong proponent of democratization in Syria. We will always defend the norms and values of democracy. It is even more poignant that the man who was an example in this respect seems to have been missing for six years now. We strive for a political solution to the current situation in Syria. This requires a basic attitude of openness and honesty from all parties involved.

We repeat our appeal to all European governments, the EU, the US government and NGOs to make a request to the Syrian regime to ask for openness about the fate of Said Malke. We will not accept any more evasive, vague or misleading answers from the Syrian regime. We will not remain silent until we know the truth and the whereabouts of our leader and friend Said Malke.

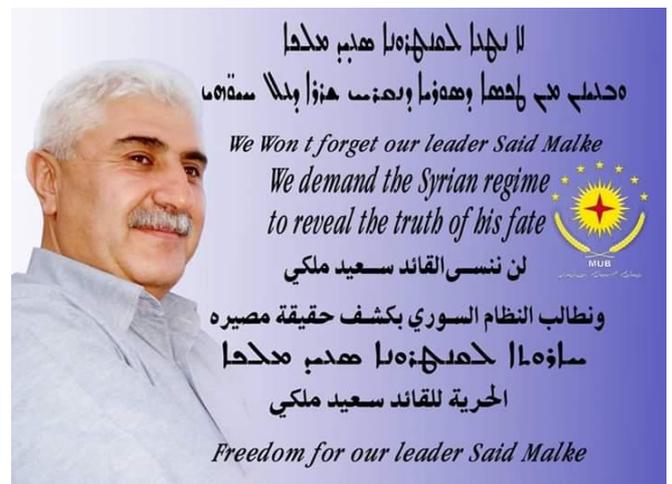
Qamishli, North-East Syria in front of UN building



Zürich Switzerland



Giessen Germany



Stop Turkish Invasion! Protect Syriac Christians from Extinction from their Homeland!



Stop the extinction of Syriacs from the Middle East! Without Oriental Christians, no pluralistic democracy in the Middle East is possible! Sign the ESU petition:

<https://www.change.org/p/european-union-peace-in-north-east-syria-stop-turkish-aggression>



Berlin Conference Calls for a Broad Alliance for Democracy and a New Social Contract in Turkey

“Come, from now on we will talk about the Turkey we want to live in together”. With this motto to work together for a more equal, fair, free and democratic Turkey, a colorful gathering of Turkish, Armenian, Kurdish and Syriac exiled and opposition politicians, artists, journalists, academics and representatives of different ethnic and/or religious groups convened the conference “The Social Contract Quest for a Democratic Turkey” in Berlin on 21-22 September. The conference was prepared by tens of organizations of which the European Syriac Union was one. In different panels and workshops the attendees discussed perspectives and solutions out of the increasing authoritarian state the Turkish Republic is currently in.

To seize the moment and build on the favorable June 2019 election results, the conference for the first time brought together the critical voices in exile in Europe with the intention to draft an inclusive and just Social Contract for Turkey and its people(s). CHP, HDP and Saadet Party Members of Turkish Parliament supported and attended the conference and formed a bridge between the exiles and the home country. Through panels and workshops with subjects as e.g. “Communities and Beliefs” and “Peace and Democracy” the attendees discussed and suggested ideas for the problems of current authoritarian Turkey: the lack of freedom of press and expression, the wielding corruption, suppression and unlawful arrests and

undemocratic, unilateral actions by authoritarian state actors. And they proposed road maps to come to stronger democratic, pluralistic pillars and a robust rule of law which will be able to fence off authoritarian attacks.

The European Syriac Union had a seat in the preparatory committee and signed the final declaration. ESU representatives Aziz Gergin and Jacob Nuhomo participated in the workshops and stressed the importance of social inclusiveness and equality. In the words of Aziz Gergin, “As Syriacs we criticize the “1 people, 1 language, 1 religion” slogan prevailing among Turkish nationalists. We as Syriac people and European Syriac Union state that different ethnicities and religions are a richness for every country – also for Turkey. Pluralism in all its forms should not be a problem or threat. The conference has shown that we can work together. For a democratic, multi-ethnic and multi-religious Turkey, and in solidarity with the exiled journalists, artist, politicians and the opposition, the European Syriac Union signed the final declaration as a road map for equality and freedom. Only in a strong state of law can our decimated Syriac people, who have inhabited and culturally enriched the Middle East and modern-day Turkey for thousands of years, have their place”.



<https://european-syriac-union.org/news-reader/berlin-conference-calls-for-a-broad-alliance-for-democracy-and-a-new-social-contract-in-turkey.html>



Recognition of the Armenian Genocide-Sayfo by US House of Representatives

On 29 October, the US House of Representatives, with an overwhelming majority, passed Resolution H.Res.296, in which the House recognizes and condemns the Genocide of 1915 on Armenian, Syriac and Pontus-Greek Christians, planned and perpetrated by Ottoman-Turkish

rule: *“Whereas the United States has a proud history of recognizing and condemning the Armenian Genocide, the killing of 1.5 million Armenians by the Ottoman Empire from 1915 to 1923, and providing relief to the survivors of the campaign of genocide against Armenians, Greeks, Assyrians, Chaldeans, Syriacs, Arameans, Maronites, and other Christians;”*

The Genocide of 1915 perpetrated by Ottoman-Turkish rule - in collaboration with local Kurdish tribes in what is now Southeast Turkey - against Armenians, Pontus-Greeks and Syriacs resulted in the massacre of more than one and half million innocent souls. Hundreds of thousands had to endure hardships under (death) marches south to the Syrian desert and tens of thousands of women and orphaned children were taken and Islamized. The genocide of 1915 caused the social, cultural and economic destruction of Armenians, Syriacs and Pontus-Greeks in current day Turkey. It is a recognition, which comes at a time when indigenous peoples as the Syriacs (Arameans-Assyrians-Chaldeans) and other vulnerable groups face violence, massacre, displacement and decimation in Syria by the same dark force as 100 years ago.

Although late overdue and only in a time of very tense relationships between the USA and Turkey, the recognition of the 1915 genocide by the US House of Representatives is a further and important step towards formal worldwide acceptance of past atrocities. We believe that the US recognition sends a clear message to Turkey to come to terms with its past and present. Nothing Turkey can do will change the fact that, outside of Turkey, everyone recognizes the 1915 Genocide. Turkey can only stall but in the end a mature Turkish democracy will have to recognize its past.

The European Syriac Union (ESU) calls on all countries in the world to also formally recognize in law the 1915 Genocide. Don't be a party to denial. After more than 100 years of Ottoman-Turkish denial and severe trauma for our Syriac people, we want closure and peace of mind. We call on the perpetrators to reconcile with their past. Only by reconciliation can we have a future together! We forgive but can't forget. We will never forget but we are open for forgiveness and reconciliation talks if the other side reaches out. A first reaching out by Turkey is to stop

the current aggression and invasion in the Democratic Autonomous Administration of North & East Syria and stop the killing and displacement of the people that had to endure genocide and its trauma for more than 100 years now.



Seminar Sayfo 1915 in Södertälje

On October 27, to keep the memory of the Sayfo martyrs alive, the 2 Syriac-Orthodox dioceses of Swedish together with ESU organized the Sayfo seminar “The Ongoing Genocide” in city hall Södertälje, Sweden. Speakers were David Gaunt (professor of history), Önver Cetrez (psychologist of religion) and Zeki Yalcin (historian). Moderator was ESU foreign affairs representative Metin Rhawi. The speakers, each from their own discipline, spoke and answered questions about what happened during the period of genocide? How has it affected the Syriac people psychologically and what traumas do carry with us and how to deal with them?



New Sayfo Monument Pohlheim-Giessen

On 2 November the local municipality and the Syriac community in Pohlheim, Giessen, revealed a new monument in remembrance of the Sayfo Genocide of 1915.

