

ESU Statement of Sayfo genocide 1915 Day

2017-06-15

WE REMEMBER INNOCENT SOULS AND MARTYRS OF SAYFO GENOCIDE OF 1915



Today, June 15, marks International Day of 1915 Sayfo genocide and remembrance of Chaldean-Syriac-Assyrian people massacred and killed under the Ottoman-Turkish rule of Young Turks between the years of 1914-1918.

As the native people of Bethnahrin, Mesopotamia for millenniums Chaldean-Syriac-Assyrian people were living in different parts and under the Ottoman-Turkish rule during the genocide of 1915. The triangle of Turabdin, including the region of Adiyaman, Harput and Urhoy, Edessa, Hakkari region and Urmia-present day in Iran- Chaldean-Syriac-Assyrian people were approximately counted as one million of population with ancient culture, traditions, language and hundreds of villagers, monuments, monasteries and churches dispersed in the entire region serving the Chaldean-Syriac-Assyrian people.

Starting from 1914 to 1918, Ottoman-Turkish rule under the leadership of Young Turks started systematic targeting of Christian population and entities living within the border of the Empire, namely Armenians, Chaldean-Syriac-Assyrians and Pontiac Greeks of the Black Sea region. Systematic targeting of Christian population of 1915 was heavily supported by some local powers and groups. In the case of Chaldean-Syriac-Assyrian people, some Kurdish feudals and Hamidiye Regiments played supportive role for the Ottoman-Turkish rule to end the presence of Christians in the region.

Sayfo 1915 genocide heavily took place during the summer of 1915 especially in the region of Turabdin by targeting dozen of Syriac villages, churches and monasteries. Hundred of thousand people had been massacred; women and young girls had been taken hostage and lately islamized with force. Beside the

killing and annihilation of Syriacs of Turabdin, perpetrators also targeted millennial monuments, monasteries and libraries with unique manuscripts and books. On the other hand, seen as the fifth column by Ottoman authorities, Chaldo-Assyrians of the Hakkari, Siirt and Van region had been annihilated at their historical homelands by ending important presence in the region.

Sayfo genocide of 1915 changed dramatically cultural, social, demographical and economic visage of Chaldean-Syriac-Assyrian people and also changed the whole region with dominant power of new Turkish republic founded on the demise of Christian components of the Empire as the Chaldean-Syriac-Assyrians, Armenians and Pontiac Greeks.

Today, June 15, we remember the innocent souls and martyrs of 1915 Sayfo genocide who had been targeted for their different identity. Remembrance is essential to heal from the wounds and open new paradigm for the future generations in order to learn their history.