

We remember martyrs of Sayfo 1915 Genocide

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Today, June 15, Chaldean-Syriac-Assyrian people commemorates Sayfo genocide perpetrated by Ottoman-Turkish rule between 1914-1918 leaving back tremendous human loss, tragedy, suffering and destruction of millennial cultural, social heritage.

Following the decision of Ottoman Empire to enter to the First World War and declaration of Jihad against European forces, Christian communities of the Empire imminently faced killings, massacres. From the last months of 1914 Assyrians of Ourmiye, Iran threatened and had been target of first wave of the genocide. This step followed by the massacres in Hakkari region and sorroundered cities and towns namely Siirt, Bitlis and the last phase occurred in Turabdin region. Similar to other practises, Turkish leaders at the first arrested and killed community leaders, teachers, intellectuals, religious and community leaders.

During the WWI, Chaldean-Syriac-Assyrian people were present in the eastern parts of the Empire starting from Harput, Urfa, Turabdin region and villages in the borderline in Hakkari and in Ourmiye, Iran with different churches and denominations. Moreover, Chaldean-Syriac-Assyrian people were also important component of social fabric by their rich contributions to social, economic and cultural life. Prior to the genocide, newspapers, magazines and literature works were growing in the region and establishing new ways of works.

During the genocide of 1915, women, children and elderly had been targeted, tortured and killed while men had been eliminated in brutal way and hundreds of women and children had been Islamised forcefully. Moreover, cultural and religious monuments and buildings had been destroyed and converted to mosques in various places. The newly founded Turkish Republic continued vigorously denialist policies. Today, there is no sign of Christian presence in Hakkari, Siirt and other places.

European Syriac Union, ESU with its affiliated associations remember innocent souls and martyrs of Sayfo genocide with honour and respect. Recognition of past atrocities is prerequisite for better future.