

MARTYRS OF 1915 SAYFO GENOCIDE

2021-06-15



In the 1914-15 period, the Christian peoples living under the Ottoman-Turkish rule were subjected to genocide and destruction in their historical lands, their centuries-old cultural, social and economic richness, assets and savings were destroyed and forcibly changed hands. Armenians, Greeks and Syriacs, as Christian peoples, were driven from their lands as a result of the violence and genocide they suffered.

The Syriac-Assyrians, who had a population of less than one million within the borders of Ottoman rule before 1915, with their different church traditions and geographical distribution, soon became the target of mass violence, while hundreds of monasteries, churches, property and cultural wealth have been destroyed. Approximately 500 thousand Syriac-Assyrians were massacred with the participation of local forces in the Turabdin region, Diyarbakır, Adıyaman, Urfa, Siirt region, Hakkari and Urmiye. After the prominent civil and religious leaders of the society were eliminated in the first place, women and children were taken hostage, forcibly Islamized and sold. Churches, monasteries and places of worship, which were considered to be the first centers of Christianity in a wide geography where the Syriac-Assyrian people were dispersed, were destroyed, libraries, books and manuscripts bearing the tradition of centuries were burned. While the Syriac-Assyrian presence in all regions came to an end after the genocide, there is still only a very small Syriac presence in Turabdin and Mardin as of today. The policies of the republican period brought with it the institutionalization of annihilation and assimilation, so another stage of the genocide was realized.

In a process where genocide and crimes against humanity are increasingly being talked about and discussed in the world, US President Joe Biden's recognition of the Armenian Genocide, similar acceptance by the US Congress earlier, and the European Parliament's reference to the Armenian Genocide in recent months, must be noted for the international community and the peoples who were victims of genocide. It is an essential development. In this sense, it is a historical necessity for the international community and

especially Europe, which has an important Syriac-Assyrian diaspora, to take a step for Sayfo 1915 and make a call to Turkey on this issue.

European Syriac Union, ESU has been working for Sayfo since the day of foundation and throughout the history of the MUB's struggle, and it has been active for the recognition and acceptance of the genocide both within and outside of our people. On this occasion, our call is for the sensitivity of our people on this issue and for the European Union countries to recognize Sayfo. On this, we respectfully commemorate those who lost their lives during the genocide on the 15 June Sayfo Martyrs' Day.