



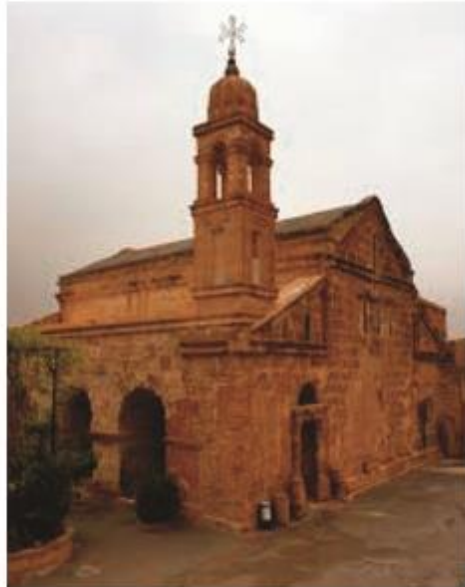
Dear readers,

During last three months, world witnessed major and important political and economic challenges with the rising new powers to the political scene on one hand and continued trade wars across the globe. Shifting power politics and the centre of the politics will continue to dominate international forums.

On the other hand, situation in Middle East continue to remain explosive with the ongoing conflict in Syria, incursion and occupation of Turkey in Syria and Iraq and the presence of non state actors across the region. During the last period, some of the regional countries went to the ballot and undertook elections.



In Turkey, general and presidential elections took place on 24 June. While current government formation lead the polls, People's Democratic Party, HDP entered to the Parliament and our friend Tuma Çelik also won his seat from Mardin city. In Europe, we mobilized our forces to the support of the party and our friend. We also organized meetings, seminars and public hearings for him to meet our people and electors. While the political, social atmosphere in Turkey remain chaotic with the iron hand of the government by jailing hundred of activists, journalists and political figures, presence in the Parliament will be crucial.



We held several activities, conferences and hearings regarding 1915 Sayfo genocide as we commemorate it. Sayfo genocide continues to be on the agenda in Sweden and Netherlands with the interference of Turkey and related organizations to the discussions and hijacking discussions.

The question of Sayfo 1915 genocide will surely continue to be discussed in the European public opinion debate and we will continue to follow closely this important issue. Our people are ready to defend their history and truth. Whatever happens and pressure from different actors, we in the ESU will continue our work and activities and encourage our people to be active in the issue to create fair and just position.

As the final point, we will continue our work in different countries and in the European Parliament regarding the future and demands of our people.

ESU Co-chairs Hulya Gabriel & Tony Vergili

We remember innocent souls and martyrs of Sayfo 1915 Genocide

Since the year of 2015, with the proposal of Syriac Orthodox Patriarch HH Aphrem II Karim with the large consultations of various parties, organisations and institutions, Syriac people commemorate Sayfo Remembrance Day on 15 June. European Syriac Union, ESU welcomed initiative and accordingly activities are underway in this period of the year.

Chaldean-Syriac-Assyrian people are ancient and native component of Mesopotamian civilization. During the history, Chaldean-Syriac-Assyrian people contribute greatly to the social, cultural, economic and intellectual life of the region under different powers. On the other side, with different periods, they had been target of killings, massacres, exodus and harassments by different rulers and dominant forces. In this regard, the genocide of 1915 is the tipping point of their suffering and annihilation. Due to their Christian and different ethnic identity, they had been victim of genocide along with the Armenian and Pontiac Greek people during the years of 1914-15. Syriac people call these years as "Sayfo" which means "Sword" in Syriac language. Sayfo took place in the eastern parts of Ottoman Empire namely in the regions of Turabdin, Hakkari and Urmia, present day in Iran. During the genocide, nearly 500 thousands of Chaldean-Syriac-Assyrians had been massacred by Ottoman powers and their local allies namely, Kurdish and other tribes.

Ten of thousands of people, most of them women and children, had been forced to convert to Islam while thousands had been forced to exile their homes and historical places; others had been perished during the deportation due to the malnutrition, thirstiness, hunger and diseases. Intellectuals, writers, composers, public figures, religious leaders and well-known civil personalities had been eliminated as the first phase of the genocide. Hundreds of historical, cultural and social monuments namely churches, monasteries, education centers had been destroyed in order to eradicate all traces of Syriac people from the region. Churches and other religious centers converted to mosques or they had been used for other inappropriate means. Ethnic cleansing took place in all Syriac towns, villages, districts and properties and goods of Syriac people had been seized.

During the genocide under Ottoman Empire rule, Syriac people had been deprived from their societal dynamics, economic resources and they had been at the threshold of total annihilation. The survivors of the genocide, Sayfo, had lived under harsh conditions and they had lived fearful life. The psychological and spiritual trauma of genocide continues to affect generations constantly until today.

Despite numerous reports, facts and findings by witnesses and observers from inside and outside of the Empire, Turkish authorities constantly continue to deny genocide and moreover work against this reality. As the inheritor of the Ottoman Empire, Turkish state continues to deny the genocide of Syriacs, Armenians and Pontiac Greeks. Plus until today, Turkey does not recognize officially identity of Syriac people. On the other side, today, in the 21st century, genocidal mentality, ethnic and religious cleansing continues to target Christian minorities in the Mesopotamia and Middle East.

We firmly believe that, the denialist mentality and genocidal politics harm the very fundamental values and understandings of the humanity. As the core and principal responsibility of international democratic laws and principles is to prevent atrocities, massacres and genocides, we want justice to take place for the perpetrators of this crime against humanity. We believe that, there is no time restriction or limitation for the crimes against humanity and genocides.

As we commemorate the innocent souls and martyrs of the Sayfo Genocide 1915, we remember all the victims of the 1915 genocide and we will continue our struggle to honor the history and victims of the Sayfo until official recognition by the perpetrators and international community. We kindly call our people for the full participation to the events, activities and commemorations.



Tuma Çelik enters to the Turkish Parliament

During the general and presidential elections in Turkey on 24 June, various members of minority groups had been presented as the candidates to enter to the Turkish Parliament from different political parties. Long time representative of ESU and Editor in Chief of monthly newspaper Sabro Tuma Çelik was also candidate from Mardin within the ranks of the Peoples' Democratic Party, HDP.

While HDP successfully passed the threshold and entered to the Parliament, with the same way, Tuma Çelik secured his place from the city of Mardin and entered to the Parliament for four years term.

ESU believes that this important development for the Syriac people in the homeland and as well to the people of the diaspora following the election of Tuma Çelik to the Parliament. On the other hand, Tuma Çelik promised to work for the well being of the whole citizens and will follow situation of Syriacs closely and will bring the issues to the attention of the Parliament.

Since several years, Tuma Çelik has been active within the political, social and cultural fields within the Syriac people. He is also author of several books, especially about Syriac people, articles, interviews and regular contributor to the various conferences.

ESU congratulates Tuma Çelik with his new task and important responsibility as the country and Syriac people in the Middle East pass through crucial process. Moreover, regarding the ongoing issues in Turkey with Syriac people, Tuma Çelik can play an effective role to highlight them.



Turkey Interference in European Affairs in Unacceptable

Since several weeks, Syriac people in Sweden at first and secondly Swedish public opinion and media continue to discuss the issue of Sayfo 1915 genocide in the country in different levels including political parties and high ranking politicians. Now, the question of Sayfo genocide also is in the actuality in Netherlands. In the cases, interference of Turkey to the discussion undermines free discussion, acceptance and progress on the genocide issue.

Following its brutal stand against opposition figures, politicians, and dissidents and of any critical views in Turkey, the Turkish government under the AKP now extends its nationalist stand to the European countries rallying behind them Turkish citizens to reach their objectives. Turkey interference in the European debate and crucial public opinion discussions undermine the prospects of free and democratic atmosphere and reach consensus based on truth and justice.

Since several weeks, Sweden discuss the issue of genocide 1915 perpetrated by Turkish-Ottoman rule and the attitude of some Swedish politicians. After long discussions and with the statements from different actors, we now know clearly the role of Turkey to stand before any recognition of Sayfo genocide. On the other hand, in Netherlands, Saxion University of Applied Sciences refused to publish an article regarding Sayfo 1915 genocide fearing the reprisal of Turkish population in the country. Fortunately, with the weight of Syriac people, associations and personalities, Saxion University accepted to publish article finally.

The genocide of 1915 issue is historical fact and truth recognized by International Scholars of Genocide Association and several countries. It is highly important for the Chaldean-Syriac-Assyrian people who continue to suffer from parallel destruction, fear and massacres. Chaldean-Syriac-Assyrian people will continue to fight for the recognition of Sayfo.

While condemning the interference and undermining role of Turkey to the European public opinion debate, we firmly believe that European countries, governments and decision makers must stand against Turkey attitude and stand before its hostage policy. Europe should stand for free, democratic and pluralistic public opinion debate without interference of any power to discover truth and recognize it.

Interview with Lars Adaktusson, MEP

Swedish member of the European Parliament Lars Adaktusson visited Iraq several times to investigate and follow up the situation of Chaldean-Syriac-Assyrian people and other groups in Iraq. MEP Adaktusson has been active regarding the situation of vulnerable groups in the Middle East and he initiated several resolutions in the European Parliament. Recently, he visited again Iraq and Nineveh Plain to see the latest situation. We present you this interview with MEP Adaktusson from SyriacPress.

What was the aim with this trip?

Fact finding mission in order to learn more about the political situation in the aftermath of the Iraqi parliamentary elections and about safety, reconstruction and the rate of return of refugees and IDPs on the Nineveh Plain.

Who did you meet with?

- Archbishop Bashar Warda, Chaldean Church
- Archbishop Nicodemus Dawood Saraf, Syriac-Orthodox Church
- Clarisse Pasztory, Head of the EU Liaison Office in Erbil
- Martin Lafon, Loevre Orient Nineveh Reconstruction Committee
- Beth Nahrin Patriotic
- Union Beth Nahrin
- Democratic Party Chaldo Ashur
- Assyrian Democratic Movement/NPU
- Kurdistan Democratic Party

Which places did you go to?

- Ankawa
- Bakhdida
- Teleskof
- Bartella
- Karemles
- Alqosh



Could you give us your opinion on how the Christian sees their situation?

The future is still unknown. Reconstruction efforts as well as return of refugees are ongoing in most parts of the Nineveh Plain, but the lack of long term security guarantees is still a major concern for the local population. The division of the Nineveh Plain into a zone controlled by Baghdad and a zone controlled by Erbil is a visual proof of the validity of those concerns, and it is clear that it is in the interest of the Chaldean/Syriac/Assyrian people to have that situation changed, so that the whole of the Nineveh Plain is united and so that all men in uniform can be community based and part of the national security structure of Iraq.

What is the analysis from the Christian political parties side regarding the elections and the result?

All Christian parties that we met were highly critical to the manipulation that had taken place, meaning that a party without any real connection with the community could win two seats of the Christian quota of five seats. They all shared the same analysis, that the weakness of the Christians in terms of population numbers had been used by the Mesopotamian List by having shi'ites in cities like Basra and Najaf, who lack a Christian population, vote for a supposedly Christian party in order to strengthen shia interests in the Iraqi parliament. They all lamented the fact that the U.N. and western nations fail to understand the Iraqi society, by refusing to restrict voting for Christian parties to Christian voters. Iraq is a sectarian society, and no matter what we think about that, loopholes like this will be used by stronger actors at the expense of weaker ethno-religious groups until something is done about it.