



Dear friends,

Our Syriac people (Assyrians-Chaldeans-Arameans) is one of the ancient peoples of the Middle East and has made great contributions to civilization. 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 Tur Abdin (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 Khabur region in northeaster Syria and the Nineveh Plain – again Syriacs had to flee their ancient homeland of Bethnahrin (Mesopotamia).

Due to the monist mindset of status-quo regimes, 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 wars 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 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 and Northern Iraq. As European Syriac Union (member of the Bethnahrin National Council) it is our national, moral, and human duty to oppose attacks and massacres on our Syriac people.

As a Syriac activist movement, we oppose all politics of extermination from our homeland. When will international powers stop this conscious policy of extermination of our people and 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 and recently Northern Iraq has accelerated 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 and Iraq to stop Turkey's war policies and to ensure future existence in our homeland. We trust that our people in Syria and Iraq 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 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 in Iraq and push for a pluralistic and democratic Syria.



15 June 2020: 105 Years Sayfo Genocide against the Syriac People

Every year on the 15th of June, Syriacs commemorate the Sayfo Genocide of 1915. Syriacs remember Sayfo



as a decades-long process of massacres which started in the Ottoman Empire in the 1890s and culminated in the Sayfo Genocide of 1915. In 1915 the Ottoman-Turkish leaders of the Committee of Union and Progress with

allied Kurds and partners carried out a targeted and organized genocide against our Syriac people, against Armenians and against Pontic Greeks.

During the genocide more than two and half million of innocent people were killed, hundreds of thousands were deported on death marches and forced to convert to Islam. Historical riches, properties, and assets have been seized. In contemporary Turkey, the Syriac, Armenian and Greek population does not exceed 100,000 of the total population.

The trans-generational trauma of the Sayfo Genocide of 1915 continues today. The policies of systematic denial, destruction, and annihilation of the Christian component in 1915 in the Ottoman Empire, are continued today within Turkey and in the broader Middle East. Successive Turkish governments have denied the Sayfo Genocide of 1915 and continue to block justice through all available means. But there is no limitation period for injustice and crimes against humanity.

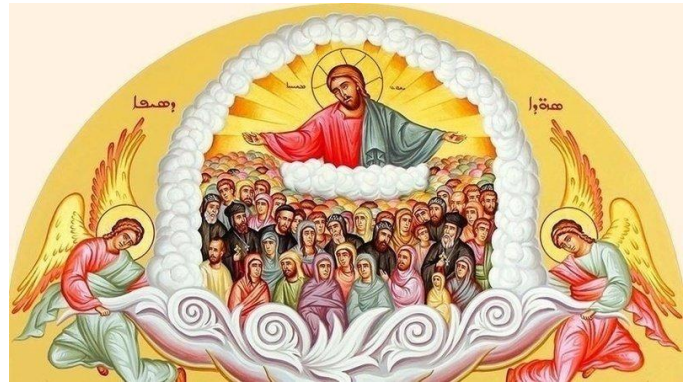
While several states and parliaments around the world recognized the Sayfo Genocide of 1915, there is still much work to be done to achieve full spectrum recognition. Together with you, friends, politicians, journalists, and non-governmental organizations we want to achieve the following;

- For Turkey, UN, EU, Arab League, other international forums, and states to officially recognize Sayfo;
- To initiate a reconciliation and settlement process with the successors of the perpetrators;
- For the international community to urgently stop the ongoing policies of denial of the Syriac people, in Turkey and in the broader Middle East;
- And the European Syriac Union asks from the United Nations to grant Syriacs full status as a people according to its charter and conventions, and according to international defining law.

How countries approach and treat their indigenous components is a measure of full-grown democracy and associated democratic values. How countries support and endorse these democratic values in practice is a measure of the internalization of these democratic values.



ESU petition for Recognition Sayfo 1915 Genocide by European Parliament



On the occasion of the annual Sayfo Remembrance Day on June 15th, the European Syriac Union has started a petition to urge the European Parliament to recognize the Sayfo Genocide of 1915 and side with historical truth. ESU asks the European Parliament to choose for peace and justice according to its founding pillars and ideals.

Help us achieve Sayfo Genocide of 1915 recognition by the European Parliament and

[SIGN THE PETITION HERE](#)



**Statement by Syriac Turkish MP and former
European Syriac Union member Tuma Çelik.**



**As addressed to the Grand National Assembly of
Turkey on the 18th of June 2020.**

Distinguished Chairman, Dear Fellow Members of Parliament, for a long time, consecutive administrations of this country have neither wanted to remember, nor did they want to acknowledge historical events — on the contrary, they deny the events. But denial does not change the historical truth. This country has, many times over, experienced many such cases of denial. We must not forget and understand that with denial of history come new genocides, more repression, and new coups. This approach has not brought our country any step forward. Past events we had to go through clearly prove this.

A good example is that of a monk who lives 24 hours a day in a monastery in the mountains. He gets arrested in the early morning and put in prison. But it should be known to everyone that this monk, according to his calling, will provide help to anyone and go everywhere where aid is needed. Fires occur annually where the Syriac population density is high. So far, no prevention measures have been taken by the authorities and calls for measures are ignored. The fires are left to burn, with all their consequences, until they go out themselves. Syriac property, in ownership for thousands of years, is

seized and transferred to the Diyanet Directory of Religious Affairs. And this despite the fact Diyanet has no relation whatsoever in matters of Syrians. When protested publicly, some of the property is returned but some of the property is stolen and not returned. And this happens every few years or so.

Despite the rights Syrians have according to the Lausanne Treaty, we are not allowed to live our identity, teach our language, or develop our culture. In conclusion: we are not allowed to live our life as Syrians. We are not allowed to exercise our rights. And when we protest, we are flouted and treated as if we are traitors. I want to state here very clearly for the record: we Syrians love and defend this country no less than you do!

The process of denial and subordination started in 1915 with the genocide on the Syrians. The genocide is called Sayfo by Syrians. It continues to this day. In the year 1915, at least 300,000 of 700,000 Syrians were killed in this country. And up to 200,000 were forced to change their identity, convert, or were deported.

In 1924, more than 80,000 Eastern Syrians, or Nestorians, were expelled from the land into an uncertain life in the diaspora. What happened during and after their expulsion is known very well to all of us. In 1928, the last two Syriac schools in Diyarbakir and Mardin were closed. The Syriac Orthodox Patriarchate which resided for more than 600 years in the Dayr al-Zafaran was expelled from the country. Unjust policies of repression were continued through the 1942 property and asset tax laws, the Events of 6-7 September 1955, and events during the Cyprus affair.

In all the above cases, Syrians were made targets. Life for Syrians was made difficult in this country and made many migrate from this country because of these unjust policies.

Syriac children were required to attend Islamic lessons, a product of the 1980 junta led by Kenan Evren. It forced all children to attend Islamic classes in school. Because of this, thousands of Syrians saw themselves forced to leave the country. In the 1990s, more than 50 Syrians were killed. All these killings got the curious label “unknown killer”. Targeted by dark forces, Syrians again saw themselves forced to leave the country. And despite all that, Syrians started coming back to the country from

the diaspora where they had established their lives after a single message from the authorities. However, again they were not left alone. For all the issues Syriacs had to go through in recent years, no one asked or cared about them.

Because all previous and current rulers and administrators that governed this country do not recognize past events and do not see or accept the responsibility that comes with their office. That is why our criticisms and complaints of systematic policies of denial are addressed to all rulers and all administrations. Our demands are directed to all in this country.

We believe that the first step for all the above issues to be settled and reconciled is to face the past. And to prevent past events from repeating, past events must be brought to the open. The perpetrators of past crimes need to be identified, brought before the court and, if found guilty, punished.

Dear friends, it is impossible to live our lives in security and have a safe and joint future if we ignore repression. In order for us to establish safe livelihood, past events and offenses must be condemned. This matter is most important for a future society of coexistence, hope, and peace in our country. That is why we call everybody to an inclusive society, to living together, to equal citizenship, and to freedom of individual identity, without limitation.

In closing, I respectfully bow my head in memory of the Sayfo martyrs of 1915.



ESU endorses Dutch MP Pieter Omtzigt (CDA) in his bid to become the new party leader of the Christian Democratic party



The European Syriac Union endorses Pieter Omtzigt to become the new party leader for the Christian Democrats in Dutch parliament. ESU has come to know Pieter as a knowledgeable politician with integrity, a fighter against injustice and repression, and an advocate of human rights. Once elected, ESU looks forward to working with Pieter in a bipartisan way on important Syriac issues and achieving Syriac rights. [@PieterOmtzigt](#)



ESU and Bethnahrin Patriotic Union demand Kurdish Regional Government to call Kurdish MP to account and take appropriate legal measures

In April, the deputy head of the New Generation political party and MP in the Kurdish Region in Iraq (KRI) expressed his dissatisfaction over the fact that authorities in the KRI demanded the same strict adherence to COVID-19 measures from mosques as they do from churches. The MP said that government agencies should not equate the majority Muslim houses of worship to the minority Christian houses of worship as this might hurt the feelings of the Muslim majority.

Together with our affiliate organization Bethnahrin Patriotic Union (HBA) in Iraq, we have [denounced](#) the statements made by the New Generation MP.

Insults of our Christian belief are not strange to ESU and HBA and come up every so often from Iraqi politicians and officials. They are the product of a mentality based on discrimination, the lack of love for nation and inclusiveness, and are part of a hostile agenda against our indigenous people, even though our people has lived on these lands for thousands of years and helped built the country of Iraq since its establishment in 1921. And our people has not stopped doing so. This attack on Christians is racist and chauvinistic, and it disrespects the laws of the KRI and Iraq, betrayed the dignified position he holds and overturns Iraqi Law 15, 2015.

ESU and HBA are genuinely concerned as such statements undermine coexistence in Iraqi society. We demand from the KRI parliament and the KRG govern-

ment to call the MP to account and take appropriate measures according to the laws of the Region.

We also demand from the authorities to take appropriate measures in all three Regions of the KRI that such insults will not be accepted and done.



ESU closely monitors the cases of the Syriac-Chaldean Diril couple and the Syriac-Assyrian Bet-Tamraz family

Turkey - The Syriac-Chaldean couple Hurmüz (71) and Shmuni Diril (65) disappeared on January 11, 2020 in their village Mehre, Şırnak Province, Turkey. On March 20, the lifeless and mutilated body of Shmuni Diril was found in a riverbed near their village. There are no new developments regarding the whereabouts of Hurmüz Diril.

Local Turkish authorities have allocated little search capacity and detectives to the case. The case is labelled confidential and to date, to our knowledge, no autopsy report on the body of Shmuni Diril has been released.

ESU closely monitors the Diril case and has had contact and met with several authorities and politicians both in the Turkey and in Europe with the request for more urgent action and transparency. ESU demands a full and comprehensive investigation in the murder of Shmuni Diril and the kidnapping of Hurmüz Diril.

Iran - Victor Bet-Tamraz (66) and his family are Syriac-Assyrian Christians who have endured many years of persecution for their Christian activities in Iran. Victor, his wife Shamiram and their son Ramiel were arrested over evangelizing activities in the Farsi language. Their daughter Dabrina fled the country.

Victor Bet-Tamraz was officially recognized as a minister and led the Shahrara Assyrian Pentecostal Church in Tehran for many years. That is, until it was closed in 2009 by Iranian authorities for holding services in Farsi. Christians in Iran may only hold services in their own

languages, are not free to evangelize, and may not admit (native Iranians) converts to their church services. In July 2017 and January 2018, Victor and Shamiram were sentenced to many years in prison and are out on bail while they await their appeal hearing. Their appeal has been postponed several times, latest in June without given reason and for an unknown date.



ESU congratulates

Evan Faeq Yaqoob Jabro with her nomination as Iraq's new Minister for Migration and Displacement

In her new role as Minister she will face many challenges as Iraq still hosts hundreds of thousands war-torn IDPs from especially Sinjar, Mosul, and the Nineveh Plains. These IDPs, with among them tens of thousands of Syriacs (Chaldeans-Arameans-Assyrians), are in urgent need of the most basic existential services.

Syriac-Chaldean Evan Faeq Yaqoob Jabro is from the Nineveh Plains.

Abraham Halef with his nomination to the Riksdag

Per 1 August, Abraham Halef will take a seat in the Riksdag, the Swedish parliament, for the Socialdemokraterna (Social Democrat party).

Halef will be the fifth Syriac member of the Riksdag after Tony Haddou (Vänsterpartiet / Left Party), Robert Halef (KristDemokraterna), Robert Hannah (Liberalerna) and Roger Haddad (Liberalerna). There is one Syriac minister Ibrahim Baylan (Minister for Enterprise).

Ms. Irena Vojáčková-Sollorano as the new United Nations Deputy Special Representative and Resident Coordinator for Iraq.

ESU wishes her every success with her appointment by UN Secretary-General António Guterres as his new Deputy Special Representative for Iraq, in the UNAMI and Resident Coordinator. Ms. Vojáčková-Sollorano will also serve as Humanitarian Coordinator.



**15th June ESU Sayfo Commemorations
in times of pandemic measures**

Pohlheim-Giessen, Germany



Etterbeek, Belgium



Gütersloh, Germany



Locarno, Switzerland



Göppingen, Germany



Switzerland



Hengelo, Netherlands



Delmenhorst, Germany

