

Assyrian Aid Society

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April 14, 2015

We are here to make a desperate plea for support to end the genocidal violence targeting Assyrians and Yezidis in Iraq and Assyrians in Syria. Assyrians and Yezidis are specifically targeted by extremists; since 2003 in Iraq and in Syria since 2011. The final phase of elimination is being carried out by the Islamic State in Iraq and Al Sham (ISIS).

The death tolls and numbers displaced from all Iraqis and all Syrians are devastating. Our cry for help should never be taken as a claim that an Assyrian or Yezidis life is worth more than that of their neighbor's. Declaring that Yezidis and Assyrians are enduring genocidal violence acknowledges that these two communities will cease to exist in Iraq and Syria without meaningful intervention.

On July 18, 2014 ISIS issued an ultimatum to the Assyrian Christians, giving them one day to convert to Islam, pay the jizya or suffer 'the sword'. Today, there are no more Assyrians in Mosul or the Nineveh Plain and the Assyrians of the Khabur River were expunged just before this session started. These attacks are happening to these people because they are Assyrian and Christian.

We stand with our Yezidi brothers and sisters who are enduring the same targeted violence, evidenced by the massacres in Sinjar and the siege of Mount Sinjar where ISIS tried to kill tens of thousands by denying escaping Yezidis humanitarian relief.

ISIS intends to destroy Yezidis and Assyrians wherever possible. The scale of the violence is attested to by Yezidis bodies in mass graves and the empty Assyrian towns in the Nineveh Plain.

ISIS is systematically destroying ancient Assyrian cities, monuments and artifacts that attest to Assyrian indigeneity in Nineveh. ISIS is denying Assyrians their future and their past. It is an attempt to annihilate an entire people in their land.

Is this not genocide?

To date no one, not the United Nations nor the US are addressing the aim of preserving Assyrians and Yezidis in their lands. There needs to be a substantive strategy for the Yezidis' and Assyrians' right of return. To that end, we urge direct aid and support to Assyrian and Yezidi IDPs from the international community channeled through independent NGOs; we urge the UN and the international community to consider mechanisms for creating a zone of international protection in the Nineveh Plain; finally, we urge the US to work with local, independent Assyrian and Yezidi forces in the Nineveh Plain to help secure these areas.



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