



WORLD COUNCIL OF ARAMEANS (SYRIACS)
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WORLD COUNCIL OF ARAMEANS (SYRIACS)
KLOCKARVÄGEN 104, 151 61 SÖDERTÄLJE, SWEDEN

NON-GOVERNMENTAL ORGANIZATION IN SPECIAL
CONSULTATIVE STATUS WITH THE ECONOMIC
AND SOCIAL COUNCIL OF THE UNITED NATIONS

RECOGNIZE ARAMEAN PEOPLE AND CRIMES AGAINST THIS SEMITIC PEOPLE

Wednesday, 26 November 2014

Geneva, United Nations | 7th Session of the Minority Issues Forum

Shlomo ahay w-ahwotho myaqre,

My name is Shadi Khaloul, I am an Aramean Christian from Israel. I am a member of the Syriac Maronite Church, but the Aramean people also consist of the Syriac Orthodox, Syriac Catholic, Chaldean, 'Nestorian' and Melkite churches.

On behalf of the Aramean people, who are the natives of Southeast Turkey, Iraq, Syria and Lebanon, our NGO comes once again to this distinguished forum to ask the United Nations and its Member States for recognition in three significant ways.

1. Recognition of violence and crimes of the last 100 years

Allow me to remind the world of some chilling facts regarding the Aramean Christians:

- In Turkey, more than 500,000 were murdered and expelled since 1895.
- From Lebanon, more than 1,5 million were killed and expelled since 1860.
- In Iraq, more than 1 million were forced to leave since 2003.
- In Syria, almost a million have escaped their homeland since 2011.

All this happened largely at the hands of Turkish, Kurdish and Arab armed forces. This resulted in the near total destruction of the Aramean people and its rich cultural heritage.

2. Recognition and action in relation to ongoing crimes

History is repeating itself and it appears that it never really stopped.

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In Syria and Iraq we see a continuation of the crimes by Muslim militants against the Aramean Christians such as killings, tortures, beheadings, crucifixions and kidnappings. The barbarism of these terrorist groups, who receive major funding from certain UN Member States, has caused a new mass exodus.

3. Recognition of our people by Israel and beyond

Mr. President, my own democratic country of Israel recently recognized the Arameans as an ethnic minority. This has enabled me and my children to correct our identity cards and to register ourselves as "Aramean Christians," because until recently we were incorrectly identified as "Arab Christians."

Not only is this historic decision by Israel and the Jewish people in accord with international law, we are also delighted that finally a state has heard our plea. Now we expect other UN Members and NGOs to equally recognize our people and thus ensure their human rights, especially Turkey, Iraq, Syria, Lebanon and the Palestinian Authority.

In conclusion: three recommendations

Mr. President, we are reliving the nightmares of the Ottoman Genocide of 1915. As we are struggling for survival, we ask the international community to guarantee UN charters and international law by recognizing:

1. the ongoing atrocity crimes suffered by the Arameans;
2. the Arameans as a distinct ethno-religious people;
3. the need for a debate about self-determination of the Aramean people.

In light of the inability or unwillingness of the governments in our home countries to protect the Arameans from total annihilation and to help them preserve their endangered cultural heritage, we appeal to the conscience of this distinguished forum and stress:

It is about time to grant the native Aramean people also their own democratic state in the land of their ancestors.

Thank you Mr. President.

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