

**More Than Crimes Against Humanity:
ISIS Targets Yezidis and Assyrians for Genocide**

Date: March 20, 2015

Time: 3-5 PM, Geneva, Switzerland local time

Location: Room 24

Moderator:

Sam Darmo ó Assyrian Aid Society of Iraq

Scheduled Speakers:

Michael Youash ó has been documenting the humanitarian crisis of minorities in Iraq since 2004

Mar Odisho Oraham - Assyrian Church of the East Bishop Diocese of Europe

Al Jasdin Osman ó attorney who has documented the stories of Yezidis IDPs living in tent cities

Faisl Mahmud Karow ó who lost thirty-eight family members to ISIS brutality

Prof. Ali Sedo Rosso ó professor, expert on Yezidis victimization by extremists

On Friday, March 20th 2015 the Assyrian Aid Society of Iraq brought together a robust showing of Permanent Missions to the UN Geneva, including the United States of America, the Russian Federation, Iraq, the United Kingdom, Armenia, Ireland and Canada, among others. Numerous NGOs were also present, including the AUA Americaø Chapter, the Assyrian Human Rights Network, the Nineveh Centre for Research and Development, the Assyrian Writerø Union, the World Evangelical Alliance and the International Association-International Gulf Organization.

At the heart of the matter is the reality that UN Human Rights Council processes are too slow moving to address the immediacy of genocidal violence facing Yezidis and Assyrians as well as the humanitarian needs of these peoples. In effect, Assyrians and Yezidis will not survive while the UN Human Rights Council ãtalksø Using its decades of delivering humanitarian relief to the areaø most afflicted populations, the Assyrian Aid Society of Iraq brought together speakers who could put the issue to those Missions with the power and interest to hopefully change ãbusiness as usualø and recognize that change is needed to save Assyrians and Yezidis.

The Republic of Armenia asserted its ongoing commitment to the preservation of Assyrians and other vulnerable minorities and to profile its resolution on genocide prevention. The U.S. and UK also made formal interventions restating their commitment and activities geared to the preservation of minorities but unable to indicate whether such concern will translate into notable action at the UN Human Rights Council. The Russian Federation was unable to make its formal intervention due to time constraints. However, the Assyrian Aid Society appreciates Russiaø earlier efforts, through its Joint Statement adopted by 62 other missions calling for the preservation of ethnic and religious minorities in the Middle East.

The Assyrian Aid Society wishes to express a special thank you to Assyrian Church of the East Diocese of Europe, H.G. Mar Odisho Oraham, whose attendance at the UNHRC was graciously facilitated by the World Evangelical Alliance. H.G. Mar Odisho's linking of Assyrian suffering throughout history and into the present, made a deep impression on all attendees. Thoughtful and assertive remarks by Giogees Hanna Mashko, Assyrian Democratic Movement Director for Europe, were also well received. We would also like to extend our deepest appreciation to Mr. Sam Edwar, director of the Assyrian Human Rights Network, for translating all statements at the event. We take pride in the focused participation and united tenor of this group of dedicated professionals, with only the best intentions at heart for our struggling Assyrian nation, in solidarity with our Yezidis brothers and sisters.

We hope to provide further details of the meetings and presentations at the UNHRC to not only inform the public about the realities of UN processes, but to also report on the outcome of these significant efforts. *It is crucial that regular and special sessions of the UNHRC are utilized in the most productive manner, to make our demands heard clearly and without any ambiguity.*

New perspective can change how the UN discusses this crisis. The Assyrian Aid Society of Iraq has been working at the epicenter of the humanitarian crisis, receiving the internally displaced from Mosul in the Nineveh Plain and then fleeing north to escape the ISIS onslaught while still delivering humanitarian aid. The shared tragedy between Yezidis and Assyrians can only be fully understood through such experiences; with the aim of moving the UN to take action.

Special Note: This event marks the first time ever that UN representatives of permanent missions, delegates and attendees were hearing the Assyrian language spoken in full presentation with Assyrian-to-English and Assyrian-to-Arabic translation. The Assyrian Aid Society of Iraq appreciates the creativity of Mr. Sam Darro for bringing about this special moment and for Mr. Sam Edwar's translation to English and Mr. Giogees Mashko's translation to Arabic!