

ASSYRIAN UNIVERSAL ALLIANCE AUSTRALIA CHAPTER

Member: Unrepresented Nations & Peoples Organization (UNPO)

PRESS RELEASE

Sydney - August 25, 2008.

Protest against Assyrian Genocide (Seyfo) on the highest Mountains in New South Wales

On Sunday 24 August 2008, over a hundred people from Sydney gathered in a show of protest against the mass slaughter of Assyrian people by the Ottoman Turks in 1915.

100 km outside Sydney on top of the Blue Mountains at Katoomba, a large number of black and red balloons were released with shouted slogans against the genocide committed by the Ottomans. Among the participants there were many young and elderly people. Australians and tourists at the location also observed the event and asked for copies of our information booklets on the Assyrian genocide.

The protest had been organized by Babylon Cultural Association and the Assyrian Universal Alliance upon the request of the Assyrian scholar from Sweden, Mr. Sabri Atman, Chairman of Seyfo Center. Mr. Atman was invited by the Assyrian Universal Alliance-Australian Chapter to hold a series of seminars in Sydney and Melbourne on the Assyrian Genocide and was a guest speaker in the Genocide Conference organized by the Alliance at New South Wales parliament House on 7 August 2008.

This event was held as part of the International Campaign being run by the Seyfo Centre to put pressure on the government of Turkey to officially acknowledge the Assyrian Genocide and apologise for the Turkish atrocities committed in 1915 against the Assyrian nation. Over two third of the Assyrian population in Turkey were murdered by the Young Turks in collaboration with Kurdish clans. The Assyrian people were systematically subjected to massacres, deportations, expropriation, torture, pillage and starvation, alongside with their Armenian and Greek brethren.

Mr. Sabri Atman gave a fevered address at the gathering, reminding all that the Assyrian victims of genocide were slaughtered simply because of their Christian religion and Assyrian ethnicity. He promised the souls of our martyrs that this nation will not forget them and will do all it can to pressure the Turkish government to acknowledge their crime against humanity. He was followed by Mr. Hermiz Shahan, Secretary of the Assyrian Universal Alliance-Australian Chapter, who spoke about the victims of both 1915 and 1933.

Mr. Shahan emphasized that the genocide committed in 1933 was in response to Assyrians demands that their national rights be asserted similar to that of other Iraqi nationalities. Of the resulting crime committed by the Iraqi government, Mr. Shahan said "We are gathered here on the highest mountain in NSW to promise the souls of our martyrs that the children of Assyria will not forget their sacrifice for the preservation of national culture and heritage." The gathering then released hundreds of balloons in to the sky with pride and dignity.

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