MEDIA RELEASE

THE OFFICIAL UNVEILING OF THE ASSYRIAN GENOCIDE MONUMENT IN ARMENIA

Yerevan, May 3, 2012

Once again the Assyrian nation has proved that it will mass stronger against all attempts to deny the Assyrian genocide committed by the Ottoman Turkey during WWI, which claimed about 750,000 innocent lives, and show to the world the heinous crimes committed against its people. “Turkey is still living in denial of this fact” Mr. Arsan Mikhaylov said.

On Wednesday 25th April 2012, the Assyrian people of Armenia gathered en masse to celebrate the official unveiling of the Assyrian genocide monument in a public land located at Crossroads of Moskovyan and Nalbandyan in central Yerevan. A special prayer service was organised by the Rev. Father Isaac Tamras from the Assyrian church of the East at the beginning of the ceremony.

The formal proceedings began with the Armenian and the Assyrian national Anthems, followed by a minute silence observed in memory of victims of the Assyrian genocide. After welcoming the attendees by the Master of ceremonies Mr. Razmik Khosroe, RA Meritorious Artist, lecturer at Yerevan Theatre and Film, State Pedagogical University, he then invited Mr. Arsan Mikhaylov, president of the Atour Association in Armenia and the Secretary of Eastern Europe of the Assyrian Universal Alliance to welcome the attendees.

“What prompted us to build this Assyrian genocide monument in Armenia is our respect for our martyrs who gave their lives for the preservation of our Assyrian cultural and ethnic identity, and also to add our voice to those of our fellow Armenians in this country” Mr. Arsan Mikhaylov said.

Mr. Mikhaylov continued that many Assyrian organisations from different countries have contributed to the cost of the entire project. The site is expected to become a pilgrimage site not only for the Assyrians but for Armenians and Pontic Greeks who are also victims of the same genocide.

Representatives from the Armenian government and Assyrian organizations from abroad attended the unveiling together with a large number of news agencies. Participating in the opening ceremony was Mr. Galust Sahakyan, the leader of the Republican faction, who condemned genocides by saying that "Even today the genocide continues against cultural values." He stressed that Armenia is home to the Assyrians and “here the Assyrians are not guests.”

Attending this historic event from Australia Mr. Hermiz Shahen, the Deputy Secretary General of the Assyrian Universal Alliance (AUA) in his speech thanked members of the Statue Project Committee
who worked hard to bring this project to reality, particularly the artist for designing this magnificent monument, and the many volunteers who worked tirelessly to build it.

In his address Mr. Shahen said “this is a significant event in the life of our nation and our people in Armenia and abroad; communities that have been established as a direct result of the continuous assaults on the Assyrian nation. This genocide monument speaks of what is occurring today to indigenous Assyrians in Iraq and Syria, who are facing systematic campaigns of murder, kidnapping, intimidation and destruction, and calls for a just and moral intervention by all people and nations who value humanity.”

In his final notes Mr. Shahen appealed to the Armenian government, as well as to other countries, to condemn these heinous acts committed against the Christian citizens of Anatolia, and urged all international humanitarian institutions to pressure Turkey to acknowledge and apologise for the atrocities its Ottoman leaders committed against their Assyrian, Armenian and Pontic Greek citizens during World War I.

The next speaker Mr. Sabri Atman, Director – Assyrian Genocide Research Center (Seyfo Center) expressed his deepest appreciation to the Armenian community and authorities in the Republic of Armenia and the City of Yerevan for making this day a reality.

Mr. Atman continued “the genocide committed against the Assyrian people by the Ottoman Empire and other genocides, including the 1933 Semele Massacre in Northern Iraq are historical realities that have affected the lives of every Assyrian family. Close to 100 years after the Assyrian genocide and 80 years after the Semele Massacre, Assyrians continue to fight for justice and recognition. The genocide which exterminated hundreds of thousands of our people destroyed our lands and forever changed the demographic of the area we called home for thousands of years. As a representative of the Assyrian community I simply ask for justice for my people also, no more and no less!”

The next speaker Mr. Armen Marukian, head of the department of Armenian Genocide Questions in the Institute of History - National Academy of Sciences, congratulated the Assyrians for honouring their martyrs and talked about the importance of the Assyrian genocide monument.

Among the speakers was Mr. Albert Yakubov, the late Lina Yakubova’s father and the Secretary of the Governor of Ararat Region, who spoke about the well-being of the Assyrians in Armenia, and the support provided by the Armenian government to them.

Dr. Anahit Khosroeva, Ph.D., a senior researcher in the Institute of History - National Academy of Science from the Republic of Armenia, spoke about the atrocities committed against the Assyrians and the Armenians, and highlighted the importance of the Assyrian genocide monument in Armenia.

The speeches were interrupted because of the sudden rain. Participants commented that the heaven was sharing in their grief and sorrow.

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