



Guest Editorial

When Will the Kidnapping and Murder of Assyrians Stop?

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(AINA) -- Last Saturday I filled my desk with things I haven't had the time to attend to for the last few months. I was ready to work on such mundane things as investigations and accounting and letters. At seven a clock in the evening our home phone at home started receiving one phone call after the other, as I had switched of my cell phone. A bishop has been kidnapped in Iraq ([AINA 2-29-2008](#)). His driver and two bodyguards have been killed. It happened in the Mosul area. I try to ignore it; I need to take care of what lies on my desk. Assyrian television stations and news agencies report about the tragic event. I don't want to pay attention. I don't have time. And no matter what, I can never undo the kidnapping and murder. I continue to go through the papers on the desk. Or should I call some of my contacts in Mosul? No, I continue to work with the other stuff.

At half past twelve on Saturday midday I come home to my mother, she is sitting and watching the Ishtar TV-channel while crying. I sit down next to her. A large crowd accompanies the coffins of the driver and bodyguards of the bishop. Everybody is crying. They cry out their grief, their fear, their inability to stop the ethnic cleansing and killings.

Three unfamiliar men have been killed in Iraq. My mother is from Turkey but cries as if she was present among the crowd in Mosul. The anger causes my body to ache. Why does my mother care? Why is my body aching. Is it because we are reminded through these events about a genocide which occurred more than ninety years ago? Yes, and because it is continuing till today ([report](#)). But we also cry because we feel betrayed, because throughout history the world has only watched when we become targets of the Islamists. We are always left without any protection. Great Britain fooled us during WWI to believe it would protect us but when they didn't need us anymore they just turned their backs and our people were slaughtered. Russia betrayed us as well. We are the only people in the Middle East being decimated instead of increasing.

Back to the TV: The coffins are carried into the church. Relatives and friends to the dead are dressed in black and bow in front of the coffins. A teenage girl screams out her grief at her father's coffin: "papa, papa, my beloved papa." A mother at her sons' coffin: "my son is a hero, my son died for a good cause." A sister kisses the picture of her murdered brother. The priests try to calm the people down, everyone is crying. The remnant of Assyrians, also called Syriacs and Chaldeans, left in the Mosul area has gathered in the church. They cry out their fear as well as their anger. They hug each other, console each other, but nothing helps. The bishop is trying to speak but his voice is drowned in the cries and screams, although the volume on the loud speakers has been turned up. My body aches, I also want to cry and scream: "Enough is enough!"

I have been told to act less on behalf of my people. I am after all an investigative journalist and can therefore not act as a generator of public opinion. Investigative journalism is founded on facts. But the fact is the Assyrians are driven out from what has been their homeland for more than six thousand years. The fact is the people who first embraced Jesus and which still use His mother tongue are being driven out, persecuted and killed. The fact is the world has shut its eyes to this tragedy. The fact is half of Iraq's indigenous population has already been driven into exile and the other half is living in constant fear.

The Assyrians must have a safe haven now! They have the right to it according to the Iraqi constitution. They are entitled to it according to international law, according to the UN constitution. But first and foremost, they are entitled to it by what we call humanity. Where is the humanity of the United States? Where is the humanity of the UN or of my home country Sweden? Why is no one saying or doing anything? I am also asking all liberal and moderate Muslims in the world why they are not doing anything to stop the killing of the Christians in Iraq? The war in Iraq has affected all Iraqis in a severe way but unlike others the Assyrians choose not to make war. They don't carry weapons and don't kill. Arabs and Kurds, Shiites and Sunnis, all must act towards ending the cleansing of Iraq's ethnic and religious minorities.

I will not be able to return to the papers on my desk today, they all now seem so trivial. As an investigative journalist I must continue to gather facts in order to be able to report about a truth most other journalists don't care about.

Assyrian International News Agency

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