

August 27, 2019

The Honorable Josh Harder  
131 Cannon House Office Building  
Washington, D.C. 20515

Dear Representative Harder:

We, the undersigned Assyrian-American organizations, write to express our support for H.Res.537 calling for U.S. recognition of the Assyrian Genocide and to thank you for your leadership in advancing this important legislation.

As organizations committed to raising awareness and promoting accountability for the Assyrian Genocide, we applaud your efforts undertaken on behalf of our community nationwide.

As H.Res.537 acknowledges, hundreds of thousands of Assyrians were subjected to a systematic campaign of massacre, torture, abduction, deportation, impoverishment, and cultural and ethnic destruction between 1914 and 1925. It is estimated that more than 250,000 Assyrians perished during the genocide—a number that represented more than half the Assyrian population at the time—alongside more than one million Armenians and Greeks who were similarly targeted by the Ottoman Empire during this period.

Historical injustices against the Assyrian people have lasting consequences that threaten their future. The effects of the Assyrian Genocide outlasted the violence, leading to transgenerational trauma, the dispossession of Assyrian lands and identity, the ruination and disintegration of Assyrian social and religious structures, and the forced and often permanent separation of Assyrian families which continues today as a result of incessant persecution.

Tragically, Assyrians continue to endure genocidal violence, persecution, and discrimination in their homeland today. Thus, the Assyrian Genocide stands as an important reminder that crimes against humanity must not go without recognition, condemnation, and resolution.



ASSYRIAN AMERICAN ASSOCIATION OF MASSACHUSETTS



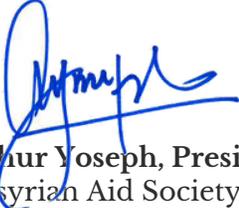
Stopping the cycle of genocide begins with speaking truthfully about past genocides. Denial of the Assyrian Genocide absolves the perpetrators, prolongs strained relationships between different ethnic and religious groups, trivializes the suffering of the Assyrian people, and contributes to the erasure of their history. Further, impunity emboldens those who would commit genocide in the future.

H.Res.537 is unprecedented in the sense that it highlights the unique suffering of the Assyrian people, which is often relegated in discourse and legislation concerning the Ottoman Empire's genocidal campaigns during WWI due to the fact that it coincided with the well-documented Armenian Genocide.

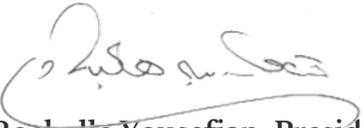
By formally recognizing the Assyrian Genocide, the United States can pay tribute to the perseverance and determination of those who survived, as well as members of the Assyrian-American community who have been deeply affected by these tragedies. Proper commemoration and condemnation of these crimes would signify the United States' commitment to victims of genocide and acknowledge its responsibility to help prevent future atrocities.

We are grateful for your leadership in making the Assyrian-American community a legislative priority and we look forward to working with your office to help advance this meaningful legislation.

**Signatories:**

  
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