



Newly Elected Assyrian Patriarch Wants to Commemorate Genocide Centennial

The decision marks a dramatic shift by the church on this sensitive issue, putting the Assyrian Orthodox Church on a collision course with Turkey, which continues to deny the genocide.

The decision is welcomed and even encouraged by the Syrian regime given the current enmity between Turkey and Syria. Patriarch Aphrem II has been vocal in his support for Bashar Al Assad's regime.

In the past the church refrained from any action which could have been interpreted as support for the recognition movement among Assyrian political organizations, fearing any such action would have jeopardized its parishioners, monasteries and churches in Turkey.

The Turkish genocide of Assyrians occurred in World War One. It began on April 24, 1915 and lasted to the end of 1918. The genocide claimed 750,000 (75%) Assyrian lives, as well as 1.5 million Armenians and 500,000 Pontic Greeks.

Sweden is the only country which has recognized the Assyrian genocide. The International Genocide Scholars Association [officially recognized](#) the Assyrian and Greek genocides in December, 2007.