



DISPLACED ASSYRIAN FAMILIES FIND SAFETY IN NEW HOMES

In February AAS-Iraq completed a major construction project in the village of Shiyoz that saw a new housing development created from the ground up for 44 Assyrian families displaced by ISIS forces in north Iraq.

The Odrana Camp is the first of its kind undertaken by AAS-Iraq. Comprised of modular caravans (called mobile homes here in North America) fabricated onsite and set on cement foundations, it is a neighborhood meant for years of use.

After the ground was cleared and leveled, and after trenches were dug for pipes bringing in clean drinking water and pipes for the sewerage system, and after an electricity network was installed to power the entire camp, foundations were set and caravans were built and then put in place. Finally, streets were built and safety fencing installed, ready for the first batch of families.

The 44 families, over 150 people, had been living 'temporarily' for many months in the AAS-Iraq dormitory in Dohuk, displacing the students who normally live and study there. With the opening of the Odrana Camp, the students are able to return to their rooms and their academic routine.

The project was a joint effort of the AAS-A, the Institute for Global Engagement, the Iraqi Christian Relief Council, the Philos Project, Discovery Church, and AAS-Iraq.



NEW PROJECT ASSISTS L.A. ASSYRIANS IN NEED

Helping Hands is a new project initiated by the AAS-A Los Angeles Chapter to assist Assyrians in need in the greater Los Angeles area. Employment, Housing, Education, and Personal Care are the categories currently covered by the project.

"The process is very simple," according to Chapter President Sayros Yadgar. "We connect those who need help with those who can provide the help!"

Here is how it works. If you need a job or housing, for example, you would contact the project and specify what kind of employment you are seeking or what kind of housing you require. Project volunteers will then check their database of jobs and

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YOSEPH AND MALIK MEET WITH OFFICIALS IN WASHINGTON D.C.

AAS-A President Ashur Yoseph and Vice President Mona Malik held a series of meetings in the nation's capital in February with U.S. government officials, the Iraqi Ambassador, Congresswoman Anna Eshoo, and fellow non-profit organizations, building partnerships to better help and serve Assyrians around the world.

Topping the week's agenda was a four-hour roundtable conference hosted by the State Department and Knox Thames, who is the Special Advisor for Religious Minorities in the Near East and South / Central Asia. Participants included the Department of Defense, the Smithsonian institute, International Orthodox Christian Charities, IDC, Yezidi representatives, a Syrian priest from the Antioch Church, Syriac Institute, ADFA, Nineveh Council of America, and the Church of the East. The name of the conference was "Protecting Religious and Cultural Heritage" with the agenda focused on oppressive laws, indigenous languages, and preserving cultural and sacred spaces in conflict zones.

In a private meeting earlier with Knox Thames that included Douglass Padgett, the Team Leader for Middle East Affairs, Ms. Malik and Mr. Yoseph impressed upon them the necessity of a master plan for the region that recognizes the Assyrians, Yezidis, and other ethno-religious minorities. The State Department representatives went on to say they are eager to continue this dialog

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Ashur Yoseph, Knox Thames, and Mona Malik at the U.S. Department of State, Washington D.C.

AAS-A MARKS ITS 25TH ANNIVERSARY IN 2016

In November 1991 AAS-A was chartered in San Francisco by a small group of Assyrians desperate to help the tens of thousands of Assyrians in Iraq being displaced by the First Gulf War. A network of donors in diaspora was quickly established along with local chapters across the U.S.

Almost immediately AAS-A became the world's premiere, most-trusted Assyrian charity organization. It remains so today.

"Instead of celebrating this year, we're honoring those who make the donations, large and small," said President Ashur Yoseph. "We're all in this together, a humanitarian effort dedicated to helping our people survive."

Anniversary fundraisers will be held around the country throughout the year.

AAS-Iraq: Looking Ahead

YEARS OF CRISIS IN NORTH IRAQ

AAS-Iraq President Ashur Eskrya looks back at 2015, ahead to 2016

In 2015 Assyrians in Iraq continued a long history of suffering. ISIS terror grows, our homes and historical sites are being stolen and destroyed, and thousands of men, women, and children have been displaced.

We estimate there are only 250,000 Assyrians remaining in Iraq now (there are no really reliable statistics). Everyday people are leaving to other countries.

The level of security in the north has not been stable. Turkish air strikes are hitting our villages all the time. We wonder if a major battle in the Nineveh Plain between ISIS and the Kurds will start later this year.

The economy here is very bad, including for the government, due to the collapse in world oil prices. For five months KRG civil workers were not paid, including teachers, nurses, and others. Most of the people here depend on government salaries. Crime rates are increasing in Dohuk and Erbil, forcing more people to leave.

More than 300 companies have moved out of the country, leaving thousands of workers jobless. In addition, the Kurdish government has no budget to begin new projects or even to complete projects that are in progress.

All of this combined to push many people to ask AAS-Iraq for help, especially people who need medicine and medical treatment because they have no money to pay for such necessities.

Relief for internally displaced families and supporting our Assyrian schools were the biggest tasks for AAS-Iraq in 2015. With no funds coming from the KRG for many months in a row, we were strained to keep the classes going and the buses on their routes. These will still be our priorities in the new year.

2016 will be difficult and hard for us all. But over 40 displaced families are moving into safe new homes in the Odrana Camp, maybe a sign of better things to come for everyone.

Without the help of the Assyrian Aid Society of America (AAS-A) and its supporters in the United States, our work in north Iraq would not be possible. Thanks to AAS-A and its partners for allowing us to do our work. There is hope!

We trust that our people in diaspora around the world will remember their Homeland.

You have always been by our side.



AAS-Iraq, President



2016 EASTER APPEAL



Artwork by children of displaced Assyrian families in Iraq

But if anyone has the world's goods and sees his brother in need, yet closes his heart against him, how does God's love abide in him? **1 John 3:17**

Easter is a time of reflection, spiritual joy, and counting the blessings of family and faith.

This Easter season again sees hardship, struggle, and misery for our people in the Homeland and especially in Syria where violence, death, and despair continue to be daily facts of life.

Your Easter donation to the Assyrian Aid Society of America will be a prayer and a joyous blessing heard across the world.

2016 AAS-A EASTER APPEAL DONATION FORM

Name (Please Print)

Address

City

State

Zip

Telephone

Email Address

Credit Card Payment: ☐ Visa ☐ MasterCard ☐ American Express ☐ Discover

Account # _____ Exp. Date _____

**Mail this form using our
pre-addressed envelope
or fax to:
510-527-6633**

Signature

Date

The Assyrian Aid Society of America is a 501(c)(3) charitable organization as recognized by the Internal Revenue Service. Federal ID # 94-3147517

RECORD AID TO IRAQ STILL NOT ENOUGH

In Fiscal Year 2015 our individual donor supporters and strategic partners enabled the Assyrian Aid Society of America to send a record of more than \$2.4 million in relief and general aid to Assyrians in need in Iraq.

Unfortunately, the need of Assyrians in the Homeland still far outstrips the available resources.

"It's crisis after crisis after crisis," says

95 cents of every dollar donated to AAS-A went directly to humanitarian projects in Iraq in 2015

AAS-A President Ashur Yoseph. "We fund an urgent project here, we fix another problem there and, by then, four new urgent problems have popped up."

On the plus side, operating expenses actually *decreased* by a full percentage point in 2015.

"We are all volunteers who work from our homes, with only one paid employee in donated office space, with one telephone and one computer," explained Treasurer Sargon Shabbas. "Our overhead expenses are small. In 2015, 95 cents of every dollar donated to AAS-A went directly to humanitarian projects in Iraq. That's a lot of bang in each buck."

So far in 2016, the need and demand for more funding is already increasing.

AAS-A FINANCIAL SUMMARY

January 1, 2015 - December 31, 2015

INCOME

Arizona	\$23,746
Central Valley	\$37,266
Chicago	\$967,187
D.C. / East Coast	\$11,754
Los Angeles	\$74,692
Michigan	\$8,891
Sacramento	\$5,474
San Diego	\$7,169
Santa Clara Valley	\$144,281
Mesopotamian Nights (SJ/LA/CH)	\$95,803
Chapters + Mesopotamian Nights Income Subtotal	\$1,376,263
National Office	\$859,948
Taste of the Mediterranean Event	\$38,621
Interest Income	\$50

National Office Subtotal **\$898,619**

TOTAL INCOME

\$2,274,882

DISBURSEMENTS

Grants

Financial Aid to Homeland (monthly transfers)	\$120,000
AAS-Iraq Special Media Projects	\$12,000
Education Projects	\$90,992
Schools: Bus + Books Projects	\$38,240
Dormitory Repairs/Renovation	\$50,430
Children's Christmas Project	\$50,000
Refugee Relief	\$1,776,591
Refugee Medical Relief	\$20,000
Refugees Khabour	\$20,000
Refugee Relief: Global Medic Canada	\$65,200
Pharmacies	\$10,000
ASSU Project	\$17,600
Cargo of Hope (transportation)	\$3,936
ACERO	\$500
URMI Project	\$3,000
Grantwriting Project	\$3,000
United Nations Humanitarian Commission Project	\$19,000
Miscellaneous Projects	\$5,406
CA Sales Tax	\$2,233
Special Travel	\$16,895

Grants Subtotal **\$2,325,022**

Operating Expenses

Administrator, National Office	\$54,494
Newsletter/Appeals/Media	\$16,379
Audit Fees	\$3,550
Insurance	\$3,099
Office Supplies + Expenses	\$2,911
Board of Directors Meeting Expenses	\$11,357
Bank Fees + Wire Charges	\$7,748

Operating Expenses Subtotal **\$99,538**

TOTAL DISBURSEMENTS

\$2,424,560

NET SURPLUS OR <DEFICIT>

<\$149,678>

Beginning Balance (1/1/15) \$369,395

ENDING BALANCE (12/31/15) \$219,717

WASHINGTON MEETINGS

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by engaging with more local community leaders, both in the homeland and in diaspora.

A meeting attended by two Vice Presidents of the Knights of Columbus (KOC) was especially promising. The KOC has raised \$6 million for Iraqi and Syrian Christians and they are seeking partner organizations that are already on the ground in the area. Their particular concerns are education and sustainable employment.

U.S. Congresswoman Anna Eshoo met with the AAS-A delegation for their updates on Assyrians in Iraq and to discuss the current legislative climate as it relates to Iraq. Ashur Yoseph also had an informative meeting with Iraqi Ambassador Lukman Faily.

Further meetings were held with current AAS-A partner, the Institute for Global Engagement, to meet new IGE President John Gallagher and to discuss future joint efforts such as the recently completed caravan project (see Page One).

Productive meetings were also held with the Center for International Disaster Information, U.S. Agency for International Development, the Iraq Foundation, and the advocacy group In Defense of Christians.

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NEEDY ASSYRIANS

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housing that have been registered with the project to see if there is a match, or survey the community for a specific need.

Recently an Assyrian family of three that is newly immigrated from Iran needed employment; Helping Hands has secured one job so far and is looking for two more. In another case, an Assyrian Iraqi refugee needing furniture was connected with a project supporter who was able to provide the furniture.

A database of current needy cases can be viewed at www.assyrianaid.org. Recent requests for assistance include a plumber seeking employment, an Assyrian Georgian in need of immigration law help, and someone looking for a roommate.

If you are seeking assistance or if you have assistance that you can provide to others, please contact the Helping Hands Project by calling 1-800-627-7570 or emailing help@assyrianaid.org.

ASSYRIAN AID SOCIETY OF AMERICA

Mission Statement

- *Helping Assyrians in need*
- *Promoting Assyrian culture and heritage*
- *Building a structure capable of responding to unexpected crises that require immediate mobilization to help our people*
- *Focusing American and international attention on the needs and humanitarian concerns of our Assyrian people, particularly in our ancestral homeland of Assyria*

AAS-A is a charitable 501(c)(3) charitable organization

NEW CHAPTER IN DENVER, NEW CHAPTER PRESIDENT IN SAN JOSE, NEW AAS-A MEDIA PROJECTS MANAGER

AAS-A Chapter News

With a growing Assyrian community in the Denver, Colorado area, AAS-A is in the process of establishing a new chapter there. **George Somi** is leading the effort. **Natalie Babella** is stepping down as Santa Clara Valley Chapter President to devote more time to her Executive Committee responsibilities, with **Rosana Eyzaznejad**

taking over the chapter duties. Ms. Babella continues as an AAS-A Director. In March AAS-A welcomes **Berlantina Dinha** as Communications & Program/Projects Manager. The **Arizona Chapter** will host the spring meeting of our Board of Directors in May.

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You and AAS-A:
25 years of serving
the Assyrian people

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AAS-IRAQ NOMINATED FOR 2016 NOBEL PEACE PRIZE

Assyrian Aid Society-Iraq (AAS-Iraq) has been nominated to receive the 2016 Nobel Peace Prize.

"We congratulate AAS-Iraq President Ashur Eskrya, his staff, and all who preceded them at AAS-Iraq since 1991," said Assyrian Aid Society of America President Ashur Yoseph. "Simply being nominated is a great honor and a true recognition of a quarter century of dedication and hard work for our people."

Recent organization recipients of the Nobel Peace Prize include Doctors Without Borders, the International Atomic Energy Agency, and the United Nations.

AAS-Iraq's nomination was put forward by Sir Edward Leigh, a Member of the Parliament of the United Kingdom who has been outspoken in calling for an end to persecution of Christians in Iraq and throughout the Middle East.



The Nobel Committee has announced that, in 2016, there are 376 nominated candidates for the Nobel Peace Prize, of which 228 are individuals and 148 are organizations.

In October the 2016 Nobel Prize Laureate will be chosen by committee vote and announced to the public. The formal award ceremony will take place on December 10 in Oslo, Norway.