

Assyrian Aid Society

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*****Press Release*****

March 8, 2016

In response to a State Department investigation of ISIS' genocidal crimes in Iraq and Syria, the Philos Project in a coordinated effort with the Iraqi Christian Relief Council, Assyrian Aid Society of America and the American Mesopotamian Organization are calling on Secretary of State John F. Kerry and the State Department to fully and unequivocally recognize the so-called Islamic State's unmistakable campaign of genocide against the Assyrians and other Iraqi and Syrian Christians in that region.

After receiving a special request from the Philos Project, Andrews Kurth, LLP prepared a detailed and in-depth letter on behalf of the aforementioned organizations which clearly establishes that ISIS' pattern of abuse, torture and murder against Assyrian Christians in Iraq and Syria meets all the criteria for genocide as laid out by the United Nations.

"As Americans, it's our job to speak for them," said The Philos Project Executive Director Robert Nicholson. "It's the world's obligation to step in and protect people who are being targeted for genocide. Without that, things will only continue to get worse."

The nearly 40-page letter, addressed directly to Secretary of State John F. Kerry, details not only ISIS' destruction of Assyrian Christian churches and historical sites, but also lays bare many examples of ISIS atrocities against Assyrians in Iraq and Syria - all of which, the letter notes, is plainly intended to eradicate Assyrians and other Christians from the Middle East.

According to Nicholson, the designation of ISIS' acts against Assyrians and other Christians in Iraq and Syria as genocide will legally be the trigger that will force the signatories to the Genocide Convention to act on behalf of those suffering for their faith. "The most important thing is to prompt action by these governments to abide by their duty under this treaty," he said. "ISIS is trying to cleanse the Middle East. They are attempting to liquidate an entire group of people."

Assyrian Aid Society of America is proud to join Philos, ICRC and AMO in this campaign to bring awareness to the plight of Assyrians and other Iraqi and Syrian Christians and to urge expediency in declaring the current atrocities as *genocide*.

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