

## The French Senate and the Assyrian Genocide Resolution

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The world watched melancholy as the number of deaths from the massive earthquake that hit Turkey and Syria climbed to over 35,000. Efforts of recovering bodies or finding and helping survivors poured from around the world, specially for Turkey. Recovery process in Syria is lagging due to the 2004 and 2011 harsh and multiple embargoes on the country which slowed down most assistance efforts. The Assyrian communities in southern Turkey and in Aleppo, Syria had their share of the human losses.

In the midst of this tragedy, the Association des Assyro-Chaldéens de France (AACF) announced that the French Senate has voted overwhelmingly for a [resolution to recognize](#) the WWI Assyrian Genocide that was committed by Ottoman Turks and Kurds. The French Senate Resolution No. 54 passed on its Ordinary Session of February 8, 2023. 300 out of 302 members voted for the resolution. This recognition is due to a very hard work that started since the 1980s on both the academic and political levels. The genocide papers published by Assyrian scholars in France in particular and Europe in general and the political activities led by both the AACF, the Union des Assyro-Chaldéens de France (UACF) and the Assyrian community in France were behind this victory.

On February 8, 2023, the AACF invited French officials, senators and Assyrian notables, scholars and politicians to commemorate the event. Among the guests were Mr. Wadee' Al-Batti, the Iraqi Ambassador to France, Professor Emeritus Joseph Yacoub of the Catholic University of Lyons, Dr. Prof. Efreem Yildiz of the University of Salamanca, Younam Kanna, General Secretary of the Assyrian Democratic Movement (ADM) and Sabri Atman, Founder of Seyfo Center.



Picture courtesy of Sabri Atman

Patriarch Mar Raphael Sako of the Chaldean Catholic Church did not make the event, but Mgr. Najib Mikhael, Chaldean Archbishop of Mosul & Aqra was present. Patriarch Mar Ignatius Aphrem of the Syriac Orthodox Church was busy tending to the Assyrian earthquake victims in Aleppo.



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Patriarch [Mar Awa Roye](#) of the Assyrian Church of the East accepted the invitation. He was in California, USA at the time and traveled to Paris to attend. He made a speech in which he reflected on WWI genocide. He said, quote: “Estimates indicate that as much as two-thirds of our population was wiped out during the genocidal campaign of the “Young Turks”, simply because our people were Christians, and not part of the majority religion of the Ottoman Empire at that time.” Unquote. Mar Awa failed to mention that the Kurds took a major part in committing the 1914-1918 Assyrian genocide. Since the 19<sup>th</sup> Century, more Assyrians have been murdered by Kurds than by any other group in the Middle East. Many argue that to ignore mentioning the Kurdish role in the Assyrian genocide is the price many Assyrians have to pay for officially moving the Assyrian Church of the East patriarchal See to Arbil in Sept 12, 2022. Being in Arbil makes it almost impossible for the patriarch to speak the truth about what the [Kurds have committed, and are still committing, against the Assyrians.](#)



Picture courtesy of Sabri Atman

Need to mention that loyalists of the Kurdistan Regional Government (KRG) were present at the event. The Barzanis have selected Assyrian loyalists throughout the world. These Kurdish loyalist Assyrians attend most human rights conferences, the International Religious Freedom (IRF) Summits and other gatherings. For example, at the recent February 2023 IRF summit in Washington, [Kurdish loyalist](#) Florin Georgis, Head of the National and Religious Components Affairs Dept in the KRG, was there to ensure that the KRG is defended.

In her speech, Valérie [Boyer stated](#) that the 100 years old Assyrian genocide of WWI continues. Boyer, is a Senator for Bouches-du-Rhône since 2020, a member of The Republicans, and previously elected to the National Assembly from 2007 until 2020. Boyer, Senator Bruno Retailleau and Francois Pupponi, former MP and former mayor of Sarcelles are behind the passing of this resolution. In her speech, Boyer stressed that the words of Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdoğan in reference to the remaining Christians in Turkey, [“leftovers of the sword”](#), is the reason why the genocide continues, as Erdogan intends to humiliate the victims, destroys civilization and the diversity in the land.



Picture courtesy of Sabri Atman

Few members of the Assyro-Chaldeans Association of France were advocating to keep the event and its guests strictly secular, but their voice did not find enough support.

Elie Wiesel said, "Genocide without recognition is killing twice". We hope that France's president and the French Government will agree with the recommendations of the French Senate and recognize the WWI Assyrian genocide.