

## Honor the Victims of Simele Massacre by Telling the Truth

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On June 25, 2023, the Australia based Nohadra radio program with Dn David Gewargis conducted an audio interview with Mr. Sam Darmo<sup>1</sup> to talk about the current Simele resolution.<sup>2</sup> The resolution has been sitting idle in the Foreign Affairs Committee of the US House of Representatives since June 6, 2023.<sup>3</sup>



In the interview, Mr. Darmo tried to justify why the text of US House Resolution 472 mentions strictly Iraq as the perpetrator of the 1933 Assyrian Simele massacre. He tried to justify why Kurds and Kurdish general Bekir Sidqi (head of the Iraqi army that committed the massacre) were not named in the resolution. Mr. Darmo attempted to water down the Kurdish involvement in the Simele massacre by stating that we cannot blame all the Kurds just because a Kurdish army general committed the massacre. Furthermore, not all Kurdish tribes participated in the massacre, but some tribes did, he emphasized.

The Kurds have continued to massacre Assyrians, plunder and expropriate the Assyrians' homes, lands and villages for the last few centuries. We have overwhelming and undisputed records of the 19<sup>th</sup> Century massacres of the 1840s, 1890s, then the genocide of WWI which followed by the 1933 Simele massacre. Kurds were involved directly in perpetrating these atrocities, massacres and genocide. We read, ***“During this and other genocides, it was mostly the Kurds who took the sword and used it against Assyrians. Kurdish society has largely participated in the process of Assyrian annihilation, and benefited from its consequences.”***<sup>4</sup> The Kurdish genocide and massacres against the Assyrians have not ended; they continue even today in one form or another. We read, ***“This genocide is not only a “historical injustice” that happened in the past; it is an ongoing crime, a political-social injustice that is still affecting hundreds of thousands of the descendants of the survivors.”***<sup>5</sup> The absence of socio-political justice, the lack of freedom of expression, the non-existence of genuine self-administration in regions where Assyrians make a majority, not protecting Assyrian artifacts, changing

1 By the way, Dn David Gewargis is related to Sam Darmo.

2 <https://www.facebook.com/Sh.David.Gewargis/videos/254728276991819>

3 <https://www.congress.gov/bill/118th-congress/house-resolution/472/all-actions?overview=closed#tabs>

4 Recep Marshli, *Justice for Assyrians: A Kurdish Perspective*. 2020.

<https://www.theamericanconservative.com/justice-for-assyrians-a-kurdish-perspective/>

5 Ibid

historic Assyrian cities and towns names, and other issues could not be overlooked simply because the Kurd-i-stan Regional Government (KRG) built few churches and a patriarchate complex or because few individuals loyalists to the Barzani regime were handed good positions.<sup>6</sup>

Yes, not all Kurds and not all Arabs participated in the 1933 Assyrian Simele massacre, but we cannot cover up for Rashid 'Aali al-Gaylani, Prime Minister of Iraq during the Simele massacre and Kurdish General Bekir Sidqi, the head of the Iraqi Army, just because not all Arabs or not all Kurds participated in the massacre. Citing Iraq alone in the resolution text gives the world the impression that only Arabs perpetrated the Simele massacre.

Using a precedent to make a decision is common in the court of law. The intention here is not to draw any comparison between Nazis and Kurds, but rather to make a point. The Nuremberg trials were set between 1945 and 1949 by the US, Great Britain and the then Soviet Union against representatives of the defeated Nazi Germany for certain reasons, including crimes against humanity. Twenty-four Nazi Germany leaders were indicted, along with six Nazi organizations, which were determined to be criminal.<sup>7</sup>

We know that not all Germans participated in the planned extermination of the Jews in Europe. If so, why did the Allies and the Nuremberg trials force the German Government to make restitutions and compensations to Holocaust victims and/or their heirs? It is interesting to know that these annual restitutions continued from post WWII until 2018.<sup>8</sup> Did the Americans and the British say, hold on, we cannot demand from Germany restitution since not all Germans participated in the planned extermination of the Jews? The Nuremberg Trials indicted not only the German government, but also leaders within that government. Did the Jews say, kindly do not prosecute or indict Nazi leader Heinrich Himmler and others for their crimes against the Jews, because not all Germans participated in the Holocaust?

The most bizarre claim came at the end of the interview when Mr. Darro said that we cannot generalize about the involvement of the Kurds in the Simele massacre since not all Kurds participated in it. Mentioning Kurds in such a general manner in the resolution will not be acceptable by the US. In fact, he claimed, the US officials will consider Assyrians as racists if we generalized and mentioned "Kurds" in such general manner in the resolution.

Mr. Darro's justification for not mentioning Kurds and Kurdish General Bekir Sidqi as perpetrators of the Simele Assyrian massacre is unjustifiable. Could we claim that the Americans are racists because US history books teach us that on December 7, 1941 the Japanese bombed Pearl Harbor killing 2,400 Americans. According to Mr. Darro's logic, we cannot say the Japanese attacked US soil, because not all Japanese participated in the attack and in the killing of Americans.

I reject the resolution for two reasons: First, as an official document, it fails to mention very important historical facts. Second, this tragic event in the history of the Assyrian people is being politicized by few uninformed American politicians and/or individuals on good terms with the Kurdish leaders and the KRG. The justifications provided for not mentioning the Kurds and Kurdish General Bekir Sidqi are irrational, fallacious and deceptive.

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6 <https://www.washingtonexaminer.com/opinion/stop-giving-iraqi-kurds-a-free-pass-on-religious-freedom?fbclid=IwAR1CdO6zvYBiTW5w5mW0qtaH4Ke0CVZ2SR5l5giNGTX7JIuvG5amRa4rOPc>

7 <https://www.history.com/topics/world-war-ii/nuremberg-trials>

8 <https://www.state.gov/reports/just-act-report-to-congress/germany/>