

7th August – Assyrian Martyr's Day

Each year, Assyrians throughout the world commemorate August 7th as a day of remembrance in honour of the millions of innocent and defenceless Assyrian martyr's who lost their lives at the barbaric hands of our nations enemies. During the last century alone, close to 1 million Assyrians were brutally massacred due to their distinct ethnic grouping and Christian beliefs.

Till this day, Assyrians are suffering in their ancestral homeland, although our people are not being massacred on a large scale, isolated cases of cold-blooded murders of innocent Assyrians as well as assassinations of Assyrian political representatives take place on a regular basis. Needless to say, those who commit such hideous crimes are never brought to justice. What is equally of concern is that our people continue to endure physical and psychological oppression by our "neighbours" resulting in the inevitable evacuation of our ancestral lands by the indigenous Assyrians. Those who perpetrate such crimes subsequently and illegally occupy our lands in what is a classic case of ethnic cleansing.

It is important that we continue to remember those who lost their lives preserving and defending our homeland, our identity, our culture, our traditions, our language and our faith. Those heroes will never be forgotten and they should serve as one of the main sources of inspiration for current and future generations of Assyrians.

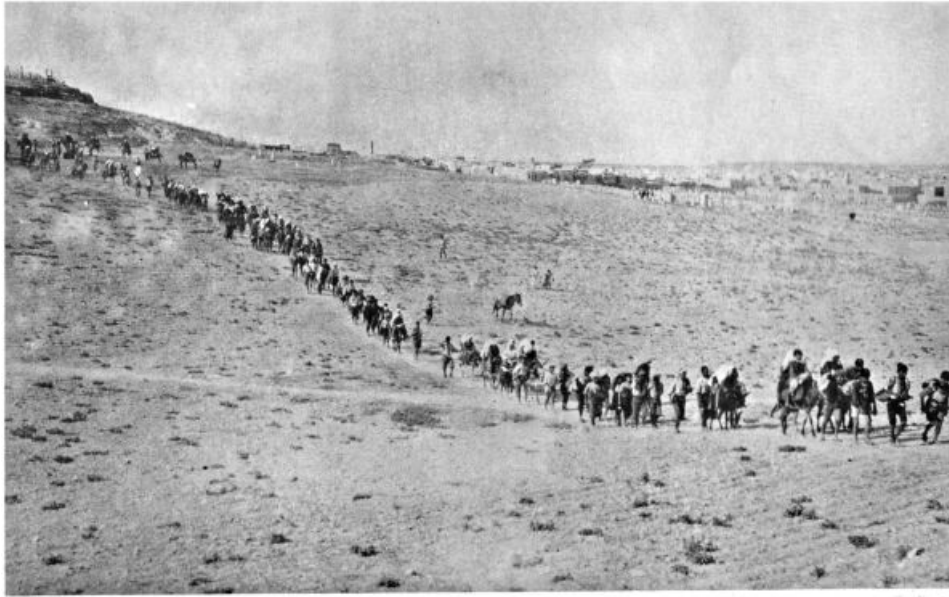
We have taken the opportunity to list a few of the darkest events in our nations modern-day history:

January 2-10, 1915

Plundering and destruction of seventy of Urmia's villages, massacres in the plains. Unknown number casualties. "There was absolutely no human power to protect these unhappy people from the savage onslaught of the invading hostile forces. It was an awful situation. At midnight the terrible exodus began; a concourse of 25,000 men, women, and children, Assyrians and Armenians, leaving cattle in the stables, all their household hoods and all the supply of food for winter, hurried, panic-stricken, on a long and painful journey to the Russian border, enduring the intense privations of a foot journey in the snow and mud, without any kind of preparation...It was a dreadful sight,...many of the old people and children died along the way." (*The Death of a Nation*, pp. 119-120)

Statement of German Missionaries

"The latest news is that four thousand Assyrians and one hundred Armenians have died of disease alone, at the mission, within the last five months. All villages in the surrounding district with two or three exceptions have been plundered and burnt; twenty thousand Christians have been slaughtered in Armenia and its environs. In Haftewan, a village of Salmas, 750 corpses without heads have been recovered from the wells and cisterns alone. Why? Because the commanding officer had put a price on every Christian head.... In Dilman crowds of Christians were thrown into prison and driven to accept Islam." (*The Death of a Nation*, pp. 126-127)



The Long Line That Leads to Death.
Deportation of Christians from their homes to the arid wastes to die.

February 23, 1915

More than sixty Assyrian notables were taken from the French mission and shot by Turkish troops. Among these was Mar Dinkha, a bishop of the Assyrian Church. "Here, then, in the ancient city of Tebarma, the scene of many previous martyrdoms, an Assyrian bishop is being led to be executed. He was not alone. He had a large company of his Christian brethren with him. What Mar Shimun Bar Sabaee, the first Assyrian Patriarch had done, during the persecution of Shapur the Magi, in the fourth century, was now to be gloriously repeated by another bishop of his church in the twentieth century. The Moslems had established a rule in asking of their victims to deny Christ and embrace Islam in order to save their lives. But weaker men and women than this body of prisoners had already chosen to be burned alive, and to be cut to pieces with axes, then deny their Redeemer! 'Be brave, take courage, be patient, falter not, be firm and look up. In a few moments we will be with Christ!' With such words he encouraged his companions in bonds, till they reached the end of their fatal journey, where they were all shot to death." (*The Flickering Light of Asia*, pp.49-51.)

Massacres at Sairt

Djeudet Bey, Military Governor of Van, upon entering Sairt with 8,000 soldiers whom he himself called the "The Butchers' Battalion" (Kassab Tabouri), gave orders for the massacre of the Assyrians. "The Chaldean-Assyrian diocese of Sairt comprises, exclusive of the Chaldean-Assyrians of the town, more than thirty villages, not to count a large number of other villages inhabited by Jacobite-Assyrians, of whose number we are ignorant. All these prosperous villages were pillaged, looted and burned, those who dwelt therein being put the sword." The following is an almost complete list with the number of Chaldean-Assyrians inhabitants who were massacred:

Sairt	2000
Sadagh	2000
Mar-Gourya	1000
Guedianes	500
Hadide	1000
Redwan	500
Dehok	500
Ketmes	1000

Der-Chemch	200
Piros	1000
Tentas	500
Tellimchar	1500
Telnevor	500
Benkof	200
Mar-Cmoune	300
Harevena	200
Der-Mar-Yacoub	500
Bekend	500
Ain-Dare	200
Berke	500
Archkanes	500
Galwaye	500
Goredj	500
Artoun (Altaktanie)	500
Der-Mazen	300
Der-Rabban	300
Charnakh	200
Artoun	1000

(Shall This Nation Die? pp. 122-123)

March 3, 1918: The Assassination of Mar Benyamin Shimun



"On the 3rd day of March, 1918, the Patriarch sat in his carriage, and with a bodyguard of one hundred and fifty horseman started for the headquarters of the Kurdish chieftain, Simkoo. He

went to assure the notorious brigands that he could remain absolutely certain of the peaceful attitude of the Assyrians, provided his own men indulged no longer in deeds of violence and lawlessness. But was not this noble, brave and Christian attitude of a great Patriarch equivalent to the giving of bread to the dogs and the casting of pearls before the swine? The news of Mar Shimon's departure preceded him; and before his arrival, the great assassin, who could hardly believe the report, stationed seven hundred of his best marksmen in concealed and commanding positions, with the order to shoot simultaneously at the sight of the Patriarch, when he emerged from the house of their chieftain after the visit. No servant could have received his master with a great honor. The Patriarch was escorted into the house. Two of his bodyguard accompanied him within. The others remained outside. The apparent absence of the Kurds from environs of their chieftain's residence took the Assyrians off their guard. In the course of the friendly interview between the Patriarch and The Kurdish chief, one of the men who had accompanied Mar Shimon into the house, noticed from the window the presence of the concealed Kurds on the surrounding roofs. Realizing the full import of the situation, the attendant said to the Patriarch, in Assyrian: " My Lord, our end is certain, permit me to kill this dog (Simkoo) just to avenge The blood that will surely be shed." The Patriarch, with an incredulous smile, bade his attendant be calm. "My Lord," repeated the Assyrian guard, "they will surely kill us all, let me kill this dog, perhaps we can save your life!" The Patriarch restrained his attendant again. He arose to depart, accompanied By Simko to the door. The later shook the hand of his guest, and went back into the house. And just as Mar Shimon was seated in his carriage, surrounded by his bodyguard, the seven hundred Kurds fired, all simultaneously, into the group of their unsuspecting victims. Only six of these men escaped, with wounds in their bodies, to give the news of the tragedy, and tell the story of the Patriarch's assassination. " (The Flickering Light of Asia. pp. 123-125).

1918 The Massacre of the Assyrians in Khoi, Persia

" In order to accommodate the mountaineer Assyrian refugees, who had fled into Persia, the Fate Mar Shimon Benyamin had arranged for some thirty five hundred Assyrians, mostly Thorn Tkhooma, to reside in the district of Khoi, These Assyrians were attacked and massacred by Kurds. Here is a description of this Moslem barbarism given by the Rev John Eshoo, who himself was one of those few that escaped in a most miraculous way from the wrath of Islam He Writes; `You have undoubtedly heard of the Assyrian massacre of Khoi, but I am certain you do not know the details Here had migrated a part of our people, and on~fourth of or refugees were stationed in Sardavar (Khoi). These Assyrians were assembled into one caravansary, and all shot to death by guns and revolvers. Blood literally flowed in little streams, and the entire open space within the caravansary became a pool of crimson liquid~ The place was too small to hold all the living victims for the work of execution. They were brought in groups, and each new group compelled to stand up over the heap of the still bleeding bodies, and was shot to death in the same manner The fearful place became literally a human slaughter house, receiving its speechless victims, in groups of ten and twenty at a time, for execution. At the same time, the Assyrians, who were residing in the suburb of the city, were brought together and driven into the spacious courtyard of a house. . .The Assyrian refugees were kept under guard for eight days, without anything to eat except a handful of popcorn served daily to each individual, This consideration was by no means intended as a humanitarian act, but merely to keep the victims alive for the infliction upon them of the most revolting tortures at a convenient time set for their execution. At last they were removed from their place of confinement and taken to a spot prepared for their brutal killing. These helpless Assyrians marched like lambs to their slaughter, and they opened not their mouth, save by sayings "Lord, into thy hands we commit our spirits~= The procession of the victims was led by two green turbaned Sayids (the highest religious order in Islam), one with an open book in his hand, reading from it aloud the passages pertaining to the holy war, and the other carrying a large bladed knife, the emblem of execution When the procession arrived at the place appointed, the executioners began by cutting first the fingers of their victims, join by joint, till the two hands were entirely amputated~ Then they were stretched on the ground, after the manner of the animals that are slain in the Fast, but these with their faces turned upward, and their heads resting upon the stones or blocks of wood Then their throats were half cut, so as to prolong their torture of dying, and while struggling in the agony of death, the victims were kicked and clubbed by heavy poles the murderers carried Many of them, while still laboring under the pain of death, were thrown into ditches and buried before their souls had expired- The young men and the able-bodied men were separated from among the very young and the

old They were taken some distance from the city and used as targets by the shooters They all fell: a few not mortally wounded One of the leaders went close to the heaps of the fallen and shouted aloud, swearing by the names of Islam's prophets that those who had not received mortal wounds should rise and depart, as they would not be harmed any more. A few.- thus deceived. stood up, but only to fall this time dead by another volley from the guns of the murderers. Some of the younger and goodly looking women, together with a few little girls of attractive appearance, who pleaded to be killed. Against their will were forced into Islam's harems. Others were subjected to such fiendish insults that I cannot possibly describe. Death. However, came to their rescue and saved them from the vile passions of the demons.' The Assyrian victims of this massacre totalled twenty-seven hundred and seventy men, women and children," (The Flickering Light of Asia, pp. 156-58)

The Exodus From Seen Kale to Hamada



Assyrian families resting in Bijar village, having arrived from Urmia and heading towards Hamadan. (Photo courtesy of Fred Aprim)

"The sufferings of the Assyrians throughout the long, tedious and hazardous journey from Urmia to Hamadan, are simply indescribable. In their haste for flight, many of these people failed to take provisions with them for the journey. And those who managed to do so, took only a supply that would last them a day or two, or possible three, the longest, as they fully expected that they would meet some where on the road, and not very far from Urmia, the returning Assyrian general (the late Agha Petros) and his men, together with the British expeditionary force. The county through which the caravan of the refugees passed was exclusively Moslem in population. The entire land had already become more than once a regular campground for the heterogeneous forces of Turkey, who had left it almost desolate and barren. There was, therefore, very little, if any, left to have been commandeered by the Assyrian forces. Consequently, when the small rations were exhausted, and the journey continued to become longer, the refugees tried to subsist on vegetation only. Diseases broke out among the multitude, and was followed by the ravages of cholera. As the fleeing Assyrians were now being pursued by the enemy they had no time to bury their dead or to carry with them those who were held in the agonies of the dreaded contagion. It was perhaps a merciful sword, even though applied with the vengeance of demons that came in time to shorten the fearful sufferings of the dying. Before Hamadan was reached, more than fifteen thousand bodies had been left behind unburied, and their bones have since transformed the narrow valley, in which they fell or were killed, into one of these melancholy scenes beheld by

Ezekial the Prophet. Naturally the progress of the refugees with the aged and the little children was very slow. The Moslems of Urmia headed by a Persian general, by the name of Majidel- Saftana, had started on the pursuit. During the night, as the Assyrians were resting near Sayen Kala, and as they fell asleep from fatigue and exhaustion, the pursuers stationed themselves over the hills that commanded the narrow road that followed the course of the river which runs zigzag through the valley. As the morning broke, and the weary pilgrims began to rub their eyes, a most murderous fire was opened into the dense crowd. Before Azaria Khan could scale the hills with a body of his men to drive the enemy away, some five thousand more Assyrians had fallen dead! The crowds were so dense that the victims fell like leaflets as from autumn trees. The Persian General, after this heartless slaughter of women and children, sent a telegram to his superiors, in Tabriz; the telegram Read: 'I have sent a few more thousand dogs into hell.'" **(The Flickering Light of Asia, pp. 176-77)**

1918: The Massacre of the Assyrians in the French mission

"The French mission buildings were sheltering more than six thousand Assyrian refugees. The murderers, led by Arshad el Hemayoon, entered with every conceivable weapon, from a long sword to a wooden mallet. They commenced with little children and infants. The latter were held by their tiny feet and their heads dashed against the walls and the stone pavements. The older ones were held up by the hair of the head, hanging, while their bodies were severed by one stroke of the sword. The little girls were publicly assaulted and then cut in twain. Women had their breasts first cut off, and then pierced by daggers. Others were taken to the roofs of the buildings, and from there dashed to their death into the streets below. Others had their hands and their limbs amputated by sickles and axes, and then had their skulls crushed by wooden mallets. The spacious courtyard became impassable from the still bleeding fragments of the victims' mutilated bodies while blood literally leaked from the floor of each building to the one below. Of the entire number of the Assyrians, estimated at more than six thousand, in the French mission buildings alone, not more than sixty souls remained who escaped in a miraculous way; and all the rest were put to death in less than forty-eight hours, the official time for the application of the mandate of the Jihad." **(The Flickering Light of Asia, pp. 184)**



Assyrian orphans whose parents were brutally massacred

August 7, 1933

The Iraqi army returned to Mosul and right through its way began a systematic massacre. At the same time the Qaimaqam of Zakho, Ahmed al-Dibuni tortured 46 Assyrians to death **(The Assyrian Tragedy, pp. 52)**

August 11 - 16 1933: The Simele Massacre

"The Assyrian population of the village of Simele was indiscriminately massacred; men women, and children alike. In one room alone, 81 Assyrians from Baz were barbarously massacred. Priests were tortured and their bodies mutilated. Girls were raped and women violated and made to march naked before the Arab army commanders. Holy books were used as fuel for burning girls. Children were run over by military cars. Pregnant women were bayoneted. Children were flung in the air and pierced on to the points of bayonets. In Dohuk 600 Assyrians were killed." (*The Assyrian Tragedy*, pp. 53-54)

Description of the Massacre

"Suddenly and without the least warning the troops opened fire upon the defenceless Assyrians. Many fell, including women and children, and the rest ran into the houses to take cover... A cold blooded and methodical massacre of all the men in the village followed... This took some time. Not that there was any hurry, for the troops had the whole day ahead of them. Their opponents were helpless and there was no chance of any interference from any quarter whatsoever. Machine gunners set up their guns outside the windows of the houses in which the Assyrians had taken refuge, and having trained them on the terror-stricken wretches in the crowded rooms, fired among them until not a man was left standing in the shambles. In some other instances the blood lust of the troops took a slightly more active form and men were dragged out and shot or bludgeoned to death and their bodies thrown on a pile of dead. (*The Tragedy of the Assyrians*, pp. 172)

It is estimated that 3000 Assyrians were massacred during August of 1933 however, the following lists only give the names of the Assyrian martyrs that could be accounted for and verified (*British Betrayal of the Assyrians*).

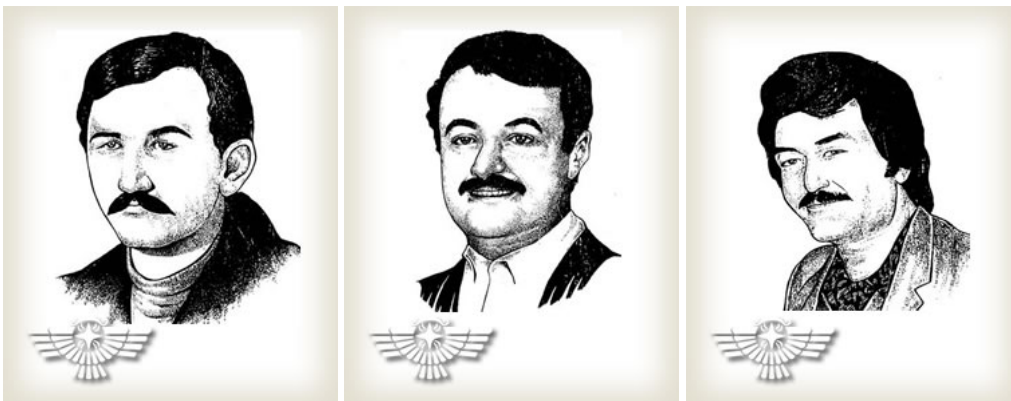
1962 - Barwar, Iraq

Thirty-three Assyrians were killed by the forces of the Kurdish chief Mustafa Barazani. The following is the list for the names of those who were killed:

Esho Jajou Belathi Sliwo Aprim Choushino Belathi Jajou Mandou Youkhana Belathi Loqou Hanou Sliwo Odisho Belathi Bobou Shamizden Youkhana Belathi Kasha Jallou Parto Belathi Shamasha Gewargis Markos Odisho Belathi Pityou lather of Zadouq Jajou Sliwo Bolathi Youkhana Toman Ishac Belathi Gewargis Londo Yonan Yousip Zaya Daoud Sawa Chokhaya KashaWarda Marcus Bet Hanou Chobou Bet Qashisha Warda Gisou Baba Dishbata Dinkha Qisrani Hasdo from Daraah Hasdou Hasdou's brother from Sardashi Baba brother of Eshaya

Two Martyrs could not be identified (*History of Mar Youalaha of Barwar*, pp. 42-43).

March 2, 1985



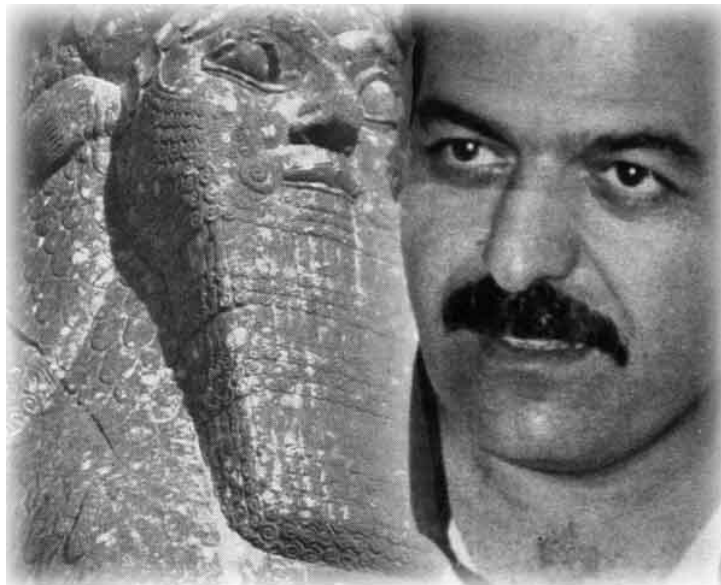
Three Assyrians were executed by the Ba'ath fascist regime of Iraq for distributing literature against the Arabisation policies of the government. The martyrs were Yousip Zaibari, Youbert

Shlemon, and Youkhanna Jajjo. Recently, the Ba'ath regime of Iraq has killed an Assyrian family of the city of Ein- Kawa. The names of this unfortunate family are; Polous Aziz Sheba (Father), Meska Wardina Sheba (Mother), Hamama Polous (Daughter), Sabiha Polous (Daughter). An Assyrian man, Mr. Hirmiz Nicola of Kirkuk (born in 1964), upon his return to Iraq from Greece, was promptly arrested and brutally executed. (*Ashur International*, July 1989, pp. 2).

September 24, 1988

The fate of the Assyrians in the anfal campaign barely two weeks after the arrival of the first deportees at Baharka, the official loudspeakers announced that some of the camp's inmates should present themselves at the police station without delay. Those singled out were either Assyrian and Chaldean Christians or members of the ezidi sect. What happened to these two groups remains one of the great unexplained mysteries of Anfal: a brutal sideshow, as it were, to the Kurdish genocide. A few days later, a single khaki-colored military bus arrived, accompanied by an army officer and nine or ten soldiers, to pick up twenty-six people from the Assyrian Christian village of Gund Kosa. ... None of those who were bussed from the camps ever reached their homes, and none was ever seen in the camps, such as Mansuriya (Masirik) and Khaneq, that were set-aside for relocated Christians and Yezidis. The inescapable conclusion is that they were all murdered. An Assyrian priest interviewed by HRW/Middle East said that he had assembled a list of 250 Christians who disappeared during Anfal and its immediate aftermath. (Iraq's Crime of Genocide, 1995, Human rights watch, pp. 209)

June 1, 1993



Francis Shabo (a member of the Northern Iraqi Parliament and a member of the Assyrian Democratic Movement) assassinated in Dohuk. Many believe that the assassination was caused by his activism in [promoting unity among the various Assyrian religious groups](#) (eg. Chaldean, Nestorian, and Syriac) as well as his active participation in the Investigative committee on resolving Assyrian land and village expropriation.

July 8, 1993

Ninos Samir murdered in Zakho.

December 17, 1994

Zaya Yonadam murdered in Arbel.

March 6, 1995

Mr. Edward Khoshaba of Aqla was tending his sheep last year when he came across 3 Kurds who had killed and butchered some of his livestock. When confronted, the Kurds attempted to kill Mr. Khoshaba. Mr. Khoshaba was able to kill two of the attackers before the third fled to his home village. Reportedly, when the Kurd returned to his home village, a celebration had ensued as the Kurdish villagers had assumed that the Kurdish intruders had successfully killed Mr. Khoshaba in addition to his livestock. When they learned that 2 of the Kurdish intruders had died instead, the entire village mobilized to exact revenge.

Mr. Khoshaba likewise fled to an area controlled by his Assyrian compatriots. A standoff ensued for some time until Mr. Khoshaba's parents (fearing a wholesale escalation in violence) convinced Mr. Khoshaba to turn himself in to the local authorities for an investigation and trial. Needless to say, the Kurdish authorities released Mr. Khoshaba to the relatives of the Kurdish intruders. He was tied up in their village and eventually butchered into hundreds of pieces on March 6, 1995. Prior to his death, he was reportedly struck in the head repeatedly by an axe by one of the elder women of the village. NONE of his murderers have been brought to justice. There has been no investigation of these crimes. There has been no investigation of the authorities who evaded their responsibilities.

The Kurdish leader who reportedly heads this village is Qaem QamFarzanda Zbeer. Mr.Zbeer has now extended his threats, persecutions, and vast land expropriations to the Assyrian village of Hzarjat.

January 13, 1996

on January 13, 1996 armed Kurds kidnapped Wassan Mishael, a sixteen-year-old girl from Simel. She was threatened and forced to renounce her Christian faith. Then she was forced to marry one of the Kurdish kidnappers. The attackers have been found and identified. The information has been brought to the attention of the local governmental officials. There has been no investigation. None of the attackers have been brought to justice; there has been no trial.

January 20, 1996

on January 20, 1996 an armed man named Khorsheed Uthman Galash kidnapped Janet Oshanna, a 13-year-old girl from Mal-Urab near Zakho. The kidnapper has subsequently been identified and all information has been provided to the authorities. No investigation has been carried out. The attacker has not been brought to justice. The young girl has not yet been returned to her family

May 12, 1996

In Ankawa, a militia group affiliated with the Kurdish Student coalition attacked an Assyrian Student gathering and killed Peris Merza, the assistant director of the Assyrian Democratic movement headquarters in Arbel, and Samir Moshi, a guard at the Ashur Television Station. These two Assyrians tried to peacefully stop the attack by the Kurdish mob on the Assyrian youths gathered at the Assyrian student club.

August 26, 1996

An Assyrian priest, Benyamin Hurmiz, 39, and his uncle Sargees, a deacon, were killed by a shell while standing in the priest's garden, in the village of Diana.

April 27, 1997

On April 27, 1997, an unarmed Assyrian from Shaqlawa, Mr. Sabri Odo Sowrish (58 years old) was assassinated while he worked in his store in Sedara, Arbil. He was struck by three bullets fired from a silencer. Shortly thereafter, another assassination attempt by means of a silencer was directed against another Assyrian from Ankawa while he was working in his store in the centre of Arbil. The Assyrian defended himself and was lucky to survive the attack. The assailant escaped.

September 25, 1997

Turkish Kurds attacked Iskandar Araz and his wife at their home in the village of Mzezakh in Southern Turkey. (Syrian Orthodox Resources, 1997)

December 13, 1997

On 13/12/97 a group of militants belonging to the Kurdish Labour Party (PKK) attacked six Assyrians through in the district of Mangeesh-Duhok, Northern Iraq. Two of the Assyrians were killed immediately and the others were wounded; the armed group killed the four wounded. Wardia Yousif, the wife of one of the victims, Naji Mikho, survived and was wounded in her leg. The victims were:

- **Slewo Jumaa**
- **Samir Esho**
- **Majid Shimon**
- **Arkhan Hermiz**
- **Salam Yousif**
- **Naji Mikho**

Salam Yousif was a member of the Assyrian Democratic Movement (ADM Bulletin, December 14, 1997).

References to many of the above from the Assyrian International News Agency.