

III. Report of September 12th, 1933.

*His Excellency,
Secretary-General,
League of Nations, Geneva.*

Assyrian Patriarchate,
Nicosia, Cyprus.
September 12th, 1933

Excellency,

In continuation of my report dated August 4th, my letter of the 16th and my second report dated August 30th, 1933.

FIRST DETAILED REPORT ON MASSACRE.

I forward herewith the first detailed report bearing on the massacre of the Assyrians in Iraq. You will observe that the information contained therein was collected from the persecuted persons themselves. Children have also been interrogated and it cannot be said that facts have been exaggerated. I believe that actual facts have been minimised rather than exaggerated and I hope to furnish the League of Nations with more particulars on the massacre.

The Assyrian women who have furnished this information are illiterate and it would have been impossible for any person, terror-stricken as the Assyrian women were, to note down every small detail minutely. Their evidence leaves no room to doubt the report that the actual perpetrators of the massacre were the Iraqi troops who were acting under the orders of their own officers in conjunction with the civil authorities who in their turn were linked up with higher authorities in Baghdad and Mosul. This I have emphasised in my former reports.

THE KURDS.

In my radiogram of early August, I said "Assyrian women, children, included in massacre by certain Kurdish tribes armed by Government". This I think requires some explanation.

The Sar Amadiyah summer camp for the British was closed down as soon as trouble broke out and the Assyrian levies who were guarding that camp were brought down in groups by cars to the aerodrome in the vicinity of Simel and from there were transported by air to Baghdad. Except for a few minutes' stay of the levies in the Simel aerodrome, their journey to Baghdad was uninterrupted. It was they who saw Assyrian dead bodies lying on the roads between Sar Amadiyah and Simel and as they would not believe that the Iraqi army would have committed these barbarous acts, they informed me of what they saw and they were, in the absence of accurate information, under the impression that this was the work of the Kurds instigated by the Government. My information conveyed in my radiogram was therefore based on the first information report which has since been modified.

THE AIR VICE-MARSHAL.

On the day of my deportation from Baghdad, the Air Vice-Marshal, Iraq, promised me to go to the massacre zone, establish a refugee camp in Dohuk and collect all those who had lost their male relatives. I am informed that he went as far as Mosul town with other British officers but they were disallowed by the Arab authorities to proceed farther than Mosul.

If a British Air Vice-Marshal representing one of the greatest Empires and who is there to protect Iraq from external aggression is not permitted by the Arab authorities to visit an area which is a few miles from Mosul, the League of Nations will not therefore find it difficult to realise the extent of measures and precautions the Arab Government has taken to prevent any observer from seeing the horrors that have been committed. Moreover, the League of Nations will also realise how difficult it has been for me to obtain even the preliminary reports.

At present, the women and children are being terrorised and coercive measures used against them — only known to those who know the Arab methods — to compel them to say that it was the Kurds and *not* the Iraqi troops who killed their relatives. They are being told that if they do not say so they will share the fate of their relatives.

IRAQI DELEGATION TO GENEVA.

The League of Nations representing almost all the Nations of the world will shortly be receiving some of the actual instigators of the recent horrific acts committed with extreme cruelty against the Assyrian people in Iraq. Denial of atrocities and shifting of responsibility will be their two main aims but the League of Nations will realise that an accused cannot at the same time be a witness and arbitrator. It was this procedure adopted in the past that brought about the present calamities on the Assyrians and it is neither fair nor just that this same procedure which has resulted in disaster to my people, should be applied.

I earnestly ask that the Iraqi Government, an accused at present, should be

treated with the Assyrians as regards procedure in the present case and the latter should be permitted to exercise the natural right of producing their witnesses to substantiate the accusations already made against the Iraqi Government. The privilege accorded in the recent past to the Iraqi Government of hearing it in person while the Assyrians were heard "on paper" only has been abused and the proverb says: "Once bitten, twice shy".

THE BRITISH OFFICIALS.

Some of the British officials have informed me that they were the servants of the Iraqi Government. These are therefore not expected to illustrate a correct picture of what has taken place unless they are prepared to adversely affect their positions which, from what I know, is doubtful.

SIR FRANCIS HUMPHRYS.

Sir Francis Humphrys, the British Ambassador, who played an important rôle in making the admission of Iraq to the League of Nations possible and who has undertaken on behalf of his Government "the moral responsibility should Iraq prove herself unworthy of the confidence placed in her", cannot either be reasonably expected to say that he misjudged Iraq after having made those eminent declarations about Iraqi fitness for independence and Iraqi tolerance.

IMPARTIAL ENQUIRY.

In view of the foregoing, the League of Nations will never be able to reach the bottom of the truth if it does not make its own enquiries independently on the spot. An enquiry by an interested party or parties will not remedy the present position nor will it enable the League of Nations to find a real solution for this acute problem. I am sure that if the League was given a chance immediately after the publication of the Anglo-Iraqi Treaty of June 30th, 1930, to make a searching enquiry into the dreadful position of the Assyrians and their complaints that inundated the League's Secretariat, stringent measures which were necessary for the real and not visionary protection of the Assyrians would have been recommended before entrusting Iraq with an unrestrained power which we all knew would be abused.

STATUS OF THE LEAGUE OF NATIONS FROM THE IRAQI POINT OF VIEW.

The Secretariat of the League of Nations will recollect the telegram sent by Yasin al Hashimi (now Minister of Finance and notoriously anti-Assyrian), Naji al Siwaidi (Senator) and Ja'far Chalabi Abu Timman in 1930 to the effect that they did not want Iraq admitted into the League of Nations. The Iraqi political circles treat the League of Nations with contempt and it is this and other reasons that have encouraged them to look upon the guarantees for the protection of the Assyrians as mere scraps of paper. Count Teleki and his Commission had prophesied in their special recommendations that this would be the case if there was no effective supervision on the spot to see that the rights and interests of the Minorities were respected and protected. The responsible Iraqis believe (and there has so far been nothing to dispel their belief) that they can persecute the Assyrians in any way they like and when it comes to judgment they will clear themselves by the simple device of withdrawing from the League.

Attached statement is only a sample that should illustrate the Iraqi public opinion. The premature emancipation of Iraq and the setting aside of the interests of the other races in the Mosul vilayet, particularly the interests of the Assyrians, could not but have produced these deplorable results.

IRAQI GOVERNMENT'S ALLEGATIONS.

In my former reports I have explained the extensive anti-Assyrian campaign carried out against the Assyrians by encouragement of the Government. The Iraqi Government in order to further poison the minds of the Arabs fabricated a tale which was to the effect that three of their officers after being killed in battle by the Assyrians had their bodies mutilated by the latter. This allegation is devoid of foundation. It was cultivated to further arouse the ill-feeling against the Assyrians. During all our battles in the past, no such complaint was made against the Assyrians who have always proved to be noble and they have always kept up the simple laws of civilisation. The truth is this:

I was informed by Major Aldwards, commanding Assyrian levies, that the Assyrian representative leaders who were on the Syro-Iraqi frontier had captured two Arab officers and a considerable quantity of ammunition and war material and as the fight was going on, the Assyrians could not have taken their prisoners with them, and so they tied them up and the ammunition that included explosives.

The Iraqi aeroplanes wanting to blow up the ammunition dropped bombs from the air that resulted in the death of their own officers.

The Assyrian people in Iraq and abroad are eagerly awaiting for me to be able when I obtain a *laissez-passer* from the British Government (as my Iraqi nationality has been withdrawn) to place the Assyrian case and the people's demands in person before the League of Nations when I shall be able to refute the allegations of the Iraqi Government.

I have applied to the British Government for a *laissez-passer* on receipt of which I propose proceeding to Geneva.

I pray the Almighty God that the League of Nations whose principle is justice and a support of the oppressed will this time not allow the innocent blood of my people to have been shed in vain.

(Signed) Eshai SHIMUN,
By the Grace of God, Catholicos
Patriarch of the Assyrians.

Appendix

FIRST MASSACRE REPORT OF ASSYRIANS IN SIMEL, ON FRIDAY, AUGUST 11TH, 1933.

The following account of the massacre in Simel is taken from the mouths of the Assyrian women who were brought to Mosul on August 17th, 1933, as no man escaped the death to tell the story.

On August 8th, the inhabitants of the villages in the neighbourhood of Simel were notified by the police to come to Simel to be protected from Arabs and Kurds. The Assyrians from the villages of :

Sayyid Zari, Mawani,	Qasr Yazdin, Mansuriyah,	Chamma Gore, Kharab Kuli,	Dari, Sarshuri,	Garpili, Busuriyeh,
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thereupon came to Simel with their cattle and belongings.

The following day they were ordered to surrender their arms as they were told that there was no danger if they did so, for they were under the Government protection. Yonan of Baz, the headman of the village, collected in the police station all those Assyrians who were in possession of Iraqi nationality papers and told them that they would be safe under the Iraqi flag. Eighty-two persons from the Baz tribe sat the whole day and night around the police station, some with their women and children. On August 10th, Thursday, the police returned the rifles to their owners, without ammunition, and, in the afternoon of the same day, the rifles were collected again and handed to the police.

On August 11th, Friday, Naib Chaush (police sergeant) separated the women and children below the age of ten from the men in the police station, and ordered them to scatter in the houses of the village. That was early in the morning. At or about six o'clock in the morning, the Iraqi flag was lowered from the police station. Soldiers from the Iraqi army, in dark-blue shirts, appeared advancing towards Simel from the direction of Zakho road. Some Arabs of the Shammar tribe and some Kurds (of Mahmud Agha and from Slivani) entered the village. The soldiers surrounded the village and the officer in charge with two soldiers came up to the police station. The officer in charge was addressed by Goriel Shimun of Baz, brother of Yonan the headman of the village. "I am an Iraqi citizen and all those Assyrians present here are Iraqi citizens. If you so desire take me to Qaimaqam Dohuk who will show you that we are such in the Government books." The officer pretended to agree and took him down the slope. There the second soldier shot him dead from behind. This was the signal for the massacre. Soldiers in dark-blue shirts ran to the houses and killed every male child over ten years old. All the remaining men from the Baz, eighty-one in number, were killed with revolver shots. Six women trying to cover their husbands were also killed together with six babies. All the other Assyrians were killed in their houses or while attempting to escape.

The persons killed and who are known to us are :

- 13 from Sayyid Zari,
- 14 from Kharab Kuli,
- 2 from Mawani,
- 1 from Dohuk.

The number of the killed who could not be identified runs from 200 to 250 and possibly more.

Three known women were killed with their three small babies.

One woman, Khaymi, wife of Hani, being pregnant, was killed.

Eleven known priests were killed after being tortured. Among them were two Catholics.

After killing all the men, the soldiers stripped the dead taking their things of value and then they chased the women. Arabs and Kurds looted the village. The better-looking women were violated, stripped and let go.

Towards the sunset, the soldiers received orders to retire. The Arabs and Kurds did not cease looting. They also killed some of the wounded men who were still alive but who were already shot by the Iraqi army. Late at night they carried the cattle and went away.

For two nights and one day the dead bodies remained unburied.

On the 13th, workers arrived and dug four trenches and piled the dead bodies in them. On the 14th, Simel was again peaceful, interrupted only by the wails of the naked and hungry terror-stricken Assyrian women and children.

The Minister of Interior who was during the massacre at Mosul came to Simel accompanied by Colonel Stafford, the British Administrative Inspector, Mosul, and they saw what had taken place.

Experienced street workers were sent from Mosul to cover or clean the trace of blood.

On August 16th, four hundred Assyrian women were brought down from Simel to Mosul and placed in khans.

After the arrival of the women from Simel, two priests Qasha Yosep de Kelaita and Qasha Kina of Baz were sent among the women to persuade them not to say that the troops of the Iraqi army had done the massacre but to testify that Arabs and Kurds killed their relatives and looted the village and that the soldiers were there to protect them.

SIMEL MASSACRE.

Statement made by an Assyrian Woman, Nimo Abo, resident in Simel since 1921.

On Tuesday, August 8th, 1933, all the Assyrians living near Simel were gathered together by the police to be protected by the Government.

On the same day, considerable number of Iraqi army soldiers came from Zakho to Simel and collected the rifles. These were taken by the Qaimaqam of Dohuk who, on his return took three Assyrians with him — namely, Qasha Sada, Rais Tallo Baznaya and a third person. All the three were killed on the way near Dulib. Qasha Sada's head was cut off and his body cut into pieces.

On Wednesday, the Arabs took the sheep of the Assyrians and killed eight shepherds. Three days later the police invited three men to go with them in search of the sheep. When they were some way from Simel, the police killed them all. They must have been killed by bayonet as we did not hear any shots though we were watching.

On Friday, the police sergeant gave orders that everybody should return to their houses and that no harm would come to us. On our way, we saw the Iraqi troops entering Simel and the village was surrounded. Most of the men ran to the house of Goriel of Baz thinking that they would be safe there. Goriel told them that he was an Iraqi citizen and that his house and everybody in it would be safe. The Iraqi army officers gave the orders to begin the massacre. Soldiers started firing at Goriel's house and killed every one there. They then scattered in the village and entered the houses one by one and killed any man they found. I saw two officers taking a woman into a house. When she came out trembling and crying she told her mother-in-law that they raped her.

Many women and children went to the police station to be protected by the police. Three priests and twenty men went there also and tried to hide themselves among the women. But Naib Chaush informed the soldiers of them. The soldiers came in search of them and on finding them killed them all. Some women and children trying to cover their husbands and parents were killed.

A girl of nine years took shelter in the church. She was a Baz girl. The soldiers found her and killed her. They also took some holy books and burnt them together with the girl's body.

On Saturday some soldiers of the Iraqi army returned to the village and tried to hide the dead bodies which were left in the open. They were doing that in a great hurry as some British aeroplanes were flying above. At night many dogs visited the village. The police informed the Government about this and about one hundred workers arrived from Mosul, buried the bodies and covered every trace of blood.

We remained about five days in Simel, after which we informed the police that we cannot live there any longer in fear and hunger. Some of us then went to Dohuk and some to Mosul. In Mosul we were examined by Malek Khamo, Qasha Kina and Qasha Yosep de Kelaita who tried to make us say that the Arabs and Kurds killed us. I cursed them and told them: "How can we say that the tribes massacred our people when we have been

The following account was given by a prisoner who was to have been killed on August 14th, 1933, when an order arrived from the Minister of Interior that all killing should cease :

Many Assyrians were taken from their villages by the police and brought to Dohuk to be jailed there, for fear they might join their brethren who were to Syria.

On August 9th nine of the prisoners were taken in an armoured car and conducted to Zakho Pass. There they were killed by machine-gun fire.

On the 10th, another group of nine was taken from the prison and brought near the army camp at Aloka. On their way, two more Assyrians were caught. All the eleven were killed by the soldiers.

One wounded Assyrian was brought to the prison from Badi. The commandant of police ordered the policemen that he be thrown to the dogs. He was taken and thrown so violently against the floor and he died right there.

On August 12th, priest Dinkha with eight other men were taken from the prison and handed them to the soldiers who killed them.

On August 13th, priest Ishmail and other fifteen men were taken from the prison and killed on small hill near Dohuk.

STATUS OF THE LEAGUE OF NATIONS FROM THE IRAQI POINT OF VIEW.

On August 21st, 1933, the following statement was made in the Iraqi newspapers :

" Poland has most cruelly treated her minorities and Germany has persecuted the Jews in the extreme but Britain and the other Powers did not intervene. No foreign Power can interfere in such affairs. The relations of Britain with this country must not be more than her relations with the above Powers if our independence is on the same footing as that of Poland and the other States. . . . The Assyrians took up arms and it was incumbent on the Government to suppress it and it was also incumbent on her to take all measures to merge this group in the Iraqi unity."

On the 24th the following statement was made :

" This united public opinion that was demonstrated recently coupled with the good feeling must be preserved and strengthened for we believe that in future Iraq will be faced with incidents and many events which, if compared with the Assyrian insurrection, the latter would not but be a simple thing."

The following statement made on August 27th, 1933, in a political newspaper written and administered by Iraqi deputies was as follows :

" When those who were joyful and gay about our entry into the League of Nations, we were in the foremost of those who said this would not be of any utility or advantage. A long time had not elapsed between our entry and the withdrawal of Spain, Brazil and Japan. We would however be sorry if the colonists believe that the League of Nations can terrify Iraq. . . . Iraq as a State or rather an independent State refuses to attach any importance to anyone while dealing with its affairs and interests. The League of Nations, particularly some of its members must know that Iraq is no longer a piece-good that can be bought and sold and is no longer, as the intriguers knew it to be, a slave to be sold in the markets of Geneva. . . . If that does not suit Geneva, Paris or London, it suits Baghdad admirably."

On August 28th, 1933, the following statement was made :

" The Iraqi people was prepared to take up arms and go to the death-field but the matter was not of great importance as those insurgents who disturbed the peace and disobeyed Government were a small mean batch but the reason that led the people for such a big rising was because this batch had gone crying before the western countries that it was being ill-treated and that it was the victim of religious fanaticism. . . . We have not yet forgotten the persecution and oppression committed by Italy in Tripoli against those who wanted to defend the integrity of their country. . . . The foreign influence must be uprooted from this country. . . . The Iraqi public demand the enforcement of conscription as the public is bloodthirsty to suck the blood of the enemies. . . ."