

Assyrian Patriarchate,
Nicosia, Cyprus.
August 30th, 1933.

To His Excellency
Secretary-General League of Nations,
Geneva, Switzerland.

Excellency,

Following my report dated August 4th, 1933 :

Your Excellency will have seen from that report wherein I stated that an Assyrian village was burnt down, that I was not feeling easy about the fate of my people, and that the storming of the first Assyrian village was but the symbol of further ravages and acts of violence by the Iraqi Government forces that were to follow.

My correspondence and that of my people subjected as it were to strict postal censorship in contravention to Article 15 of the Iraqi Constitutional Law and I being under Government detention, Baghdad, totally cut off from my people, it was not under the circumstances possible for me to obtain in time first-class information as to callous oppression of my people without making a searching enquiry which has now been rendered somewhat possible subsequent to my deportation from Iraq on August 18th, 1933.

It would appear that subsequent to the meetings held at the Mutassarifiyyah of Mosul on July 10th and 11th, 1933, at which meetings the Assyrians were told to leave Iraq if they disapproved the Government policy in regard to heterogeneous settlement that would have necessarily led to their complete destruction, added to this the declared policy of the Government to settle a few hundred Assyrians only thus leaving thousands of others unsettled and homeless as Your Excellency will have observed from the copies of letters and reports before you, the Assyrian representative leaders who enjoy the confidence of almost all the members of my people decided to obey the Government instructions conveyed to them by the Mutassarif of Mosul by leaving Iraq to a place where they can live peacefully. Syria, under the French mandate, was under the circumstances the only avenue open in the face of my people.

The Iraqi Government instead of honouring its public announcement referred to above placed Mosul liwa under military occupation and began molesting groups of Assyrians who were desirous of joining the groups who had already left Iraq and safely reached their destination without firing a single shot, every group being headed by its own representative leader from every Assyrian tribe. Simultaneously with the molesting of Assyrians in Mosul, the Iraqi advance guard launched several attacks and counter-attacks on the Assyrian

representative leaders who were now in a point on the Syro-Iraqi frontier on August 4th, 5th and 6th, 1933, inflicting, according to the Iraqi Government *communiqué* itself, casualties of some ninety-five Assyrians killed and a larger number of wounded; the latter I am assured were brutally killed on the battlefield.

My people whether those on the Syro-Iraqi frontier or those in Mosul had no intention whatever of fighting the Iraqi forces but the circumstances under which they found themselves forced them to defend themselves in the face of many difficulties and overwhelming odds until they finally entered Syrian territory. Had the Iraqi Government honestly kept its announcement made at Mosul and did not harass those left in Mosul and permitted them to leave peacefully to join their comrades and relatives, I am sure that not one drop of blood would have been shed. But the aim of the Iraqi Government was to inflict as many casualties as it could on my people before and after leaving Iraq.

Had the Assyrian representative leaders who left Iraq remained in Mosul, their fate would have almost certainly been tragic as has been the fate of their compatriots and relations who remained behind for all the activities of the Iraqi Government tended to show that such would be the case. And if the Assyrian representative leaders who were now on the Syro-Iraqi frontier after receiving a desperate appeal from their comrades who were being badly molested by the Iraqi army, did not go to relieve them it is almost sure that that group would have been totally wiped out.

Before there was any fighting, the Assyrian villages, at the instigation of and the encouragement by the Iraqi Government officials without distinction, were exposed to all kinds of ravages. Their sheep and cattle were carried off with impunity; cultivated lands were encroached upon and destroyed; rice and other cultivations were totally damaged; burglaries became common and anarchy universal. The Assyrians were being raided hourly and were left unprotected to the cruel treatment of the predatory Arabs at the open instigation of a fanatic Government who had three months previously prepared a plan for the total extermination of the Assyrian people by first attempting to disarm them some two months ago and then attack them.

On its return from the frontier, the Iraqi army together with that part of the force which was proceeding to Assyrian settlements shot down every non-combatant isolated Assyrian they came across. In the villages of the Qadha of Dohuk, men, women and children were turned out of their villages and shot down collectively by rifle and machine-gun fire. In Simel alone, more than three hundred and fifty persons were massacred in this barbarous manner. The Iraqi army went so far as to bayonet some of these defenceless people. In the Qadha of Dohuk where the excesses were acute and the casualties among the Assyrian civil population heavier the reason was because the Assyrian settlements and villages were within the easy reach of the Iraqi army and the access to them was not difficult as these villages and settlements lie not far away from the main roads that the Iraqi army force was using.

In Amadiyah districts, individual murders became common and the property of the civil population carried away. The persecution of the Assyrians in the other settlements was of no less barbarity than in Dohuk and Amadiyah districts.

Reports to hand from various sources show that the Assyrians who have been treacherously victimised by the Iraqi Government and the police can be counted in hundreds. Thousands of Assyrians have become widows and orphans. All of these have become destitute for what little they had has all been looted. They are at present destitute and poverty-stricken and look here and there for crumbs of bread they can find.

It is however said that a certain number of Assyrians who mysteriously escaped the massacres were transported to Dohuk and each person supplied with three loaves of bread *per diem*. Diseases are reported to have already broken out among the panic-stricken Assyrian population which will soon become universal and play havoc with those who have survived only to undergo more acute sufferings. The rest of the Assyrian villages in addition to those in Dohuk and Amadiyah have been subjected to robbery and loot and a large proportion of the villages burnt down.

The number of people who have suffered terribly in every imaginable way at the hands of the Iraqi Government is estimated at eight thousand and I do not know what has happened to my people since my deportation from Iraq.

It should be borne in mind that the Assyrians up to the last moment maintained a peaceful and tranquil spirit though they were aware that the Iraqi Government was doing its utmost and leaving no stone unturned to bring about these massacres. To make sure that when the massacres would be put in operation, the Iraqi Government had long before embarked upon a scheme whereby she weeded out all the Assyrian policemen in the north and transferred them to the southern districts. Before trouble breaking out in Mosul, the Iraqi Government established temporary police posts and increased the numbers of others from among newly recruited men and posted them in every Assyrian village and settlement of importance to prevent them from giving any sort of relief to their brethren who were being massacred in the other villages. To justify this action, the Iraqi Government stated that this was necessary to protect the civil population! Travelling by day and night from Mosul to other districts was forbidden in order to hide the atrocious acts that were in process.

On May 12th, 1933, an Arab officer in Mosul was told to say that stones were thrown

issued the orders following those of Baghdad for the massacring of the Assyrian population) to raid and assassinate the Assyrian Patriarch and the other Assyrians in Mosul. It can be safely said that this case in which the Assyrian Patriarch was falsely accused was the first sign of the contemplated massacres. The Mutassarif of Mosul informed a European in Mosul that the assassination of the Patriarch and the rest of the Assyrians was within the military plan of operations.

This having failed in Mosul to produce the long-awaited sequel, the authorities in Baghdad took the matter up themselves. A perverse but a continued anti-Assyrian campaign was carried out by the medium of the newspapers throughout Iraq which went on for three months unchecked. As a matter of fact it was encouraged by the Government officials. The ill-feeling against the Assyrians became universal when certain deputies delivered fiery speeches in the Iraqi Parliament implying the necessity for the extermination of the Assyrian people. There was a general outcry through sheer fanaticism and hatred created and promoted by the Government for a holy war against the Assyrians. Demands for anti-Assyrian demonstrations were pouring in from Baghdad and Mosul at the instigation of the Government. In the case of the Kurds in Iraq who had already risen twice on a large scale in addition to several other minor risings against King Faisal's Government and his artificial but oppressive regime, there was no desire on the part of the Arabs to volunteer and support the Iraqi Government as they did in the case of the Assyrians. The case of my people was obviously different. We were looked upon as unbelievers and all means employed against us were lawful.

The Assyrians in Baiji in the employ of the Iraq Petroleum Co. were attacked and removed from their posts. The Assyrian railway employees were also all withdrawn to Baghdad.

Despite all the persecutions and acts of violence to which the Assyrians were subjected, the Assyrian levies awaited patiently in a wonderful manner that is highly commended hoping that the League of Nations and the Powers interested in my people to take drastic action against the oppressors and find a definite and final permanent solution for their future welfare. The Assyrian levy officers and men were seeing and hearing of the tragic fate of their wives, mothers, sisters, children and relatives yet they did not move to meet evil with evil. It is true that they petitioned the Air Vice-Marshal and gave him one month's notice following the terms of their contract after which date they would leave the service to go and save their people but they were disallowed to take this step. Actually through deep sorrow and grief about sixty and seventy of them were rapidly falling sick daily and were going to their doctors for medical treatment as a result of the terrible agony they were passing through.

The Assyrians in Baghdad were disarmed and had, together with those in Mosul and Kirkuk, and in all the other parts of Iraq to live under a reign of terror as they were expecting death, and a brutal death, at any moment.

Before I go any further, it would not be out of place to mention that when I last met Sir Francis Humphrys the then British High Commissioner in Iraq at Geneva at the Hôtel Beau-Rivage on the eve preceding the entrance of Iraq to the League of Nations he admitted that in 1931 arrangements were well in train to massacre the Assyrians had it not been for the prompt action he had taken to stop it. I thanked him most cordially but asked him what guarantees had he that could ensure the non-repetition of what we were discussing and what assurances had he to stop any attempt for such massacres in the future. He was kind enough to say that Iraq would not venture to attempt to do so as the British influence would still be great in Iraq; that he personally would have much time to devote to the Assyrian question and that he would do much more than when High Commissioner.

Whilst on this, may I draw Your Excellency's attention to His Britannic Majesty's Government's announcement before the Permanent Mandates Commission:

"His Majesty's Government fully realise its responsibility in recommending that Iraq should be admitted to the League. . . . Should Iraq prove herself unworthy of the confidence which has been placed in her, the moral responsibility must rest with His Majesty's Government."

At 2.30 p.m. on August 17th, 1933, an Arab police inspector entered the Y.M.C.A. premises at which I was dwelling and handed me an order for my deportation from Iraq. A copy of the order in question is enclosed herewith. I will not dwell on the legality or otherwise of this arbitrary order but would simply say that it is in contravention to Article 7 of the Iraqi Constitutional Law; of the Iraqi Nationality Law and is a grave violation of the letter and spirit of the guarantees of the League of Nations for the protection of the Iraqi minorities. This order supposed to be based on an emergency law that will be passed by the Iraqi Parliament the first moment it is presented to it, has rendered the guarantees of the League of Nations null and void. Thousands of others in addition to Assyrians are liable to this arbitrary treatment and you will now realise that our fears in the past, as at present, were well founded. Iraq is not a State that can and will respect

international guarantees and keep up promises and it is lamentable that my people despite their years continuous protests should have been subjected to such a Government.

Five minutes after the arrival of the police inspector with the order of my deportation in his hand, the Air Vice-Marshal dropped in to say that he had had information about the order as the Iraqi Government had furnished the British Embassy with a copy. The Air Vice-Marshal said that there were two alternatives. Either I should submit to deportation to Cyprus immediately or else the armed policemen who have formed a cordon round the Y.M.C.A. would seize me by force together with my father and brother and throw us over the Iraqi frontier. The Air Vice-Marshal was perturbed to such an extent so as to say that he was not altogether sure whether or not we could be safely transported to our new destination. As no one was allowed access to my place of residence and as I do not know Arabic, I asked the Air Vice-Marshal to give us a chance to have the order translated. This was not to be. I then asked that I should be given an opportunity to see or telephone to the British Ambassador and this was also refused.

I enclose herewith a copy of my letter dated August 15th, 1933, to the British Ambassador Baghdad. I had to submit to the order of deportation in view of paragraph (c) of the letter under reference, and particularly to have the massacres stopped as stated in the letter.

In order to give another chance to the League of Nations to intervene and fearing an undoubted clash between my Assyrian people and the levies in Baghdad on the one hand and the Iraqi police on the other if the latter would have attempted to commit the usual acts of violence which they were prepared to do *vide* the statement of the Air Vice-Marshal, I agreed to proceed to Cyprus but do hereby most strongly protest against the action of the Iraqi Government. I am assured that there would have been a serious retaliation on the part of the Assyrian levies with disastrous effects to the Assyrian case as the Iraqi Government was doing all in its power and tempting the Assyrians as in previous instances to take the law into their own hands thus enabling the Government to fall on the Assyrians in Baghdad as they did in the other parts of Iraq. I was informed by authoritative persons that the Arab Government was after my blood as it is now after the blood of every Assyrian in the country. I now emphasise the fact that the life of every Assyrian in Iraq is in danger and an imminent danger. I would have personally gladly sacrificed myself in defence of my Assyrian people and would only be too glad to meet the fate of my predecessors but as the lives of my people were at stake, as are now, I have accepted the order of deportation under the strongest protest pending the intervention of the League of Nations in regard to the whole Assyrian question.

At 4.15 a.m. in the morning the Iraqi authorities handed me over to the Air Vice-Marshal and the secretary to the British Ambassador who took me, my father and brother by cars to Hinaidi. From there we were transported by air to Cyprus.

Your Excellency will have observed that the Emergency Law No. 62 for the year 1933 referred to above was purposely enacted to be applied in our case irrespective of the existence or otherwise of the guarantees of the League of Nations.

I am at present in Cyprus with my father and brother.

Two Assyrian levy officers were detailed by the Air Vice-Marshal to accompany me to Cyprus and on their return to assure the Assyrian levies and the Assyrian population now completely desperate and waiting eagerly to hear that I was free to proceed to Geneva and elsewhere and re-submit and defend the Assyrian case before the world.

Eight Assyrians have been deported to Nasiriyah, Muntafik Liwa, on the lower Euphrates and many others are being terrorised.

I was informed to-day by Mr. C. Hart Davis the District Commissioner Cyprus that in addition to the Patriarchal family members that include men, women and children now on their way to Cyprus, eight other Assyrian leaders are to be deported to Cyprus bringing the number of deportees to 25. This is based on information received from London by the Government of Cyprus.

It would be quite impossible for the League of Nations to fully realise the barbarous atrocities committed against my people and the excesses used against them if no International Enquiry Commission proceeds to the spot as soon as possible to find means to stop further massacres that are bound to follow. And in order to be able to assist the Commission in its difficult task and give a full account of what has taken place, it is essential that I should be on the spot together with representative leaders recognised by the Assyrians and selected witnesses to give evidence in a healthy atmosphere under the protection of the League of Nations.

Finally, I pray Almighty God to accomplish through your intermediary the salvation of this remnant of the most martyred Christian Church and people.

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

Appendices.

Ministry of Interior, Iraq.

No. S/1801.

Date 25th Rabi ul Thani 1352. August 17th, 1933.

To *Eshai Mar Shimun*.

This is to notify you that the Council of State has, by virtue of the authority vested in him, decided to withdraw your Iraqi nationality and this Ministry has moreover decided that you should be deported outside Iraq.

For your information, we send you herewith a copy of the order relating to this.

(Signed) NASHAT AL SINAWI,
For Minister of Interior.

Ministry of Interior, Iraq.

No. S/1792.

Date 24th Rabi ul Thani 1352. August 16th, 1933.

Whereas the Council of State has decided to withdraw the Iraqi nationality from *Eshai Mar Shimun* in accordance with the authority vested in the Council of State *vide* Article I of the law for the withdrawal of Iraqi nationality No. 62 for the year 1933 and whereas it has appeared that the deportation of the person in question outside Iraq is in the interests of law and public security :

Therefore We, Minister of Interior by virtue of the authority vested in Us under Article II of the Law in question, order that he be deported outside Iraqi frontier.

(Signed) NASHAT AL SINAWI,
For Minister of Interior.

His Excellency,
The Acting British Ambassador,
Baghdad.

c/o Y.M.C.A.
Baghdad, August 15th, 1933.

Your Excellency,

Might I recall to you our conversation of yesterday, August 14th. That the British Government had made a decision to remove the Patriarchal family, that is, myself, father, brother and Lady Surma, because :

- (a) Of danger to its life ;
- (b) Because of the status of Iraq as an independent State, no protection could be given by the British in this country ;
- (c) If we left Iraq temporarily, that I should be free to proceed to Geneva, or any place where I could help my Assyrian people.

The alternative being — that the Iraqi Government had decided to imprison us either in Nasiriyah or Rutbah, and if we state that we are not Iraqis, then they will deport us over the frontier.

You also stated that the Iraqi Government accused me of being the cause of the present situation.

As I have already answered you verbally yesterday, so I now state in writing. The Patriarchal family has no wish to avail itself of any protection apart from that afforded to the whole Assyrian people. The most urgent question at the moment is that the British Government who handed us over to Iraq should stop massacre, persecution, and extermination of the families especially when so many of the young men are now serving British interests in this country when they could be defending these helpless families. This to me is much more important than any question of personal safety.

Moreover, if the presence of the Patriarchal family of eighteen persons is in danger and thus endangers the life of the Assyrian people, because of their loyalty, then surely their removal to an R.A.F. cantonment at Mosul or Hinaidi would be sufficient protection.

If as you say the Arab Government hold me solely responsible for the present situation, and my presence in Iraq prejudices the termination of the massacre and bitter feeling, then in the interests of peace I agree to being transferred under British auspices for a period to such a place that I am free to present in person the case of the Assyrians to the League of Nations. In such a case I would need to take with me a personal attendant.

(True copy.)