



Conference Programme

Vulnerability and Empowerment of Women and Children in Armed Conflict

International Assyrian Women's Conference

29 September 2016 | 10:00 to 13:00
European Parliament, Brussels | Room ASP-1E1

A devastating and protracted humanitarian crisis is currently ongoing in Syria and Iraq, with brutal violence and chaos forcing millions to flee their homelands and leave everything behind. Women and children make up the majority of the displaced population; as victims of displacement, they experience additional challenges and vulnerabilities, such as sexual, physical and psychological abuse and trauma.

The Assyrians, an ethnic and religious minority, whose traditional homeland comprises parts of northern Iraq, Syria, Turkey and Iran, have seen their already precarious situation deteriorate since the advance of the so-called Islamic State. In this context of war, not only ISIS forces and commanders, but reportedly also Iraqi Security Forces, Popular Mobilization Units and Kurdish Peshmerga have committed war crimes prohibited under international law. Like other women from minority components, Assyrian women are particularly vulnerable due to the double challenge of being a woman and belonging to a minority group.

Despite the perilous journeys and inhumane experiences women fleeing violence have to endure, there are courageous women and positive initiatives that seek to make an empowering difference in the lives of those affected by armed conflict. Against this background, this conference, organised by the **Unrepresented Nations and Peoples Organization** (UNPO) in conjunction with the **Assyrian Women's Federation of Sweden**, and hosted by **Kati Piri MEP (S&D)**, will offer a platform to raise awareness of the experiences and work of Assyrian women in conflict zones.



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Group of the Progressive Alliance of
Socialists & Democrats
in the European Parliament

- **Opening remarks**

Ms **Kati Piri**, Member of the European Parliament (S&D)

Ms **Johanna Green**, UNPO Programme Manager

Ms **Nursel Awrohum**, Head of the Assyrian Women's Federation of Sweden

- **Guest Speakers**

Ms **Bahija Dawod Nisho**, Assyrian Woman Union Secretary, Nohadra, Iraq

Ms **Norma Zeito Saadi**, Member of the Central Board of the Assyrian Democratic Organization (ADO), Director of the Assyrian Women Committee, Qamishli, Syria

Ms **Sabah Elia**, Active member of the women's section of the Assyrian community in Södertälje, Sweden, relative to several ISIS captives in Syria

Ms **Februniye Akyol Akay**, Midyat Syriac Culture Association, Assyrian Research Centre Association, member of the union of Democratic Local Government in Mardin province, Turkey.

- **Discussion, questions, comments**

- **Closing remarks**

Ms **Attiya Gamri**, President of the PvdA Women's Movement in The Netherlands