

# Open letter from 19 000 Assyrians to Turkey: Do not touch the St. Gabriel!

**The group "Aktion Mor Gabriel" in Germany, held a protest demonstration in Berlin against Turkey's attempts to confiscate the Mor Gabriel Monastery. According to official figures from the Berlin police, more than 19 000 people gathered. It is undoubtedly the largest Assyrians demonstration ever in Europe.**

Buses filled with young, old, men and women from Belgium, Holland, Switzerland, Austria, and from several cities in Germany emptied outside the magnificent cathedral, the [Berliner Dom](#). In an hour the cathedral's park area turned to a meeting place for Assyrians from all over Europe.

Just a stone's throw from the gathering is the Pergamon Museum. Inside the museum you can watch the impressive [Babylonian procession street](#), built by the Assyrian king Nebuchadnezzar II (604-562 BC). Lions in the relief walking along the procession street's blue and ochre colored glazed walls towards the [mighty gate of Ishtar](#). They are witnesses of a great past and have seen many generations of Assyrians come and go.

## **The contrast in Berlin**

Inside the Pergamon Museum, you can watch the Babylonian procession street and the gate of Ishtar, one of ancient history's most unique remains from the great Assyrian empire, while outside, a stone's throw from the museum you are met by today's brutal truth, where the remains of the Assyrian empire protest against Turkey's attempt to confiscate the Mor Gabriel Monastery, which has become a symbol of the Christian Assyrians since it was built in 397 A.D.

Before the [protest march](#) was moving towards its final destination, the Syriac Orthodox Church Archbishop of Germany, [Julio Hanna Aydin](#), made a short speech.

- I am extremely pleased to see so many young people involved in the Mor Gabriel issue. I am overwhelmed with joy to see all of our organizations, regardless of name, flags and colors. It is the day of unity, said Bishop Hanna Aydin.

Under the leadership of Bishop Hanna Aydin the crowd prayed the Lord's prayer, after that the demonstrators began to move towards the [Brandenburg Tor](#), the arch of triumph

that has become the symbol of a free, democratic and reunited Germany, where several demonstration speeches would be held.

Berlin's main avenue, [Unter den Linden](#), was closed for car traffic for the demonstration. This avenue which is Berlin's cultural and political center is heavily visited by tourists. Some curious tourists asked the organizers in yellow vests what it is about.

The demonstration took the march from the Berliner Dom at [Pariser Platz](#) to the Brandenburg Gate in one hour. "[Do not touch the Mor Gabriel](#)" the crowd scanted all the way.

The list of speakers consisted of representatives from various organizations, Assyrian, Armenian, German Evangelical Church representatives, other coreligionists and human rights activists. Also the authors Yelda Özcan and Recep Marasli showed their solidarity and gave speeches during the demonstration.

The line of argument in the speakers' message was that Turkey should stop harassing the Assyrians. Most speakers noted that the feudal system is a problem and the village guards armed with government weapons are raging freely and terrorizing the Assyrians in the area. The Turkish State which has started this systematic state terror by using Kurdish clans and village guards has to immediately stop it if they want to belong to the civilized world, emphasized the majority of speakers.

## **History is present**

A few hundred meters south of the Brandenburg Gate, where 19 000 Assyrians were assembled, the [Holocaust Mahnmal](#), a monument to the Holocaust, which covers a 19 000 m<sup>2</sup> area in the middle of Berlin's most central neighborhoods. The monument was built as an unforgettable symbol of the crime that Nazi Germany had committed against the city's once flourishing Jewish community.

Turkey, however, does the contrary, and responds to its dark history in an entirely different way. Just a few kilometers from the demonstration site is [Hardenberg Strasse](#), the street where the genocide architect of Seyfo, Talat Pasha, was killed in March 15, 1921 by an Armenian survivor of the genocide. Seyfo-genocide was staged by the young Turks under the direction of among others Talat Pasha. The current Turkish government continues its policies in the same spirit. With its aggression and its harassment of the Assyrians<sup>20</sup> and other Christians in the country, the Turkish state shows that even today they follow in Talat Pasha's footsteps.

Turkey seems to have difficulties to put up with the fact that there are a couple of thousand Assyrians left in Turabdin, the origin area of the Assyrians, and that they have a monastery in the area, although they already have eradicated several hundred thousand of them during the Seyfo genocide. Turkey wants to erase the last remains and to complete the genocide that Talat Pasha and the young Turks began in the shadow of the First World War. A country which does not recognize its crimes and apologize for them is always prone to commit the same crimes against humanity. Learn from Germany, Turkey! Dare to face your dark history and make up with it!

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