

# ܕܝܗܘܕܝܐ ܕܝܢܘܨܘܫܐ



threats targeting the remaining Assyrian community in Turkey are just as alarming.” Speaking through a megaphone to the demonstrators, Mr. [redacted] message was quite clear- unconditionally release an unjustly imprisoned priest, and recognize the Assyrian Holocaust of 1915.

“Turkey has now added that Assyrians are forbidden under threat of execution to affirm the horrors of the past or to bear witness to those taking place now. Although the Turkish government successfully blackmailed the U.S.

The screams from the 80-strong crowd of Assyrians- both children and adults alike- were loud enough to be heard not only by the inquisitive grey-suited office workers crowding around the Albert road offices in South Melbourne, but also more importantly by the intended target- The Consulate General of The Republic of Turkey.

“The very idea that someone can still be arrested in Turkey at the dawn of the twenty-first century for expressing his belief in an eighty-five year old historical fact is disturbing. The subsequent intimidation and

government into withdrawing the Armenian Genocide Resolution, the ensuing controversy and now the threat against Fr. Yusuf have served to strengthen the Assyrian, Armenian, and Greek communities into unprecedented coordination. This new combined front against the denial of the twentieth century’s first Holocaust has preoccupied the Turkish government’s foreign policy. Assyrians around the world are submitting their protests to Turkish and local authorities demanding the immediate

*Continued Page 4 - 5*

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## TAAAS' Youth Conference

Participate in interesting workshops and activities with your community and friends while you explore picturesque Kiama.

Starts: 8am - Saturday, 7 April - 4:45pm Sunday, 8 April, 2001

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## Writers Wanted....

Interested in crystallising your thoughts on the pages of Nakosha? Then contact the team at Nakosha.

Send us a report on the activities of your local Assyrian community. Contact David on 9359-0362 or nakosha@hotmail.com

## Kha B'Neesan ASSYRIAN CHALDEAN NEW YEAR

1st April, 2001

Akkad Cultural Centre presents:  
6751 new years!

1pm @ Bundoora Park, Bundoora  
Featuring : D.J. Aghader  
and Dowla O Zurna.

**CHALDEAN BISHOP REFLECTS ON "HOPELESS SITUATION" UNDER SANCTIONS**

(ZNDA: St. Louis) Archbishop Mar Jabrail Kassab of Iraq, in his first visit to the St. Louis area, painted a bleak picture Sunday of life in his country after a decade of economic sanctions.

Kassab is the archbishop of Basra for the Chaldean Catholic Church, which is associated with the Roman Catholic Church. In an interview at St. Francis Xavier College Church, Kassab described a country beset with economic hardship, social breakdown and general hopelessness.

Three-quarters of Iraqi adults are unemployed, and as many as 5,000 children under age 5 die every month from malnutrition and diseases that go untreated because of chronic shortages of basic medicines, he said.

"There is minimal access to food and minimal access to medicine," Kassab said, speaking through an interpreter. "Young people are living in a hopeless situation."

The U.N. embargo prohibits the sale of a range of products, including pharmaceutical equipment, insecticides, education supplies and chlorine to disinfect water. The sanctions were imposed in 1990 to force Iraq to admit international weapons inspectors.

Some people at the conference asserted that the embargo has remained in place in an attempt to heighten political tensions that could lead to the ouster of dictator Saddam Hussein.

But "economic pressure has not translated into revolution," said Hans-Christof von Sponeck, former U.N. assistant secretary-general, who also attended the conference. "Saddam Hussein's life is fairly normal."

For 17 months, von Sponeck headed the U.N.'s oil-for-food program, which allows for the sale of up to \$5.6 billion of Iraqi oil every six months in exchange for food and medicine. But he quit last year because, he said, the program was a total failure.

"Wherever you look socially, sanctions have brought about a very destructive reality," he said.

"We must see the Iraqis disarm, but economic sanctions should not be linked to disarmament."

Kassab's message was taken to heart by some of the approximately 1,000 people who heard him speak at Sunday Mass at St. Francis Xavier, 3628 Lindell Boulevard.

"He asked us to be a voice for suffering people," said Jim Fears, a retired teacher from Kirkwood. "And I'm very sympathetic. The American government is trying to force the Iraqi people to revolt, but it's poor people who are paying the price."

Jane Mix of suburban Glendale said: "This was the first time I've heard the (Iraqi) situation described in human terms."

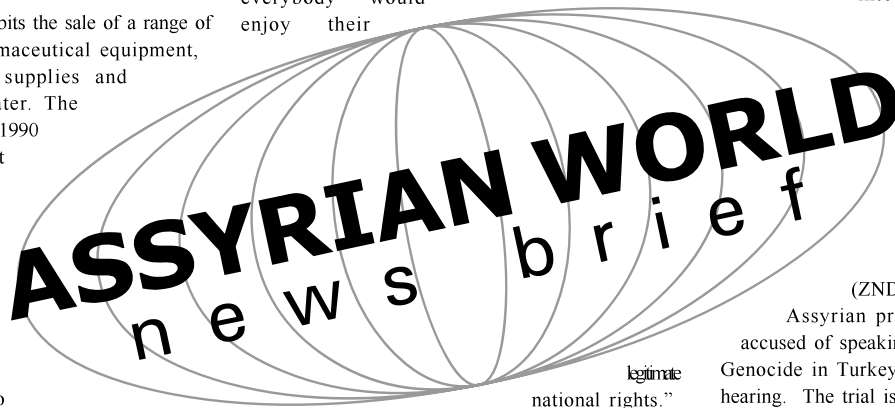
Kassab was ordained a priest in 1961 and named archbishop of southern Iraq by Pope John Paul II in 1995. About 1 million of the country's 21 million people are Christian, most of them Chaldean-

Catholic.

**NORTHERN WATCH - ZINDA NEWS FROM NORTHERN IRAQ, FEBRUARY**

5: The Assyrian Students and Youth Union ends its Congress in Nohadra (Dohuk). The Executive Committee releases a statement on the success of the 4th Congress.

8: The Central Committee of the Turkomani Party announces its new leadership group and releases the following statement: "we renew our promise to remain loyal to our Turkoman people under the umbrella of the Iraqi Turkoman Front, full of hope and determination to embody our party's slogans and its brilliant ideology in order to achieve all our legitimate national and patriotic goals and rights, to consolidate brotherhood relations with all political parties in the arena and to work jointly with those who share with us the homeland including the Arabs, Kurds and Assyrian towards a parliamentarian pluralist democratic Iraq in which everybody would enjoy their



legitimate national rights."

15: Bet-Nahrain Democratic Party announces the opening of a "charity pharmacy" in Arbil.

15: Romeo Hakari, Bet-Nahrain Democratic Party leader, told the KDP newspaper, "We have tried to keep the Assyrian community [abroad] in touch with the political situation in the region and Kurdistan people's living conditions."

15: The new issue of Assyrian Democratic Movement's Bahra Magazine is published in Arbil.

22: Nechrivan Barazani's statement on the assassination of Fransu Hariri: "Faranso Hariri was a Christian in his religion, a Barzinji in his course of struggle for freedom, a KDP follower in his political beliefs, an Assyrian in his nationality, and a Kurdistanian in his national struggle."

**THIEVES RANSACK ANCIENT NINEVEH, OTHER SITES**

(ZNDA: Baghdad) Since 1990, when the United Nations imposed sweeping economic sanctions on Iraq because of its invasion of Kuwait, world-famous sites such as Babylon, Hatra, Umma, Ur and Nineveh have become prime targets of looters. "Not only are things being destroyed, but the accumulation of knowledge at a breathtaking speed has been replaced by destruction at the same sort of pace."

Virtually no illegal trade in Iraqi antiquities existed after Saddam Hussein came to power in 1979. Hussein set about ensuring the country's rich heritage would be accessible to all Iraqis, ordering establishment of more than a dozen regional museums to house

important local artifacts. In a nation with 10,000 historical sites, archaeology flourished.

Amid the chaos immediately after the war, most of the regional museums were looted, some burned to the ground. In the years since, the thieving has continued nonstop. Some of the damage is caused by desperate people hit hard by the sanctions. Other sites are hit by highly organized, well-armed teams of looters.

In stark contrast to the careful, time-consuming methods of modern archaeological excavation, the antiquity bandits use hammers, heavy earth-moving equipment and even dynamite to extract their booty.

Before the war, George and Russell worked together at Nineveh, producing a complete photographic catalog of the palace reliefs. The reliefs were in such good condition they were left at the site rather than moved inside a museum. Today, the evidence of looting is plain to see. The ground inside the palace throne room is littered with hammered remains of several reliefs — proof that looters smashed the heavy stone slabs

into smaller, easier-to-carry chunks. "This was part of a palace of an emperor who was encouraging science and literature," George said. "Now it's been destroyed by a hammer."

**FATHER ABKULUT'S TRAIL DELAYED AGAIN**

(ZNDA: Ankara) The trial of the Assyrian priest, Father Yusuf Abkulut, accused of speaking up in support of the Seyfo Genocide in Turkey, was delayed at last week's hearing. The trial is now scheduled for April 5th. Father Abkulut appeared at the Diyarbakir State Security Court on February 22, where many European, Assyrian, and human rights groups had come to observe the trial. Mr. Abkulut's lawyers stated that the speech for which Abkulut is being accused and was recorded on cassette tape was made during an informal discussion and was never released to the press. It, therefore, did not constitute a crime. In addition, there was no need for the cassette to be transcribed by experts, they said, and added their client was simply availing himself of his individual right to criticize. The lawyers also commented that their client was being tried for freely expressing his personal thoughts on that matter and that the trial was itself in contradiction to the European Human Rights Convention. Father Abkulut's lawyers stressed that the place in which their client spoke did not have a concentrated population of either Assyrian or Armenians, therefore he could not be in contravention of Article 312 of the Turkish Penal Code (TCK), under which he was being charged. They then demanded full acquittal.

The hearing was observed by Parliamentarians from Germany and Switzerland; the Swiss Consul Sture Theolin; the Norwegian Consul Haakan Svane; and the representatives of various human rights organizations. An Assyrian observer noted that the "Turkish court was amazed at the international coverage of the trial. They delayed the trial with the argument that they had to study the case more. But the main reason is that they try to diminish the international interest for this case."

# 1,000,000 DEATH TOLL



The father of 2-year-old Nemya grips her death certificate while talking to a doctor moments after she died from meningitis in a quarantined room at the hospital. A 50-cent tube could have saved the youngster's life, one doctor says. But the hospital has none. Impossible to obtain under the sanctions, another doctor says.

- ◆ More than one MILLION Iraqis have died since the start of the blockade in 1990. - United Nations Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO), December, 1995.
- ◆ The blockade has killed more than 567,000 children under the age of five.- United Nations Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO), December, 1995.
- ◆ More than 4,500 children under the age of 5 are dying each month from hunger and disease. - United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF), October 19, 1996.
- ◆ Since the onset of sanctions, there has been a six-fold increase in the mortality rate for children under five and the majority of the country's population has been on a semi-starvation diet. - World Health Organization (WHO), March, 1996.
- ◆ The Assyrians, from the Church of the East and Chaldean Church, in Iraq, number between 1 - 1,500,000 in total population, around 5% of the total Iraqi population.- Zinda Magazine, 1999.
- ◆ Approximately 270 Assyrian children die every month, or roughly 7 Assyrian children die every day, as a result of the U.N. imposed sanctions in Iraq. - Zinda Magazine, 2000.
- ◆ A conservative U.N. estimate estimate gives the 10 year Assyrian children, under the age of 5, death toll in Iraq at approximately 3,000 per year for a total death toll of 30,000 Assyrian children!

*"They died silently , for humanity had closed its ears to their Cry."*  
*Dead Are My People, Khalil Gibran.*



## YIMMA

Odi Youeel

Australia's very own, Odi Youeel, releases his latest cassette, featuring 10 Assyrian songs.

*"I dedicate these songs to all the Assyrians around the world and to all my friends."*

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**E mail : oodisho@vtown.com.au**

This month, and every February 5, we pause and recall the passing away of an Assyrian who was generations ahead of his time. Naoum Faiyq.

In a Zinda magazine survey, conducted last year, readers were asked to rate the most important Assyrian persons of the Twentieth Century. General Agha Petros d'Baz, a war leader, was rated first, whereas Naoum Faiyq, political activist and journalist, however, was voted to third position only. Sadly, this survey gave me a limited, and general, understanding of the true importance that the Assyrian people, unfortunately, place on journalism and education.

Naoum Faiyq, was one of the few Assyrian who understood the value of education and journalism. Despite being responsible for translating many books to Syriac, he was also instrumental as a journalist in giving the Assyrian people a legacy. That legacy was in the form of an awakening that was implanted in the Assyrians at the start of the 20th century.

He was adept at using Journalism, and subsequently, the Media as tools with which he projected his message to the Assyrian people. He understood something that many Assyrians will claim they understand, but only a handful have ever known. All of "the Assyrians' " and "the world's" problems could be solved using this very tool.

Individual, national and world liberation are right under our very noses, yet few will come to this realisation, and fewer still will attempt to use this medium as a tool to advance our people, or the rest of the world.

Years of planting seeds of self-awareness, in Melbourne's Assyrian youth, finally germinated this month at the first-ever street protest conducted by Melbourne's Assyrian community, in order to free Fr. Yusuf Akbulut. An energetic and unexpected youthful awakening, with guidance by experienced activists, led the peaceful and successful protest, which was heard in the governmental halls of Ankara and Canberra.

The protest, held outside the gates of the Turkish Consulate in South Melbourne, brought together many youth, who showed remarkable initiative to show the world that at the start of the 21st century, the once politically immature and naive Assyrian people are starting to finally stumble into an era of self-awareness. ■

editor's note

David Chibo

# Free Fr. Yusuf Akbulut!



release of Fr. Yusuf,” M [REDACTED] added.

The protest, organized by the Father Akbulut Committee based here in Melbourne and headed by Mr. David Chibo and [REDACTED] commenced at 12:00 p.m., 28th February, 2001, on the footpaths in front of the Consulate.

The demonstration was organised and run with military precision. Plain clothes Detective Sergeant Mr. Andrew McGowan of the Protective Security Intelligence Group, Victorian Police, met with M [REDACTED] and Chibo from the outset and outlined his group’s role. “We expect a peaceful protest today,” said the Sergeant. Obtaining written information from the two Assyrians-including an official letter of protest addressed to the Turkish Consulate-he indicated that this information would be officially logged in Canberra. Even appearing to show some interest, he added with a smile “Believe me, we’re quite used to protests being held here at the Turkish Consulate.” And with the numerous other

oppressed minorities on the Turkish governments’ backs, this came as no surprise.

M [REDACTED] then continued speaking into the microphone, “Assyrians have been persecuted for simply being Assyrian, speaking a distinct language and being culturally and linguistically different.”

As expected the protest was indeed a peaceful one. The Federal and State police’s presence- specifically requested by the Father Akbulut Committee- served merely to reinforce the image of a controlled and non-violent protest, and to maintain safe traffic flow.

As the afternoon weather warmed up so too did the vocal cords of the demonstrators, spurred on by a particularly passionate and vocal group of young teenagers. Earlier on, this group of youths paraded down Albert road with their “Turkey-Free Assyrian Priest” protest banner along with the Assyrian flag- painstakingly painted by Sargon Warda- looking for all the world like a group of

victorious soldiers marching into a reclaimed Bet-Nahrain.

Normal business at the consulate was brought to an official close at 12:00 p.m. by the peaceful demonstration, and despite repeated efforts, the Consul- perhaps not surprisingly- would not accept an official protest letter nor meet with representatives from the Father Akbulut Committee. The demonstration drew to a close at 2:00 p.m.

It would be hard to argue with those critics who point out that the protest could hardly ever hope to achieve its primary aim of releasing Father Akbulut, let alone persuading the Turks to acknowledge our Holocaust. Yet, at the same time, no one can easily deny its power as a symbolic gesture, not just as a gesture to the Turkish government to show that Assyrians, wherever they may be, will never forget the past- as it can all, too easily, be repeated in the future- but more significantly as a gesture to the children of our community. As a child





# Cartoon on Life

## Do you find it difficult to meet, talk to, or go out with Assyrians of the opposite sex?



► **Female/19 /Sydney, Australia**  
 ▷ Yes... :)

► **Female/35/North American Continent**

▷ Being in different areas of the world, many Assyrians have been separated from their immediate families. Before when they were in certain countries all together it was very common that most would meet members of their own extended families and that would result in marriages. Also, being in certain areas of the world, example, the Middle East meant that mixed marriages were also very rare.

Today, many Assyrians aren't looking any more for an Assyrian mate whether be it a Female or a Male, being surrounded by diverse cultures some are fascinated to see what these cultures have to offer.

One more thing is that relations outside marriage are very common because it's very normal in western countries to have sexual relationships without marriage and thus to young Assyrian men and few women too, it's very easy to have access to these relations without being married.

Another factor is that life isn't like before any more, where by a man used to look for a woman who would have his family and together they would build a home. Today's life is somewhat built on how much we can make in order to be able to live in a certain standard of life, and unfortunately many relations are failing because one or both parties are failing to live up to what the other's expectations are.

One thing which I think is very important too, is the fear of one another, our youth are afraid in a way from each other, they have accumulated many misunderstandings and as such they label each other and think that meeting a non-Assyrian for a relationship is the solution to these misconceptions.

Finally, maybe one remedy is to have gatherings

all around the world for the young Assyrians to get to know each other and have open discussions in order to clarify these fears and bring out young men and women closer so that they wouldn't go out looking for relationships outside their communities, it's not only good that we have parties and picnics here and there, we are really in need for open discussions because there are many misconceptions circulating amongst our youth.

Finally, the geographical factors can also play a role many of our people are at times living in cities where there aren't many Assyrians of a certain age in order to meet Assyrians.

► **Female/18/Toronto, Canada**

▷ No, I do not find it difficult to meet, talk to, or go out with Assyrians. I'm pretty attractive knowing from the compliments I get, I can start my own conversations, I'm very nice and anyways I started singing Assyrian now so of course I am more interactive than I usually am.

► **Female/25/USA, Fremont, California**

▷ no

► **Male/23/Sydney, Australia**

▷ It is difficult meeting Assyrian girls, the reason is that, many of them don't like mixing with Assyrians or participating in Assyrian festivals and parties. They simply allege that Assyrian talk a lot!

But I will tell you the real reason behind that, take this example:- In Iraq Assyrian girls had two choices of men one is Assyrian guy, the second a Muslim, and we know an Assyrian girl going out with a Muslim in Iraq will be a suicidal and shameful for her and her family!

So Assyrian guys were always in demand! or the first and most of the time the last choice!

But in this country the borders of religion and race have been broken by Assyrian girls and guys,

now you can see Assyrian girls going out with Lebs, Turks and even Indians!

So Assyrian girls in this country "Australia" have a more variety of guys to choose from, and they don't need to go out or mix with Assyrian guys unless he is a Tom cruise look alike!

► **Female/32/Melbourne, Australia**

▷ I find it more difficult to find someone with the same philosophies etc. rather than just meeting someone of the opposite sex! By the same token, I have absolutely no qualms about going out with Assyrians (i.e. I don't care if people gossip) but, again, it comes back to the issue of compatibility.

BTW, I guess it's helpful to talk about this issue but how about some more diverse questions that flush out major conditions (diseases?) that lead to such symptoms (as addressed by your question above). We need to ask what sort of contributions each of us is making/needs to make in order to build a better Assyrian Community. Why do we still hire halls from 'foreigners' after being in this country for three decades??? What do we need to do in order to bring people together in order that they may then meet, talk, go out...

Remember, losers find it impossible to accept temporary setbacks, but winners ask "WHY?" My absolute two cents worth!

► **Male/18/West Bloomfield, Michigan**

▷ YES! I fear that if I dare ask a female Assyrian out, her relatives will be "out to get" me or people will start spreading rumors about us.

► **Male/25/Södertälje, Sweden**

▷ Well sometimes, but not all the times, the most times it is ok I have never had any problem, but some of the girls are afraid, but when the field secure with me the act normal and we have a good time.

# THE WORLD'S FIRST UNIVERSITIES

## *Nisibin & Edessa*



Out of the many young Assyrians who received their final high school results and are preparing to enter university, many know that the world's first schools were Assyrian but very few are aware that the same applies to universities.

During the golden age of Assyrian Syriac culture between the 4th and 13th centuries A.D. many training and educational centres actively served the Syriac world and exhibited profitable and important activities. Some of these training centres taught philosophy, philology and other branches of science, yet most of them gave training in theology. History would come to recognise these centres of learning as the world's first Universities.

### **The First University of Nisibin**

In 325, St. James of Nisibin (above) and his disciple St. Ephraim attended the First Ecumenical Council of Nicaea, representing the Bishops of Mesopotamia. On their return, St. James established the world's first university and theological school in his hometown, serving as its rector until his death in 338. St. Ephraim, who had been serving as a tutor then assumed his mentor's post, which he occupied for 24 years.

In 362 the Romans surrendered Nisibin to Persia. This event put an end to the city's private Syriac University. St. Ephraim (right) moved with Nisibin's nobles first to Diyarbakir then to Edessa, and re-established the university there, so that Edessa became the

new centre of Syriac intellectual life.

### **The University of Edessa**

Historical sources indicate that this university started to provide a truly superior quality of theological training within a year of its foundation. St. Ephraim died in 373. It was he and the graduates of this university that practically created Syriac Church music and melodies as we know

them today. The Romans first closed the university in 431 after it began to support the case of St. Nestorius the excommunicated Patriarch of Istanbul (ethnically an Assyrian).

The most famous student of the university was St. Narsai of Maaltha, who became its rector in 437. In the controversy between the Nestorians and the Monophysites (who preached different beliefs on Christ's nature), he sided with the Nestorians who enjoyed the patronage of Ibas, Bishop of Edessa. After Ibas' death in 459, Narsai and his Nestorian colleagues were expelled from



Edessa.

When supporters of St. Nestorius again gathered at the university, it was finally closed

by order of the Eastern Roman Emperor Zeno in 489, resulting in a vigorous Nestorian remnant migrating to the Persian Empire, joining the Church of the East (which had split from the Church of Antioch over its support for St. Nestorius), and relocating at Nisibin and later at Jundishapur.

In 498, Zeno destroyed the university and theological school buildings at Edessa and built a church on its ruins, obliterating every last trace of one of humankind's greatest intellectual centres. The Syriac (especially the Church of the East's) intellectual centres then became the second university of Nisibin, which carried on the venerable traditions of Edessa, and the university of Jundishapur (in southern Iran), which combined the traditions of Edessa and Nisibin with those of India and Greece.

### **Legacy**

The second university of Nisibin broke-up in 596, when the 10th General Synod of the Church of the East, under Catholicos-Patriarch Saurishu, condemned the teachings of the school's rector. The university and state-of-the-art medical school and hospital at Jundishapur, under the patronage of the Persian Emperors, combined the medical knowledge of Mesopotamia, Greece and India, thriving even after the Islamic invasion. They became the model on which all-later

Islamic medical schools and hospitals were to be built.

By the 8th century, this university gave way to the hospitals and medical centers of Baghdad, established by families of its graduates Bukhtyishu and Maswayh. These culminated into the period of Islamic Renaissance, the golden era of Islamic Medicine, and the establishment of the famous Islamic Universities. With the Moorish invasion of Spain in the Middle Ages, this knowledge in turn led to the European Renaissance and the foundations of modern society and, yes, Universities around the world today.

Much of the knowledge, first discovered and recorded for posterity by the Assyrians, was later claimed by the Europeans as their own. ■

# ملف لغوي

# كلمة لغوية

learn your  
language

سَلْجَا	.....halwo.....	milk.....	khalwa.....	كَلْجَا
لُجَا	.....libo.....	heart.....	liba.....	لُجَا
هَهْجَا	.....quodmo.....	tommorow.....	quodme.....	هَهْجَا
سَلْجَا	.....hilmo.....	dream.....	khilma.....	سَلْجَا
شَهْجَا	.....shahro.....	festival.....	shahra.....	شَهْجَا
بَهْجَا	.....bahro.....	light.....	bahra.....	بَهْجَا
هَهْجَا	.....hizwo.....	appearance (vision).....	khizwa.....	هَهْجَا
كَلْجَا	.....kthowo.....	book.....	kthawa.....	كَلْجَا
جَهْجَا	.....gurno.....	liquid-vessel.....	gurna.....	جَهْجَا
نَهْجَا	.....nohoro.....	commentary.....	nohara.....	نَهْجَا



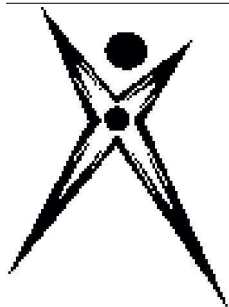
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The Assyrian Youth Group of Victoria is a non-political, non-religious and non-profit organisation. It seeks to promote the Assyrian culture, history and language, as well as the Assyrian name and community, bringing it to the world stage.

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