



Assyrian American National Federation

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Contact:
Jon Koriel
(213) 694-3345
jkoriel@rabengroup.com

National Assyrian-American Federation Condemns Hobby Lobby on Recent Black Market Purchases of Ancient Assyrian Artifacts

(Chicago, IL)-- The Assyrian American National Federation (AANF) strongly condemns the actions of Hobby Lobby and all parties involved in the theft of Assyrian Antiquities. As part of an agreement with the Department of Justice, Hobby Lobby will turn over thousands of priceless Assyrian artifacts it obtained from third parties and will pay a \$3 million fine.

Since the fall of Saddam Hussein, reports of lootings of Assyrian and other artifacts from Assyria, present day Iraq, became all too commonplace. The theft of these priceless antiquities gave rise to a black market that was further compounded by the rise of the Islamic State and its looting and destruction of ancient Assyrian sites in Iraq. Consequently, terrorist groups like ISIS made millions on the black market and used much of those funds in its campaign of terror against the people of Iraq, including the Assyrians, by displacing them, taking many of them for ransom, and destroying their villages.

The Assyrian people are a resilient people who have endured the worst of times in its long history -- from the Genocide over 100 years ago orchestrated by Ottoman Turkey to the present-day ethnic and cultural cleansing by ISIS, said Martin Youmaran, president of the Assyrian American National Federation. "On top of this, to see that a major U.S corporation like Hobby Lobby would benefit from the cultural cleansing of our people is disappointing and disheartening to say the least."

The Assyrian American National Federation is currently working with its team on meeting with the executives of Hobby Lobby and will report back once the meeting is complete. The Assyrian American National Federation is committed to protecting and promoting the progression of Assyrian culture, education, religion and humanitarian rights.

About the Assyrian American National Federation

Established in 1933 by the Assyrian community of the United States, the Assyrian American National Federation, Inc. (AANF) is a Federation of Assyrian Associations in the United States that strives to unite the Assyrian Nation by protecting and promoting the progression of Assyrian culture, education, religion and humanitarian rights.