



GULAN

Att: Mr. David Carrington
19 CHELSEA PARK GARDENS
LONDON SW3 6AF
UNITED KINGDOM

Tuesday, 1 February 2022

OPEN LETTER TO WWW.GULAN.ORG.UK

[via. express post and e-mail: info@gulan.org.uk]

Dear Members of the Board of Trustees,

We, the Board of Directors of ACSYA Inc. write to raise serious concerns about the gross misrepresentation of Indigenous Assyrian folk garments on your website— www.gulan.org.uk. According to your website— and specifically under the navigation heading “culture of Kurdistan” —three articles of clothing, as well as embellishments that are of Assyrian heritage (see annexure marked “A”) have been published and mislabelled as “Kurdish costume”.

For many Assyrians, these garments are not simply functional or ornamental but are valued carriers of Indigenous identity and continuity, as well as a form of cultural expression. The mislabelling of such cultural assets, whether intended or not, may be viewed as a form of cultural appropriation. Such appropriations not only seek to diminish the cultural significance of these garments to Indigenous people but widen ethnical divisions between Assyrian and Kurdish communities. Acts of cultural appropriation may also be viewed as a form of erasure and of forced homogeneity, thus, perpetuating a pattern of dispossession and oppression.

We, hereby, urge that you remove the images from your website, or at the very least identify such articles of clothing with the correct identification marker— “Assyrian costume”. Indeed, the Kurdistan Region of Iraq (KRI) consists of multi-ethnic, multi-cultural, and multi-confessional societies. In fact, the constitution of the KRI, and that of the Federal Government, that is, the Republic of Iraq, embraces this multiculturalism and celebrates this diversity.

Should you wish to discuss this matter, please do not hesitate to write to us.

Regards,

Ramy Jajo
President,
ACSYA Inc.

c.c. His Excellency, Mr. Mohammad Jaafar Al-Sadr
Iraqi Ambassador to the United Kingdom
[via. e-mail: lonemb@mofa.gov.iq]

ANNEXURE "A"



Qaraqosh, North-West of Iraqi Kurdistan

A hand-embroidered dress covered by a hand-embroidered shawl, or Charouka, decorated with Christian symbols. The headress is rainbow coloured and decorated with coins.

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Tiyari, North-West of Iraqi Kurdistan

A black and silver dress with typical silver belt and necklace, worn with a black turban with silver headress attached.

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Baashiqa, North-West of Iraqi Kurdistan

A colourful hand-embroidered dress with a long overcoat, overlaid by a hand-embroidered shawl, or Charouka, decorated with Christian symbols.

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