



بطريرك بابل للكلدان
فطريركا دكليا
Patriarcha Babylonensis Chaldaeorum

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العدد:

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This letter was read by his Beatitude Sako during the international conference organized by the center of the King Abdullah bin Abdulaziz for interreligious dialogue in Vienna /Austria 18/19 Nov.2014 attended by 200 personalities Muslims and Christian on the topic “*United against violence in the name of religion, supporting religious and cultural diversity in Iraq and Syria*”.

To the Muslim Brothers and Sisters in All Over the World.

Greetings to you as brothers of the same human family and in the name of all values we share.

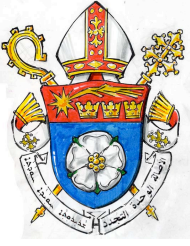
Based on our common goals and with confidence in the capability of nations to preserve life and to direct the public opinion to respect their aspirations, I appeal to you, who represent the moderate majority of Muslims wherever you are, lest our current tragedy be a lost cause or an unacknowledged responsibility.

I address you with a spirit of sincerity, carrying in my hand a map of our wounded Middle East and of Iraq, that part of the globe, which has been for many centuries the central focus of the world; a zone which is facing an unprecedented historic crisis. With this letter I would like to express my pain and the pain of your Christian brothers and sisters in the face of our calamity, appealing to your conscience and goodwill to do something for the liberation of their towns, recovery of their property and restitution of their rights. Accordingly, I request a drastic change, because it is your responsibility to find an answer, which has to come from you and not from an outside force.

Sharing the same human sensitivity, I believe, you were equally shocked as we were by the barbaric acts that swept through the towns of Mosul and the Nineveh Plain against the Christians, Yazidis and other minorities who were uprooted empty-handed from their homes and villages overnight, heading towards “an unknown future” struck by fear and terror.

Amidst this gathering in the name of humanity, it is worth mentioning that there is a superior law (Sharia) of love and mercy engraved in the human heart. This superior law demands compassion and charity for every helpless father with a hungry infant in his arms and mercy for every human fellow in pain. Therefore, the crimes committed by ISIS (The Islamic State of Iraq and Syria) against such helpless civilians demonstrate an absurd theory or law that is by no means based on any human law except on a barbaric one.

What was equally shocking is the violation by ISIS of the sanctity of churches and monasteries by burning of their contents including old manuscripts, and selling or converting them into mosques. Some of these were built in the first centuries. It is also quite shameful to see the captivity of women becoming a legal legislation, as they are sold in the slave markets at a ‘bargain



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price' as if they were "junk"! **That is evil in the worst respect.** This reminds me of the monster, which was mentioned in the book of Revelation (chapter 13).

In fact, these barbarous acts, which will always be a blot in the human history, are promoted by organizations and ideologies parallel to the Nazis and other totalitarian political philosophies. Human history, however, will never have mercy on those who planned and implemented such vicious acts, which threaten the existence of Christians, the natives of these lands. Unlike the Nazis and other deadly ideologies of the twentieth century, ISIS claims to be doing all this in the name of Islam.

I feel more shocked because of those who disbelieved and belittled the serious danger that ISIS represents, especially when our helpless people, Christians, Yazidis, and other minorities were targeted in the name of the Islamic religion. It is quite shocking to see the insufficiency of the official Islamic community that only denounced these acts by shy and helpless statements, showing the absence of a real role in raising the awareness of the public about the impending danger of ISIS in the name of religion.

How can one stand inactive in the face of these countless crimes, repression, and displacement of innocent people that are considered legal and legitimate by ISIS and hard-liners! Isn't this a humiliation for all mankind in general and women in particular? Have we started to live in an era of turning our backs on values? There is no apparent respect for human beings, nor does it appear that is life worth anything.

We, as minorities without protection or care, are targeted, our children are threatened and kidnapped, our homes were robbed or looted publicly as if it is legitimate (Halal). We have reached the peak of iniquity: our families were living in their own homes with dignity and pride, today they live homeless in several towns and villages, in tents or in caravans or in a room which is provided rent-free from the church. Disease is rampant, and the displaced are living in terrible anxiety.

Compassionately, we appeal to you to act responsibly on your part when little interest, if any, is expressed by the State to liberate Mosul and the towns of the Nineveh Plain, so that thousands of displaced people can return to their homes. It is vital to point out the important role which needs to be taken to expose the regional and international forces that try to guarantee the survival of ISIS cells by interfering in a well calculated way.

We are concerned not only about the lack of hope for an immediate return to our towns which motivates people to migrate to any country that provides safety for them, but also that we might only be a piece of memory in history, beseeching UNESCO to preserve it.

In the midst of this anxiety, we request you to think responsibly of our tragedy and do something to improve the security and provide stability for the citizens. The development of our country would be assured only by ensuring a continuous normal life.

The real foundation of your common responsibility towards us is based on your awareness of the growing religious extremism and obscurantist takfirist that poses a threat to us and is no less dangerous for you.

Do not forget that Christians are natives in this land, and they have contributed a lot to Arab culture. Arabs must present a unified position with one vote against extremism. This united Arab coalition must ensure a peaceful solution. Extremism is everywhere and what is required is the



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adoption of moderation and a thinking process excommunicating obscurantism, in addition to the rejection of terrorism in the name of religion and resisting it in all its forms.

Religious scholars should rebuff ISIS arguments, refute their arguments with jurisprudence and denounce their heinous practices, in addition to proclaiming their thoughts as the scourge of humanity. Religious and educational institutions should start inculcating an open and moderate culture that respects diversity and provides an objective image about the different peoples, which is characterized by respect and belief in the equality of all to live in freedom and dignity.

Silence doesn't befit you because ISIS and their followers will direct more distortionary strikes on Islam. It's dangerous to give them that chance because people will think that Islam is a threat to world peace. We have great confidence that you will make a move before it's too late to prevent this tsunami from again hitting a new area.

We look forward to the day when Muslims announce officially to themselves and to those who are persecuted that attacking innocent peoples Muslims or Christians, believers or not is against religion and against God the Almighty who is the only one who will judge every human beings and recompense them with justice.

+ Louis Raphael ISako

Chaldean Patriarch of Babylon & president of catholic bishops Assembly in Iraq

