



بطريرك بابل للكلدان
ܩܘܕܝܫܘܬܢ ܕܩܕܝܫܘܬܢ
Patriarcha Babylonensis Chaldaeorum

Date 4.9.2014

No: 138

**“AFTER A MONTH OF THEIR DISPLACEMENT,
THE CHRISTIANS IN IRAQ ARE GOING EXTINCT!”**

A whole month passed after the plight of Iraqi Christians and Yezidis and other minorities, as if it was meant to be. The curtains have been drawn on the painful events, and 120.000 Christians are uprooted from their historical homeland because the Political Islam does not want them there, and the world is silent, standing still, either because it approves or because it is incapable of acting. This encourages ISIS (which has nothing to do with the ancient Egyptian goddess of nature and fertility ISIS) to move forward with its ferocious war against culture and diversity and threatening the intellectual and social security. The suffering of the displaced Christians and other minorities is mounting: their needs are escalating and their fears of an unknown future of their shocked children, seized towns, and looted houses keep them sleepless! These people were living in their hometowns in prosperity, pride and dignity; in the blink of an eye, they were ousted from their homes, terrified and fleeing on foot in search of a shelter. It is a scene that takes us back to the dark centuries of the past although it has become a horrific reality of our present civilization!

What these peaceful Christians and loyal citizens experienced is a real genocide, a sad ending, and a proof of the privation of the religious, human, moral, and national values. Therefore, it is a shameful stain in history. Everybody should know is a threat for all!

Few days ago we saw the 13 year old girl on Ishtar satellite channel, screaming: *“I want to go back to my own town, Qaraqosh. I am tired of this life here; I would rather die for it rather than living here in humiliation”*. It’s a loud call to the conscience of the world!

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The inability of the Iraqi State: What hurts us most is the inability of the machinery of the government to impose law and order in front of the on-going and significant deterioration of security, which fosters a culture of violence that provides the extremist groups a favorable locale to expand! ***In Baghdad***, Christians and others are kidnapped in armored and shaded cars in broad daylight, and are threatened to leave their houses, and harassed in some schools and in some public offices where they hear spiteful words. Could these current barbarous behaviors be unleashed without any control or without a mechanism of re-education?

The people are suffering and the politicians are fighting for positions instead of being united to identify the causes that lead to extremism, violence and injustice, and to seek radical solutions before it is too late! Hopefully the new Prime Minister and the new Government would recognize this as their historical, national and moral responsibility!

Emigration: after being robbed of everything they had, including their official documents, and in the absence of an immediate solution along with the mistrust in the present authorities, the displaced Christians are faced with a pointless waiting for an unknown future. Therefore, many of them are in pursuit of a safe country in the West because in their country, the country of Manna and Quail, only disasters prevail. ***Emigration should be not a solution!***

In order to preserve themselves from extinction, **and to keep being the leaven**, the Christians of Iraq must face the situation as it is, especially because they carry the message of hope by which they can keep aflame the spark of life. Active and lively Christian groups must move to construct the future, because the challenges of life are faced with courage rather than cowardice. They have to take decisive steps to put pressure on the decision-makers at home and abroad to ensure a life, free and safe, for them in their own Iraq. And here are some practical suggestions that, hopefully, our people wherever they are, will work on making them real:

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- To form competent Christian organizations, both political and independent, with qualified staff who undertake permanent sessions of analyzing and studying situations and proposing solutions and apt plans to face the consequences arising both from present crisis and even from unforeseen!
- To create a Crisis Management Team (CMT) to prepare an accurate statistical record of the displaced families in order to claim compensation from the government for the damages and loss of properties, and to help specific cases with solutions and recommendations.
- To organize an Education Committee to keep track of the academic status and the figures of the displaced students and to ask the government of Kurdistan to host them in its schools and universities lest they lose their scholastic future taking into consideration that their number is considerably low.
- To request the UN and other sponsor countries to help constructing decent and suitable housing complexes for those who do not want to be back to their villages, instead of current inappropriate tents.
- To appeal the UN Security Council to form a United Nations peacekeeping force in collaboration with the Iraqi Security Forces and the Kurdish Peshmerga for liberating the Nineveh Plain and for providing adequate security which allows the displaced persons to return to their home villages where they lived for thousands of years.
- To establish local police force comprising the different components of the Nineveh Plain to protect the villages, as envisaged in the new law presented to the new government, which reassures social interaction among Christians and their fellow-citizens.
- To demand the UN Human Rights Council to investigate the human rights violations in Iraq by establishing a commission of inquiry into the atrocities and crimes committed by the so-called “Islamic state” and to bring to justice those responsible behind these “crimes against humanity”.

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- We should not give up in raising our voice against the extremists and work to create a new mentality of living together Shiites, Sunnites, Arabs, Kurds, Turkmens, Christians and yezidis in peace and harmony, therefore we also have to take offensive action at the ideological level with Islamic world to stop the veneer of religious legitimacy and financing and sending militants. We urge the Central Iraqi Government and the Regional Government of Kurdistan to spread the culture of openness, diversity, plurality and equal in the face of a culture of extremism, elimination, marginalization and social backwardness along with a weak individual and collective consciousness of its deficiency. This can be achieved primarily by changing the school and university curriculum. Only education can commence this transformation and build a society where equality amongst citizens succeeds. To guarantee a better coexistence it is imperative to create a civil society which respects every religion and does not politicize religions for its own benefits.

+ Louis Raphael Sako

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