

✠ K. MARDINKHA IV

CATHOLICOS PATRIARCH OF THE HOLY APOSTOLIC
CATHOLIC ASSYRIAN CHURCH OF THE EAST

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May 9, 2007

The President of the United States of America
The Honorable Mr. George W. Bush
The White House
1600 Pennsylvania Avenue
Washington, DC

The Honorable Mr. George W. Bush,

In the name of God, may I begin with my sincere greetings to you and to the other members of your government.

As the Patriarch of the Assyrian Church of the East, I feel that it is my obligation to inform you of the currently bleak situation of the Christians of Iraq.

I acknowledge that this is a difficult phase for all Iraqi people and I pray that this struggle will ultimately result in a fair and successful democratic system. However, in this process, Iraq will suffer a significant loss if added protection is not given to the tiny Christian minority of Iraq.

Iraqi Christians are not members of any insurgency groups; they are not violent; they live in peace and brotherhood with others; they are loyal and honest. Their desire is to co-exist peacefully with their Muslim brothers, be it Sunnis or Shiites.

Throughout the ages, Christians have defended the soil and integrity of the country and they have played a key role in building the civilization of Iraq.

Today, a small Christian minority is subjected to the most terrifying, intimidating and threatening circumstances; our Church received alarming daily reports of such atrocities brought upon Christians by some Islamic extremist groups. Such reports are countless, but for the purpose of this plea I provide you with a general overview, presuming with confidence that you will have been briefed with details of such atrocities.

Christians families, in all regions that they reside, including Dora, Baghdad and Mosul are being forced to leave Iraq or convert to Islam or pay the *jizya* (a protection tax imposed on non Muslims), otherwise they face death or deportation from their homes.

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✠ ماردنخا الرابع
بطيرك كنيسة المشرق الآشورية في العالم

Furthermore, pamphlets are distributed in all such regions; threaten the killing of Christians if they do not abandon their homes and towns, at times, within 24 hours. Some are abducted and murdered without reason; properties are confiscated and families are thrown into displacement.

Additionally, the Christian minority are victim to religious intimidation and atrocities. Churches are being bombed and destroyed; priests have been found decapitated. Christians are, by the issuing of a *Fatwa*, forbidden to wear crosses; crosses of churches are being destroyed; Christian women are being persecuted, at times in the form of rape and beheading, for not wearing the *hijab*.

For Iraq and its Christian minority, this is a humanitarian crisis. Christians have little or no protection of such abuses by the Islamic extremist factions; the inevitable result of which is the mass exodus of our community from Iraq. Never before in the history of Iraq has such a refugee crisis arisen against the Christian minority of Iraq. If this critical situation is not effectively addressed, then the unfortunate consequence will be the elimination of Christianity from Iraq and the destruction of a cradle of civilization, in recent years famous for its mosaic of cultural, civil and religious variety and co-existence.

I trust that you will consider the seriousness of my pleas; and I pray that you will assume a more active and responsible role in implementing mechanisms and programs which will provided added and essential protection and security for Christians, such that all Iraqis, can live together in harmony and peace; and so that Christians are not driven into force migration from their homes and country, thereby creating a phenomenal refugee problem for your government and the international community.

May God enhance your leadership with wisdom and good judgment.

Yours Faithfully,

+ K. Mardinkha

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