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# ISDP NEWS RELEASE

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## FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

### **\$10 Million for Nineveh Plain IDPs Passes – Ensuring Full Benefit to IDPs is Next**

**Washington: December 21, 2007** – In June this year ISDP announced the passage of \$10 million in funding for internally displaced persons (IDPs) in the Nineveh Plain, proposed by Congressman Mark Kirk (R-Ill.). It rallied numerous concerned representatives, and with its ease of passage in the Senate, the focus is on maximizing outcomes for IDPs.

The \$10 million passed the Senate easily given the extent of the crisis facing the Assyrian/Chaldean/Syriac Christians, and other religious minorities in the Nineveh Plain. “ISDP is proud that its policy work and research could be the driving force behind this entire effort and that others in the community were able to rally to it and support our ground-breaking work”, said ISDP’s Project Director Michael Youash.

The \$10 million amendment is a major breakthrough as it focuses on a specific geographic area – the Nineveh Plain. This is unprecedented and reflects close to 3 years of constant work by ISDP to raise awareness on the vital role of the Nineveh Plain in ensuring a future for Assyrian/Chaldean/Syriacs, Shabaks, Yezidis and others.

This message is growing, as demonstrated by Rep. Kirk’s own statement that, “We must build a safe and secure home for Christians in Iraq. This \$10 million is the first step toward building that home in the Nineveh Plain.”

Additionally, it rallied numerous community organizations and countless individuals to the push, making this a genuinely grass roots effort. From ISDP’s offices in Washington, events unfolded that made an entire community heard with historical results.

“We are overjoyed that so many people have been able to play a part in this process and that other organizations have been able to take forward their own work as a result of ISDP’s efforts in Washington,” added Youash.

ISDP has been working for months with aid and relief partners in Iraq on the types of projects needed for minorities, including IDPs, and coordinating its unique expertise with governmental and non-governmental stakeholders. This always has been and will remain a primary focus for ISDP. Reconstruction and development is one of the central policy pillars on which ISDP is working; with security and governance matters also being of central importance.

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The Iraq Sustainable Democracy Project's (ISDP) research and policy analysis maintains that ChaldoAssyrians and Iraq's other, *real* minorities (e.g. Turkmens, Shabaks, Yezidis, Mandaeans and others) are the best variable for leveraging the development of a genuine and sustainable democracy over the long term.

For the United States, Iraq's *real* minorities are also the truest '*moderates*' as defined by the National Military Strategic Plan for the War on Terror. As such, they are a key element in the fight against extremism in Iraq and the Middle East as a whole.

ISDP works to ensure that these minorities are factored into policy development accordingly through research and policy analysis for all relevant stakeholders.