



The Indigenous Iraqi Assyrian Community Since the Fall of Saddam Hussein

HUMAN RIGHTS REPORTS, POLITICAL
RESOLUTIONS & OTHER DOCUMENTATION

Ninos Warda
Assyria Council of Europe (ACE)

December 2007

CONTENTS PAGE

INTRODUCTION	i
1. HUMAN RIGHTS REPORTS	1
2. POLITICAL RESOLUTIONS	5
2.1 EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT	5
2.2 COUNCIL OF THE EU	24
2.3 EUROPEAN COMMISSION	29
2.4 OTHER	30
3. OTHER DOCUMENTATION	31
4. APPENDIX	32

INTRODUCTION

Since the fall of Saddam Hussein's regime in the spring of 2003 the situation of the Iraqi people in general and the Assyrian community in particular in Iraq has caused particular concern on an international scale. It is generally accepted that although the situation of the Iraqi people had been regrettably dire following the fall of Saddam's regime, the bombing of the al-Askari Mosque in Samarra in February 2003 marked a turning point in that 'this incident led to targeted killings of thousands of Iraqis from both communities (i.e. Sunni and Shi'a) as well as other groups on the basis of their religious identity resulting in massive displacement of populations.'¹ This displacement crisis, according to Amnesty International, is now the fastest growing displacement crisis in the world with the number of displaced people now standing at 4.2 million.²

The Assyrians, the indigenous inhabitants of Iraq and a predominantly Christian ethnic minority, have not been immune to such sectarian violence and have been particularly targeted in recent years as a result of their distinct ethnic and religious identity. The church bombings in 2004 are a case in point, but simply reflect just the tip of the iceberg.

Unfortunately, there still remains a large lacuna in the general public's awareness and knowledge of the plight of Iraq's Assyrian community and this is reflected by the paucity of media coverage on this issue in the western world together with a lack of initiative to resolve this issue within national and international political institutions. Although the recent resolutions emanating from the European Parliament and the Parliament of the United Kingdom, for which see chapter 2, are welcomed, it is clear that more must be done.

With this in mind, it has been felt necessary to compile a dossier containing various documents and information outlining the plight of Assyrians in Iraq with the hope that such a dossier can act as a reference tool for people to refer to when wanting to find out accurate information about this situation from reputable and reliable sources.

Before setting out to describe the general scheme of the dossier, it is helpful to resolve an important issue which if left unresolved can sometimes lead to confusion. As a result of a rich and ancient heritage, the Assyrians have come to be identified under many names throughout the ages and this is reflected in the human rights reports and political resolutions listed in this dossier by virtue of the fact that some documents use various names such as Chaldeans, ChaldoAssyrians, or Syriacs when referring to Assyrians. It should be emphasised from the outset that all these names refer to essentially the same indivisible people and are simply the accumulation of a heritage spanning thousands of years. As such, these different names should not be allowed to act as an impediment to the understanding and resolution of the situation of the Assyrians. Furthermore, it will be noticed also that many of the reports refer to Assyrians in Iraq simply as 'Iraqi Christian'. This is unfortunate as the term Iraqi Christian does not take into account the ethnic identity of the Assyrians and only emphasises their religious affiliation, despite the fact that 95% of Christians in Iraq are actually of Assyrian ethnicity. In addition, some people also refer to Assyrians as Arab or Kurdish Christians, terms which are

¹ UNHCR *Return Advisory and Position on International Protection Needs of Iraqis outside Iraq*, December 2006. Available at <http://www.unhcr.org/cgi-bin/telex/vtx/home/opendoc.pdf?tbl=SUBSITES&id=45a252d92>

² Amnesty International, *Millions in Flight: The Iraqi Refugee Crisis*, September 2007. Available at <http://web.amnesty.org/library/Index/ENGMDE140412007?open&of=ENG-IRQ>

erroneous given the fact that Assyrians possess a different language, ethnicity, culture and heritage to that of the neighbouring Arab or Kurdish populations.

The first section of the dossier contains a general list of human rights reports from various reputable institutions and individuals worldwide such as Amnesty International, the United Nations Assistance Mission for Iraq (UNAMI), the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), etc. Some of the reports deal with human rights abuses within Iraq whilst others concentrate on the refugee and displacement problem of Iraqis both within Iraq itself and the neighbouring countries such as Syria and Jordan. Many of the reports deal with the situation in Iraq generally, within which many references to the plight of the Assyrians can be found, whilst some reports are specific to the Assyrians. The names of the relevant reports and their author(s) are written, together with links leading directly to the reports. The links are all correct at the time of compiling this dossier (December 2007).

The second section then deals with important political resolutions, motions or strategies that have been adopted by various supranational and national political institutions regarding the current situation in Iraq. Foremost amongst these has been the European Parliament which has adopted a number of important resolutions expressing concern for the situation of the Assyrian community in Iraq and the state of Iraqi refugees. The texts adopted by the European Parliament have been referenced in full to ease the reader's access to them. Although such statements of concern and intent are a step in the right direction, it is clear that more tangible work must be done by all relevant institutions so that rhetoric can be turned into visible and effective action.

Although not human rights reports in the strict sense of the term, there are certain documents which shed more light on the current situation in Iraq and of Assyrians in particular and some of which also offer recommendations and proposals to resolve the deteriorating situation. Due to their importance in this regard, the third section is devoted to providing a brief list, identical in format as section one, of some of these documents.

Finally, the dossier ends with an appendix containing extracts from the Iraqi constitution which are of particular concern to the Iraqi Assyrian community. As stated in the appendix, the list of extracts does not intend to be exhaustive and for this reason a link to the UNAMI website is provided so that the full document can be read if one wishes.

It is hoped that, although a small contribution, this dossier can help in raising awareness of the plight of Iraqi Assyrians so that peaceful resolutions can be adopted as soon as possible and the current distressing situation can be alleviated with as little delay as possible.

Ninos Warda
Member of Staff
Assyria Council of Europe

1. HUMAN RIGHTS REPORTS

AMNESTY INTERNATIONAL

- Amnesty International Report 2007: Iraq
 - o <http://thereport.amnesty.org/eng/Regions/Middle-East-and-North-Africa/Iraq>
- Millions in Flight: The Iraqi Refugee Crisis
 - o <http://web.amnesty.org/library/Index/ENGMDE140412007?open&of=ENG-IRQ>
- The Situation of Iraqi Refugees in Syria
 - o <http://web.amnesty.org/library/Index/ENGMDE140362007?open&of=ENG-IRQ>

ASSYRIAN ACADEMIC SOCIETY

- ChaldoAssyrians of Iraq & the Iraqi Interim Constitution, Position Paper (I)
 - o <http://www.aina.org/reports/catal.pdf>
- ChaldoAssyrian Churches in Iraq, Position Paper (II)
 - o <http://www.aina.org/reports/cacir.pdf>

ASSYRIAN INTERNATIONAL NEWS AGENCY

- Incipient Genocide: The Ethnic Cleansing of the Assyrians of Iraq
 - o <http://www.aina.org/reports/ig.pdf>

EUROPEAN COUNCIL ON REFUGEES AND EXILES

- Guidelines on the Treatment of Iraqi Asylum Seekers and Refugees in Europe
 - o <http://www.ecre.org/files/ECRE%20Iraq%20Guidelines%20April%202007.pdf>

HUMAN RIGHTS WITHOUT FRONTIERS

- The ChaldoAssyrian Community in Today's Iraq: Opportunities and Challenges
 - o http://www.hrwf.net/reports/ext/Iraq_MissionReport_Nov03.pdf
- Freedom of Religion and Belief in Iraq 2007
 - o <http://www.hrwf.net/religiousfreedom/news/2007PDF/Iraq%202007.doc>
- Freedom of Religion and Belief in Iraq 2006

- <http://www.hrwf.net/religiousfreedom/news/2006PDF/Iraq%202006.doc>
- Freedom of Religion and Belief in Iraq 2005
 - http://www.hrwf.net/religiousfreedom/news/2005PDF/Iraq_2005.pdf
- Freedom of Religion and Belief in Iraq 2004
 - http://www.hrwf.net/religiousfreedom/news/2004PDF/Iraq_2004.pdf

HUMAN RIGHTS WATCH

- Rot Here or Die There, Bleak Choices for Iraqi Refugees in Lebanon
 - <http://www.hrw.org/reports/2007/lebanon1207/lebanon1207web.pdf>

INTERNAL DISPLACEMENT MONITORING CENTRE

- Iraq: A Displacement Crisis
 - [http://www.internal-displacement.org/8025708F004BE3B1/\(httpInfoFiles\)/129E903BAA2C8245C12572AE002EE88A/\\$file/Iraq+-March+2007.pdf](http://www.internal-displacement.org/8025708F004BE3B1/(httpInfoFiles)/129E903BAA2C8245C12572AE002EE88A/$file/Iraq+-March+2007.pdf)

IRAQ SUSTAINABLE DEMOCRACY PROJECT

- Preventing the De-Christianization of Iraq: How to Stop the Exodus of Iraq's Indigenous ChaldoAssyrian Christians
 - <http://www.iraqdemocracyproject.org/pdf/Ethnic%20Cleansing%20of%20ChaldoAssyrians-1.pdf>
- Nineveh Plains Needs Assessment Report: The Case of ChaldoAssyrians and other Minorities
 - <http://www.iraqdemocracyproject.org/pdf/Nineveh%20Plain%20Needs%20Assessment.pdf>
- Voting with their Feet: Understanding the Assyrian/Chaldean/Syriac Exodus from Iraq
 - <http://www.iraqdemocracyproject.org/pdf/IDP-policy%20brief.pdf>
- Creating a Nineveh Plain Local Police Force: Overcoming Ethno-Religious Minority Insecurity
 - <http://www.iraqdemocracyproject.org/pdf/Minority%20Policing%20-%20policy%20brief.pdf>

MINORITY RIGHTS GROUP INTERNATIONAL

- Taneja, P, Assimilation, Exodus, Eradication: Iraq's Minority Communities Since 2003
 - <http://www.minorityrights.org/?lid=2805>
- Jabar, F, The Constitution of Iraq: Religious and Ethnic Relations

- <http://www.minorityrights.org/?lid=957>

UNITED NATIONS ASSISTANCE MISSION FOR IRAQ (UNAMI)

- Human Rights Report, 1 April - 30 June 2007
 - <http://www.uniraq.org/FileLib/misc/HR%20Report%20Apr%20Jun%202007%20EN.pdf>
- Human Rights Report, 1 November - 31 December 2006
 - <http://www.uniraq.org/FileLib/misc/HR%20Report%20Nov%20Dec%202006%20EN.pdf>
- Human Rights Report, 1 September - 31 October 2006
 - <http://www.uniraq.org/documents/HR%20Report%20Sep%20Oct%202006%20EN.pdf>
- Human Rights Report, 1 July - 31 August 2006
 - <http://www.uniraq.org/documents/HR%20Report%20July%20August%202006%20EN.pdf>
- Human Rights Report, 1 May - 30 June 2006
 - <http://www.uniraq.org/documents/HR%20Report%20May%20Jun%202006%20EN.pdf>
- Human Rights Report, 1 March - 30 April 2006
 - <http://www.uniraq.org/documents/HR%20Report%20Mar%20Apr%202006%20EN.PDF>
- Human Rights Report, 1 January - 28 February 2006
 - <http://www.uniraq.org/documents/HR%20Report%20Jan%20Feb%202006%20EN.PDF>

UNITED NATIONS HIGH COMMISSIONER FOR REFUGEES (UNHCR)

- Background Information on the Situation of Non-Muslim Religious Minorities in Iraq (October 2005)
 - <http://www.unhcr.org/publ/RSDLEGAL/4371cf5b4.pdf>
- UNHCR's Eligibility Guidelines for Assessing the International Protection Needs of Iraqi Asylum-Seekers
 - <http://www.unhcr.org/cgi-bin/texis/vtx/home/openssl.pdf?tbl=SUBSITES&id=46dec4da2>
- Sperl, M, Fortress Europe and the Iraqi 'Intruders': Iraqi Asylum-Seekers and the EU, 2003-2007
 - <http://www.unhcr.org/research/RESEARCH/470c9be92.pdf>
- UNHCR Return Advisory and Position on International Protection Needs of Iraqis Outside Iraq
 - <http://www.unhcr.org/cgi-bin/texis/vtx/home/openssl.pdf?tbl=SUBSITES&id=45a252d92>

- Iraq Situation Update - 09 July 07
 - o http://www.europarl.europa.eu/meetdocs/2004_2009/documents/fd/droi20070717_iraq_006/droi20070717_iraq_006en.pdf

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF STATE

- International Religious Freedom Report 2007 - Iraq
 - o <http://www.state.gov/g/drl/rls/irf/2007/90211.htm>

U.S. COMMISSION ON RELIGIOUS FREEDOM

- Annual Report of the United States Commission on Religious Freedom
 - May 2007, pp. 31-48
 - o <http://www.uscirf.gov/countries/publications/currentreport/2007annualRpt.pdf#page=1>

OTHER

- Kino, N, By God: Six Days in Amman
 - o <http://www.aina.org/reports/bgsdia.pdf>
- Viklund, M, The Trip to Northern Iraq (English Translation)
 - o <http://www.aina.org/reports/viklunden.pdf>
- Viklund, M, The Trip to Northern Iraq (Swedish Original)
 - o <http://www.aina.org/reports/viklundse.pdf>

2. POLITICAL RESOLUTIONS

2.1 EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT

P6_TA-PROV(2007)0542

Christian Communities

European Parliament resolution of 15 November 2007 on serious events which compromise Christian communities' existence and those of other religious communities

The European Parliament,

- having regard to Article 18 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR) of 1948,
- having regard to Article 9 of the European Convention on Human Rights (ECHR) of 1950,
- having regard to Article 18 of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR) of 1966,
- having regard to the UN Declaration on the Elimination of All Forms of Intolerance and of Discrimination based on Religion and Belief of 1981,
- having regard to the reports of the UN Special Rapporteur on freedom of religion or belief and in particular her reports of 8 March 2007, 20 July 2007 and 20 August 2007,
- having regard to its annual reports on the situation of human rights in the world and its previous resolutions on religious minorities in the world,
- having regard to its resolutions of 25 October 2007 on Pakistan⁽¹⁾ and Iran⁽²⁾,
- having regard to its resolution of 28 April 2005 on the Annual Report on Human Rights in the World 2004 and the EU's policy on the matter⁽³⁾,
- having regard to its resolution of 6 July 2005 on the European Union and Iraq - A framework for engagement⁽⁴⁾,
- having regard to its resolution of 6 April 2006 on Iraq: the Assyrian community; the situation in Iraqi prisons⁽⁵⁾,
- having regard to its resolution of 10 May 2007 on reforms in the Arab world: what strategy should the European Union adopt?⁽⁶⁾,
- having regard to Rule 115(5) of its Rules of Procedure,

A. whereas in its relations with the rest of the world, the European Union affirms and promotes its values and contributes to peace, mutual respect between peoples and the protection of human rights,

B. whereas it has on several occasions expressed itself in favour of the rights of religious communities and the protection of their identity all over the world and in favour of the recognition and protection of religious minorities, without any distinction,

C. extremely concerned, in this connection, about the proliferation of episodes of intolerance and repression directed against Christian communities, particularly in the countries of Africa, Asia and the Middle East,

D. recalling its commitment to the principles of freedom of thought, conscience and religion and freedom of religious observance everywhere in the world, and to the principle that the State and its public institutions should be secular; stressing that, everywhere in the world, these authorities have a duty to guarantee these freedoms, including the freedom to change religion,

E. having regard to the importance of dialogue between religions to promote peace and understanding between peoples,

F. whereas political and religious leaders have a duty at all levels to combat extremism and promote mutual respect,

G. whereas, according to international human rights law and particularly Article 18 of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, everyone has the right to freedom of thought, conscience and religion; this right includes freedom to change his religion or belief and freedom, either alone or in community with others and in public or private, to manifest his religion or belief in worship, teaching, practice and observance,

H. whereas the UN Special Rapporteur on freedom of religion or belief highlights worrying situations where the freedom to adopt, change or renounce a religion or belief has been infringed and reports numerous cases of inter-religious discrimination and violence, killings and arbitrary detention for reasons of religion or belief,

I. whereas other groups of people such as refugees, internally displaced persons, asylum-seekers, migrants, persons deprived of their liberty, ethnic, religious and linguistic minorities and children of believers also face a growing number of violations of their right to freedom of religion or belief; recalling, in this respect, the principle of non-refoulement, according to Article 33 of the Geneva Convention relating to the Status of Refugees,

J. concerned at the recent violent events in Iraq, including the kidnapping of two Catholic priests, Fathers Pius Afas and Mazen Ishaq, on 14 October 2007 in Mosul, the assassination of two Assyrian Christian members of the organisation National Union of Bet-Nahrin, Zuhair Youssef Astavo Kermles

and Luay Solomon Numan, on 28 June 2007 in Mosul, the murder of a Chaldean priest, P. Ragheed Ganni, and of three deacons who were his assistants, on 3 June 2007 in Mosul,

K. deploring the situation of Assyrian villages in Turkish border areas such as the village of Kani Masi,

L. concerned at the recent violent events in Pakistan, including the attack on a Christian church on 10 October 2007 in Godwinh on the outskirts of Lahore, the bombing on 15 September 2007 which seriously damaged the Saint John Bosco Model School, a school run by Mill Hill missionaries in the district of Bannu and the assassination of the Protestant Bishop Arif Khan and his wife on 29 August 2007 in Islamabad,

M. deploring the murder in Gaza of Rami Khader Ayyad, owner of a Christian library, on 7 October 2007,

N. saddened by the murder of two young Copts, Wasfi Sadek Ishaq and Karam Klieb Endarawis, on 3 October 2007 in Awlad Toq Garb in Egypt,

O. horrified by the attacks on the Christian publishing house Zirve on 18 April 2007 in Malatya (Turkey) during which three Christians, Tilmann Geske, Necati Aydin and Ugur Yuksel, were murdered; recalling its resolution of 24 October 2007 on EU-Turkey relations⁽⁷⁾ and its strong condemnation of the murders of Hrant Dink and the Catholic priest Andrea Santoro,

P. deploring the kidnapping of the Catholic priest Giancarlo Bossi in the Philippines,

Q. stressing in particular the seriousness of the situation of Christian communities in Sudan, where the Khartoum authorities continue to repress its members,

R. whereas in recent years hundreds of Assyrian Christian families living in the Dora neighbourhood in the south of Baghdad have left the city as a result of intimidation, threats and violence,

S. whereas the exodus of Christians from Iraq is cause for serious concern, as is underlined by the fact that, in 2006, of a total of 38 000 Iraqis registered by the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) in Syria, about 24% were Christian and whereas more than two million people have been internally displaced within Iraq, the vast majority of them belonging to Christian minorities, and are mainly moving to the Nineveh plains,

T. having regard to the seriousness of the situation regarding religious freedom in the People's Republic of China, where the authorities continue to repress any religious expression, particularly by the Catholic Church, many of whose members and bishops have been imprisoned for a number of years and some of whom have died in prison,

U. whereas in Vietnam too, the activities of the Catholic Church and of other religious communities have been severely repressed, as is demonstrated by the serious situation facing the communities of Vietnamese 'montagnards',

V. whereas in some cases the situation facing Christian communities is such as to endanger their future existence, and if they were to disappear, this would entail the loss of a significant part of the religious heritage of these countries,

1. Strongly condemns all acts of violence against Christian communities, wherever they happen, and urges the governments concerned to bring to justice the perpetrators of these crimes;

2. Strongly condemns all kinds of discrimination and intolerance based on religion and belief and acts of violence against all religious communities; urges the countries concerned to ensure that their constitutional and legislative systems provide adequate and effective guarantees of freedom of religion or belief as well as effective legal remedies for victims where the right to freedom of religion or belief is violated;

3. Points out that the right to freedom of thought, conscience and religion is a fundamental human right which is guaranteed by various international legal instruments; recalls, at the same time, its commitment to the fundamental concept of the interdependency of human rights;

4. Strongly supports any initiative to promote dialogue and mutual respect between religions; calls on all religious authorities to promote tolerance and to take initiatives against hatred and violent and extremist radicalisation;

5. Urges the governments of the countries concerned to improve the security situation of the Christian communities; stresses therefore that the public authorities have a duty to protect all religious communities, including Christian communities, from discrimination and repression;

6. Calls on the Commission and the Council to raise the subject of the situation of the Christian communities in the framework of the political dialogue with the countries where they are threatened, through the promotion of a strategic commitment from the countries concerned on the basis of the international treaties on human rights;

7. Calls on the Commission, the Council and the Member States to make further contributions to the strengthening of human rights and the rule of law using all the EU's foreign policy instruments;

8. Calls on the Commission and the Council to devote particular attention to the situation of religious communities, including Christian communities, in those countries where they are threatened, when drafting and implementing development cooperation and aid programmes with those same countries;

9. Calls on the European Union and the Member States to earmark more funds for the activities of the UNHCR and for humanitarian aid managed by that organisation;

10. Recommends that its relevant committees consider the situation of Christian communities, notably in the Middle East;

11. Instructs its President to forward this resolution to the Council, the Commission, the UN Secretary-General and the UN Human Rights Council.

(1) Texts Adopted , [P6_TA\(2007\)0489](#).

(2) Texts Adopted , [P6_TA\(2007\)0488](#).

(3) OJ C 45 E, 23.2.2006, p. 107.

(4) OJ C 157 E, 6.7.2006, p. 390.

(5) OJ C 293 E, 2.12.2006, p. 322.

(6) Texts Adopted , [P6_TA\(2007\)0179](#).

(7) Texts Adopted , [P6_TA\(2007\)0472](#).

Link: <http://www.europarl.europa.eu/sides/getDoc.do?pubRef=-//EP//TEXT+TA+P6-TA-2007-0542+0+DOC+XML+V0//EN&language=EN>

The humanitarian situation of Iraqi refugees

European Parliament resolution of 12 July 2007 on the humanitarian situation of Iraqi refugees

The European Parliament,

- having regard to its previous resolutions on the rights of people in need of international protection,
 - having regard to its previous resolutions on the situation in Iraq and in particular its resolution of 15 February 2007 on the humanitarian situation of refugees from Iraq⁽¹⁾,
 - having regard to the UN Convention Relating to the Status of Refugees of 1951 (the Refugee Convention) and to the UN Protocol Relating to the Status of Refugees of 1967,
 - having regard to the urgent appeals by the UN High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) of 7 February 2007 to increase international support for those countries hosting refugees fleeing Iraq, the international conference on Iraq of 17-18 April 2007 in Geneva aimed at raising awareness of the scale of humanitarian needs in Iraq and in the region, the UNHCR call of 5 June 2007 for all borders to remain open to those in need of protection, as well as to the UNHCR Return Advisory and Position on International Protection Needs of Iraqis outside Iraq of 18 December 2006 and the UNHCR 'Supplementary Appeal - Iraq Situation Response' of 8 January 2007,
 - having regard to the Guiding Principles on Internal Displacement issued by the UN Secretary General's Special Representative on Internally Displaced Persons on 11 February 1998,
 - having regard to Council Directive 2004/83/EC of 29 April 2004 on minimum standards for the qualification and status of third-country nationals or stateless persons as refugees or as persons who otherwise need international protection and the content of the protection granted⁽²⁾ (the Qualification Directive),
 - having regard to the decisions adopted by the European Community and its Member States in the area of asylum and immigration,
 - whereas the number of applications from Iraqi asylum-seekers has doubled in the first half of 2007 in comparison to the same period the previous year,
 - having regard to Rule 115(5) of its Rules of Procedure,
- A. whereas the general humanitarian and human rights situation is deteriorating in Iraq, as reflected by the regular reports of the United

Nations Assistance Mission for Iraq (UNAMI) and other UN agencies in the country, that show that an average of 100 people are killed and 200 are wounded per day, that 50% of the population is living on less than USD 1 per day, that unemployment affects more than 80% of the population, that 70% lack access to adequate water supply and 81% to effective sanitation, that 3 million people will be food insecure if food distribution fails and that the system has already ceased to function in some areas, that 80% of doctors have left hospitals, that 75% of children are not in school and that depending on the region 30% to 70% of the schools are closed,

B. whereas in the current post-war situation criminal activities include armed robberies, kidnappings for ransom, harassment, the killing of persons involved in the political process or reconstruction activities, sabotage attacks against civilian infrastructure such as electricity or oil pipelines and full-scale attacks involving indiscriminate use of bombs and/or other explosives against civilians and as a result many Iraqis continue to flee, primarily to Jordan and Syria but also to Egypt, Lebanon, Turkey, Iran and further afield,

C. whereas more than 2 million people are now Internally Displaced Persons (IDPs); whereas since February 2006, 822,000 people have been newly displaced, with a further 2000 believed to be displaced each day; and whereas for the end of 2007, UNHCR estimates the number of IDPs as likely to reach 2,3 to 2,5 million,

D. whereas in addition to the internally displaced, there are approximately 42 000 non-Iraqi refugees within Iraq (including around 15 000 Palestinians who are at particular risk, as well as Sudanese, Turkish Kurds, Iranians and others),

E. whereas many governorates in Iraq restrict access to new IDPs, which means drastic limitations on the chances of finding a temporary safe place inside the country,

F. whereas IDPs are denied registration for food distribution, which increases the risk of a humanitarian crisis,

G. whereas an estimated 2 million Iraqis are refugees in neighbouring states without any formal protected status provided by these host states: Syria hosting 1.2 to 1.5 million, Jordan 500 000 to 750 000 Iraqis, representing a high proportion of the population, Egypt (over 80 000), Lebanon (estimated 20 000), Iran (over 50 000), the Gulf region (over 200 000) and Turkey (estimated 5 100),

H. whereas 560 000 of the refugees in the neighbouring countries are children of school age, and whereas access to public education or subsidised health care in many areas is very difficult or barred by law,

I. whereas, under customary international law, there is a legal obligation not to return refugees to persecution or serious harm, and to allow asylum seekers fleeing widespread human rights abuses and generalised violence to

enter the relevant country, at least temporarily, in order to be screened for refugee status,

J. whereas the attitude of most Member States and the US to recognising the protection needs of Iraqi refugees has been largely restrictive,

K. whereas great disparities have been determined in the way Iraqi asylum claims are being assessed in the Member States, illustrating the lack of progress made in the development of a Common European Asylum System that is based on high common standards and is able to give protection to those in need,

L. whereas neighbouring countries have considerably restricted access for refugees, forcing many to return to Iraq or remain trapped at the borders, as well as imposing restrictive stay requirements, such as reducing periods of stay and/or making the renewal of their visas so difficult that most Iraqis quickly lose their legal status,

M. whereas the government of Brazil is one of the few countries to have offered to resettle a number of Palestinian refugees who formerly lived in Iraq under the solidarity resettlement programmes,

N. whereas UNHCR is finalising a request to increase the Supplementary Budget for the Iraq situation from USD 60 m to USD 115 m,

O. whereas Jews, Mandeans and Christians (including Assyrians, Armenian, Greek orthodox and other Christian minorities) are increasingly experiencing discrimination with regard to access to the labour market or basic social services and many are afraid of persecution by insurgent groups as well as Islamist militias, which have gained de facto control over entire neighbourhoods in various cities and villages in Iraq; whereas as part of increasing tensions between Sunnis and Shiites, individuals may also be solely targeted on the basis of their membership of ethnic or religious minorities,

1. Welcomes the solidarity shown by Iraq's neighbouring countries with Iraqi refugees and invites these countries to inform the international community about the support they need to cope with the situation;

2. Recognises the improvements in terms of contribution of the regional Kurdish authorities in assisting non-Muslim communities who are internally displaced;

3. Joins with the UN High Commissioner for Refugees in calling for a sustained, comprehensive and coordinated international response to ease the plight of millions of people uprooted by the humanitarian crisis that can no longer be ignored; considers the support of the international community vital in easing the suffering of hundreds of thousands of Iraqi refugees and internally displaced persons (IDPs) or those fleeing the country, as well as increased encouragement and assistance to countries like Syria and Jordan, which together host an important number of Iraqi refugees;

4. Recognises also the efforts made by non-border countries of the region such as Egypt to assist Iraqi refugees; asks these countries to pursue their efforts in favour of the Iraqi refugees by keeping their borders open and improving conditions for them, respecting their fundamental rights and ensuring their access to basic services such as health and education with the support of the international community;
5. Deplores that neighbouring states kept their borders closed, with rare and limited exceptions, to Palestinians fleeing violence and threats against them in Iraq, condemns the call of the Iraqi Minister of Displacement and Migration to expel all Palestinians from Iraq; condemns the Iraqi government's decision to impose onerous registration requirements on Palestinians making it difficult for them to stay legally in Iraq;
6. Calls on the Iraqi Government, as well as local regional and religious authorities and the Multi-National Coalition Forces in Iraq to take immediate steps to improve security for all the refugees and IDPs in Iraq and end discriminatory practices;
7. Strongly rejects the threats of expulsion and cutting off supplies of fuel and drinking water made by some senior officials in the Iraqi Government against 4 000 members of the Iranian opposition who have been political refugees in Iraq for the past 20 years and have the legal status of " Protected persons under the Fourth Geneva Convention" and calls on the Iraqi Government to respect their rights under international law;
8. Calls on the Member States to overcome their position of non-action regarding the situation of the Iraqi refugees and to fulfil their obligations under international and Community law to give Iraqis in Member States the opportunity to lodge asylum applications and have them processed with minimum delay, respecting procedural safeguards, and grant refugee status or subsidiary or temporary protection to those who have a well-founded fear of persecution or serious harm;
9. Urges Member States not to transfer people to another State under the Dublin II Regulation⁽³⁾ if it is known that that country does not properly consider Iraqi asylum claims; points out that Member States may invoke Article 3(2) of the Dublin II Regulation for this purpose;
10. Encourages the Member States to grant Iraqis who do not qualify for a protection status but cannot be returned, a legal status (temporary or permanent depending on their circumstances) and to ensure adequate conditions and basic rights;
11. Notes with concern that 400 to 500 forced returns to Iraq were registered in 2005 and 2006 and asks the Member States to suspend temporarily all forced returns to any part of Iraq;
12. Urges the Member States and the international community, as a demonstration of international responsibility-sharing, to contribute in a significant manner to the resettlement of Iraqi refugees and stateless

persons as well as the Palestinian refugees currently in Iraq or having fled from Iraq and now stranded in the region, giving priority to the most vulnerable cases in accordance with UNHCR guidelines on resettlement of Iraqi refugees; asks the European Union and its Member States to set up a mechanism to organise this responsibility-sharing and support the Member States accordingly;

13. Supports the UNHCR recommendation to favourably consider Iraqi asylum seekers from southern and central Iraq as refugees under the Refugee Convention and, where they are not recognised as refugees, to grant them a complementary form of protection unless the individual comes within the exclusion criteria in the Refugee Convention;

14. Calls on the European Commission to urgently explore further possibilities to bring humanitarian support to the IDPs in Iraq, exercising appropriate flexibility in interpreting the relevant rules, and to assist the neighbouring countries in their efforts to host the refugee population;

15. Welcomes the first steps undertaken by the Commission's Directorate-General for Humanitarian Aid (ECHO); regrets, however, the very lengthy procedures necessitated by the particular constraints on the country;

16. Invites the Commission to prepare urgently for the creation of post traumatic centres for Iraqi refugees and IDPs, as well as to develop "occupational" projects in particular for IDPs in the agricultural sector in those parts of Iraq where this is possible;

17. Urges the Commission to inform Parliament, and in particular its Committee on Budgetary Control at its meeting of 16 July 2007, about the use of the funds allocated to Iraq, in particular via the International Reconstruction Fund Facility for Iraq (IRFFI), and reminds the Commission of the priorities of its Communication of 7 June 2006 ([COM\(2006\)0283](#)), which included (1) support to a democratic government, (2) security reinforcement on the basis of the rule of law and the promotion of a culture of respect for human rights; recalls that it considers it as an extreme emergency, and urged in its abovementioned resolution of 15 February 2007, that a significant part of the EU budget earmarked for programmes with Iraq be allocated for the refugees; this presentation should include an exact breakdown by activity type and budgeted, committed and paid activities identifying also clearly programmes dedicated to Iraqi refugees and IDPs;

18. Instructs its President to forward this resolution to the Council, the Commission, the governments and parliaments of the Member States, the UN High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), the governments and parliaments of Iraq, Syria, Jordan, Lebanon, Egypt, Turkey, Palestine and the Arab League.

(1) Texts Adopted, [P6_TA\(2007\)0056](#).

(2) OJ L 304, 30.9.2004, p. 12.

(3) Council Regulation (EC) No 343/2003 of 18 February 2003 establishing the criteria and mechanisms for determining the Member State responsible for examining an asylum application lodged in one of the Member States by a third-country national (OJ L 50, 25.2.2003, p. 1).

Link: <http://www.europarl.europa.eu/sides/getDoc.do?pubRef=-//EP//TEXT+TA+P6-TA-2007-0357+0+DOC+XML+V0//EN&language=EN>

Humanitarian situation of refugees from Iraq

European Parliament resolution on refugees from Iraq

The European Parliament,

- having regard to its previous resolutions on the right of refugees to international protection,
- having regard to its previous resolutions on the situation in Iraq,
- having regard to the UN Convention Relating to the Status of Refugees of 1951 (the Refugee Convention) and to the UN Protocol Relating to the Status of Refugees of 1967,
- having regard to the urgent appeal by the UN High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) of 7 February 2007 to increase international support for those countries hosting refugees fleeing Iraq, as well as to the UNHCR Return Advisory and Position on International Protection Needs of Iraqis outside Iraq of 18 December 2006 and to the UNHCR document of 8 January 2007 entitled 'Supplementary Appeal - Iraq Situation Response',
- having regard to the Guiding Principles of Internal Displacement issued by the UN Secretary General's Special Representative on Internally Displaced Persons on 11 February 1998,
- having regard to Directive 2004/83/EC of 29 April 2004 on minimum standards for the qualification and status of third-country nationals or stateless persons as refugees or as persons who otherwise need international protection and the content of the protection granted⁽¹⁾ (the Qualification Directive),
- having regard to Rule 115(5) of its Rules of Procedure,

A. whereas violence and criminal activities in Iraq include armed robberies, kidnappings for ransom, harassment, the killing of persons involved in the political process or reconstruction activities, ethnic cleansing, sabotage attacks against civilian infrastructure such as electricity or oil pipelines and full-scale attacks involving indiscriminate bombs and/or other explosives against civilians, and whereas, as a result, hundreds of thousands of people are being forcibly displaced within the country and abroad, primarily to Jordan and Syria but also to Egypt, Lebanon, Turkey, Iran and further afield, in an upheaval unprecedented in the Middle East,

B. whereas many groups continue to suffer persecution in Iraq, particularly professionals, women, Iraqis employed by foreign contractors, the UN or other international organisations including non-governmental organisations, and ethnic and religious minorities, such as Christians, Jews and Mandeans; whereas internally displaced persons (IDPs) are frequently victims of human

rights violations originating from ethno-religious differences, or of a political and criminal order; whereas the security of third-country nationals, stateless persons and particularly the approximately 34 000 Palestinian refugees and thousands of refugees from Turkey, Iran and Syria in Iraq has drastically deteriorated,

C. whereas the United Nations estimates that 1,8 million Iraqis are displaced within Iraq and up to 2 million Iraqis have fled the country,

D. whereas 50 000 people try to leave Iraq every month and whereas the neighbouring countries have restricted access for refugees to seek asylum, forcing many to return to Iraq or remain trapped at the borders,

E. whereas the refugees receive sparse humanitarian assistance from UNHCR and the International Committee of the Red Cross, but conditions for refugees and other displaced Iraqis are increasingly appalling, with limited supplies of water, food, fuel and medicines, and whereas humanitarian organisations are appealing for adequate funding to respond to the increased needs inside Iraq and in its neighbouring countries,

F. whereas several countries hosting Iraqi refugees are restricting entry, as well as imposing restrictive stay requirements, such as reducing the temporary protection regime (TPR) and/or making the renewal of their visas so difficult that most Iraqis quickly lose their legal status,

G. whereas the attitude of most Member States to accepting Iraqi refugees has been equally restrictive, with the exception of Sweden,

H. whereas, under customary international law, there is a legal obligation not to return refugees to persecution or serious harm, and to allow asylum seekers fleeing widespread human rights abuses and generalised violence to enter the relevant country, at least temporarily, in order to be screened for refugee status,

I. whereas Egypt, although not a border country, has been hosting a considerable number of refugees, and whereas Syria, which hosts a high proportion of the Iraqi refugees, no longer recognises the TPR, which was implemented until now without restrictions,

1. Urges Iraq's bordering countries to abide by their legal duty immediately to admit refugees, particularly those stranded at their borders and belonging to specially targeted minorities such as stateless Palestinians or religious and ethnic minorities;

2. Welcomes the recent UNHCR appeal to mobilise additional international support in order to fund its work for uprooted Iraqis within their country and in neighbouring States and for foreign refugees in Iraq; calls on the EU and the Member States and other international donors to respond to the UNHCR appeal in support of the programmes for Iraqi refugees and IDPs in Iraq, Syria, Lebanon, Turkey and Iran, as well as Egypt; considers it as an extreme

- emergency and urges that a significant part of the EU budget earmarked for programmes with Iraq be allocated for this purpose;
3. Considers that the support of the international community is vital in easing the suffering of hundreds of thousands of Iraqi refugees and IDPs or those fleeing the country, and therefore asks the Commission and the Member States to support the UNHCR's protection efforts focused on minimum protection from detention and refoulement and non-penalisation for illegal entry; as well as access to education, adequate housing, basic health care facilities and other basic services for those inside and outside Iraq;
 4. Calls on the many donor countries which have been reluctant to face up to a regional Iraqi refugee crisis to take into consideration the fact that the Iraqi authorities and the governments affected in the neighbourhood appear unable to fully cope with the crisis and to reconsider the necessity of providing financial assistance to help those host countries in order to share the burden of this refugee problem by offering third-country resettlement opportunities to those refugees;
 5. Welcomes the holding of an international conference on addressing the humanitarian needs of refugees and IDPs inside Iraq and in neighbouring countries in Geneva on 17 April 2007; urges the Council, the Commission, the authorities in the region and the international community to fully participate in that conference and provide appropriate financial support;
 6. Asks the Member States and the international community, as a demonstration of international burden-sharing, to contribute to the resettlement of Iraqi refugees and stateless persons, including the Palestinian refugees from Iraq stranded in the region;
 7. Calls on Member States, while recognising the efforts deployed by the Swedish Government swiftly and fairly to determine the claims of Iraqi asylum-seekers, in accordance with the above-mentioned UNHCR Return Advisory and Position of 18 December 2006, and to fulfil their obligations under international and Community law to grant refugee status or subsidiary protection to those who are at risk of persecution or serious harm;
 8. Recognises also the efforts made by non-border countries of the region such as Egypt to assist Iraqi refugees; asks this country to pursue its efforts in favour of the Iraqi refugees by keeping its border open and improving conditions for them; asks countries hosting Iraqis to respect their fundamental rights and ensure their access to basic services such as health and education;
 9. Recognises the contribution of the regional Kurdish government in assisting Christian communities that are internally displaced;
 10. Calls on the Iraqi Government, local regional and religious authorities and the Multi-National Coalition Forces in Iraq to take immediate steps to

improve security for all the refugees and IDPs in Iraq and end discriminatory practices;

11. Instructs its President to forward this resolution to the Council, the Commission, the UN High Commissioner for Refugees, the Secretary-General of the Arab League, the Director-General of the Organization of the Islamic Conference, the governments and parliaments of Iraq, Iran, Syria, Jordan, Lebanon, Egypt, Turkey and the member states of the Gulf Cooperation Council, and the Palestinian National Authority.

(1) OJ L 304, 30.9.2004, p. 12.

Link: <http://www.europarl.europa.eu/sides/getDoc.do?pubRef=-//EP//TEXT+TA+P6-TA-2007-0056+0+DOC+XML+V0//EN&language=EN>

Iraq: Assyrian community, situation in Iraqi prisons

European Parliament resolution on Iraq: the Assyrian community; the situation in Iraqi prisons

The European Parliament,

- having regard to its resolution of 24 February 2005 on the EU's priorities and recommendations for the 61st session of the UN Commission on Human Rights in Geneva (14 March to 22 April 2005)([1](#)),
- having regard to its resolution of 28 April 2005 on the Annual Report on Human Rights in the World 2004 and the EU's policy on the matter([2](#)),
- having regard to its resolution of 6 July 2005 on the European Union and Iraq - A framework for engagement([3](#)),
- having regard to the decision of the General Affairs and External Relations Council of 21 February 2005 to launch an Integrated Rule of Law Mission for Iraq (EUJUST LEX),
- having regard to the conclusions on Iraq of the External Relations Council of 7 November 2005,
- having regard to the conclusions on Iraq of the External Relations Council of 27 February 2006,
- having regard to the Convention against Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment,
- having regard to Article 35 of the Iraqi Constitution of 2005, Article 333 of its Penal Code and Article 127 of its Code of Criminal Procedure, prohibiting all forms of torture,
- having regard to Rule 115(5) of its Rules of Procedure,

The Assyrians (Chaldeans, Syriacs and other Christian minorities)

A. whereas on 29 January 2006 four churches and the offices of the Vatican's representative in Baghdad, as well as two churches in Kirkuk, were attacked, killing three people (including a fourteen-year-old child) and injuring several others,

B. whereas the Assyrians (Chaldeans, Syriacs and other Christian minorities) have increasingly become the victims of targeted violence such as destruction of property, kidnapping, attacks on churches, harassment, extortion, and torture of persons perceived as not respecting Islam,

C. recognising that there has also been a rise in attacks on Christian students in Iraqi universities, especially in Mosul, and that Christian citizens of Mosul are being told to move out of the area,

D. noting the dire situation of Christians who have fled from Iraq and are refugees in neighbouring countries, mainly Syria and Jordan, where, according to a report by the UN Refugee Agency (UNHCR), they receive no international aid,

E. whereas the Assyrians (Chaldeans, Syriacs and other Christian minorities) constitute an ancient and indigenous people who are very vulnerable as a result of persecution and forced emigration, and whereas there is a danger of their culture becoming extinct,

The situation in prisons in Iraq

F. whereas, according to the Human Rights Office of the UN Assistance Mission for Iraq (UNAMI), the conditions and the legality of detention in Iraq remain a matter of particular concern,

G. whereas, according to the Iraqi Ministry of Human Rights, as of 28 February 2006 there were a total of 29 565 detainees: 14 229 in the custody of the Multinational Force-Iraq (MNF-I), 8 391 in the custody of the Ministry of Justice, 488 juveniles in the custody of the Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs, 5 997 held by the Ministry of the Interior and 490 by the Ministry of Defence,

H. whereas inspections are carried out by representatives of Iraqi ministries in places of detention under the control of the Ministries of Interior and Defence or run by the Special Forces throughout the country,

I. whereas EUJUST LEX is providing the necessary training for over 700 Iraqi judicial, police and prison personnel,

J. mindful that the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights provides that no-one should be subjected to arbitrary detention and that deprivation of liberty must be based on grounds and procedures established by law, and urging all parties to apply its provisions,

The Assyrians (Chaldeans, Syriacs and other Christian minorities)

1. Strongly condemns all acts of violence against the Assyrians (Chaldeans, Syriacs and other Christian minorities) in Iraq; urges the Iraqi authorities and the MNF-I to find the perpetrators of these serious crimes and bring them to justice as soon as possible;

2. Urges the Iraqi authorities to protect the Assyrians (Chaldeans, Syriacs and other Christian minorities) from discrimination, in accordance with their international obligations;

3. Urges the Iraqi authorities to improve the security situation of the Assyrians (Chaldeans, Syriacs and other Christian minorities) and to facilitate the return and resettlement of Assyrian (Chaldean, Syriac and other Christian minority) refugees to a secure environment where their customs and way of life are respected;

4. Calls for the involvement of the Christians in Iraq in the reconstruction and administration of their land and villages in Northern Iraq and elsewhere in the region in order to preserve their cultural, religious and ethnic identity within one undivided country;

5. Strongly supports the calls by most Iraqi political and religious leaders for restraint and urges the communities in Iraq to come together in a spirit of dialogue and mutual respect; expresses its full support for the efforts of the UN in promoting intercommunal dialogue within the framework of a national dialogue; welcomes the initiative by the League of Arab States to hold a second conference on national reconciliation with the participation of all Iraqi communities;

6. Urges the Constitutional Committee of the Iraqi Council of Representatives to preserve the cultural and religious rights of all Iraqi communities in its proposals for a constitutional amendment;

7. Calls on the Commission and the Council to take all necessary measures to assist and protect the Assyrians (Chaldeans, Syriacs and other Christian minorities);

The situation in prisons in Iraq

8. Expresses its concern at the conditions of detention in prisons and other places of detention in Iraq; reaffirms its condemnation of the use of torture and other cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment of prisoners; calls on the Iraqi authorities and the MNF-I to ensure that conditions of detention conform to international standards for the treatment of prisoners;

9. Calls on the MNF-I and the Iraqi authorities to release immediately the identities of all remaining detainees and to ensure that they have access to legal counsel and prompt access to their families, and are informed of the reasons for their detention;

10. Calls on the Iraqi authorities and the MNF-I to put in place adequate safeguards to protect detainees from torture and ill-treatment by:

- a) ensuring that all allegations of such abuse are subject to prompt, thorough and independent investigation and that any military, security or other officials found to have used, ordered or authorised torture are brought to justice;
- b) ensuring that detainees are able effectively to challenge their detention before a court and are subject to due process;
- c) prosecuting all those currently held without charge for internationally recognisable criminal offences or else releasing them;

11. Welcomes the ongoing investigations carried out by the MNF-I into allegations of abuse of prisoners;
12. Welcomes the inspection of places of detention throughout the country carried out by the Iraqi authorities; welcomes the fact that more inspections are underway; also welcomes the fact that UNAMI encourages this process;
13. Calls on the MNF-I and the Iraqi authorities to grant the International Committee of the Red Cross unfettered access to all British and US detention facilities;
14. Supports the continuing efforts of the Iraqi Ministry of Human Rights to uphold high standards, including for people under detention;
15. Supports EUJUST LEX; notes that the Iraqi authorities have requested that the mission be extended beyond the end of its current mandate and the scope of the training provided expanded; urges the Commission and the Council to extend the mission beyond the end of its current mandate and to expand the scope of the training provided to include forensic policing;
16. Calls on the Iraqi Council of Representatives to ratify the Convention against Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment;
17. Calls on the Commission, the Council and the Member States to make further contributions to the strengthening of human rights and the rule of law in Iraq;
18. Instructs its President to forward this resolution to the Council, the Commission, the Iraqi Transitional Government, the Iraqi Council of Representatives, the Government of the United States of America, the governments of the other countries that are part of the MNF-I, and the UN Secretary-General.

(1) OJ C 304 E, 1.12.2005, p. 375.

(2) OJ C 45 E, 23.2.2006, p. 107.

(3) Texts Adopted , [P6_TA\(2005\)0288](#).

Link: <http://www.europarl.europa.eu/sides/getDoc.do?pubRef=-//EP//TEXT+TA+P6-TA-2006-0143+0+DOC+XML+V0//EN&language=EN>

2.2 THE COUNCIL OF THE EUROPEAN UNION

2831st EXTERNAL RELATIONS Council meeting
Brussels, 19-20 November 2007

Council Conclusions on Iraq

The Council adopted the following conclusions:

"1. The Council warmly welcomes the attendance of Foreign Minister of Iraq, H E Hoshyar Zebari, and the opportunity to enhance the political engagement of the EU with Iraq and to reiterate the commitments made by the EU to support Iraq. Following discussions with FM Zebari and taking into account the views of the Government of Iraq, the Council, recalling its current actions, agreed that the EU should work closely with the UN to further identify and deliver support for it to fulfil its role as set out in UNSCR 1770; identify further contributions to help alleviate the humanitarian situation in Iraq and the region; identify and take opportunities to provide further human rights support; and assist the Iraqi authorities in meeting their responsibilities in accordance with the International Compact with Iraq (ICI) and identify and provide further support.

2. The EU welcomes the holding of the Expanded Ministerial Conference of the Neighbouring Countries of Iraq in Istanbul on 2 - 3 November 2007. The Council underlines the importance of continuing the dialogue and co-operation between Iraq and its neighbours and notes with satisfaction that the next Ministerial Conference will be held in Kuwait. It recalls that constructive engagement of Iraq's neighbours and partners in the region remains essential to achieve peace and stability in Iraq and in the region as a whole and encourages all partners in the region to live up to the commitments made in the Final Communiqué of the Istanbul meeting. The EU remains ready to offer its support in this endeavour.

3. The Council emphasises the obligation of neighbouring countries to contribute to the political stabilisation of Iraq, whose territorial integrity should be preserved. It encourages the Government of Iraq to undertake all necessary measures to promote stability through an effective national reconciliation process.

4. The Council welcomes the decision by the Government of Iraq to form an "ad-hoc expanded neighbours support mechanism" to deal with substantive, technical and organizational issues concerning this process and the endorsement of this decision by the Ministerial Conference in Istanbul. The Council expects the Neighbours process, and in particular this support mechanism, to result in concrete steps forward, and emphasises the crucial role of constructive relations between Iraq and its neighbours at the political and technical level.

5. The Council emphasizes the importance of the essential input and recommendations provided by the three working groups on energy, security and refugees and internally displaced persons, which were established by

the Expanded Ministerial Conference on 4 May in Sharm El Sheikh. It notes with satisfaction the decision by the Ministerial Conference of Istanbul to convene the next sessions of these groups and calls for those meetings to be held as soon as possible. It encourages all neighbouring countries to participate constructively in this work and reiterates its readiness to participate, assist and provide expertise to these working groups.

6. The Council recalls the obligation of the Government of Iraq, its neighbouring countries and the international community, as expressed in Istanbul, to protect and assist displaced Iraqis by addressing their immediate and foreseeable needs and ensure their safety. It calls upon the Iraqi Government to assist vulnerable groups, including refugees and internally displaced persons and to promote the protection of human rights. The EU reiterates that it stands ready to support the Iraqi authorities in the field of human rights and fundamental freedoms, underlining the need to protect the rights of all Iraqis, including those of women and persons belonging to religious and ethnic minorities. The Council calls upon the Iraqi Government to suspend the practice of the death penalty as a step towards abolition. The EU especially welcomes work of UNAMI in the field of human rights and calls upon all relevant parties to support UNAMI in this endeavour. The EU will continue to identify in a concerted way possibilities for further assistance to the Iraqi refugees in neighbouring countries and internally displaced persons. It recalls the commitment made by participants in the Istanbul Conference to deliver assistance in coordination with the Government of Iraq also by contributing to the International Reconstruction Fund Facility for Iraq (IRFFI).

7. The Council is encouraged by and considers of utmost importance the continued dialogue and co-operation between Iraq and Turkey on the combat of terrorism. It calls on the Iraqi Government and the Kurdistan Regional Government to take the appropriate measures to ensure respect for the Turkish border and guarantee that the Iraqi territory is not used for violent action against its neighbours. "

Link:

http://www.consilium.europa.eu/uedocs/cms_Data/docs/pressdata/en/gena/97152.pdf

Council Conclusions on Iraq

The Council adopted the following conclusions:

"1. Iraq remains a central challenge for the international community. As a major global player, the Council reaffirms the EU's support to a secure, stable, democratic, prosperous and unified Iraq and reiterates its commitment to the independence, sovereignty, unity and territorial integrity of Iraq.

2. The EU will continue to play a major role in supporting the Iraqi government in its work to bring stability, security and prosperity to all of its citizens, including through practical assistance. The EU is committed to enhancing its political engagement with Iraq and with its neighbours, as well as supporting the UN and other international actors in their efforts.

3. The Council warmly welcomes the unanimous adoption on 10 August 2007 of the United Nations Security Council Resolution 1770, renewing and extending the mandate of UNAMI. The Council reaffirms its strong support to the central role of the UN in Iraq. In this connection it congratulates Mr. Staffan de Mistura on his appointment as the Secretary General's Special Representative for Iraq and Head of UNAMI and assures him of EU's support in leading UNAMI's work in Iraq to implement the new mandate. This mandate is of utmost importance for the stabilisation of Iraq. In addition to UNAMI's existing mandate in areas such as political dialogue, national reconciliation, economic reform, human rights and the Rule of Law, UNSCR 1770 adds important new fields: notably to advise, support and assist the Government of Iraq in areas such as facilitating the regional dialogue within the framework of the neighbouring countries process, implementing the International Compact with Iraq and strengthening donor coordination including with the International Reconstruction Fund Facility for Iraq (IRFFI). The EU is actively engaged in many of these areas and will continue to work closely with the UN. However, further improvement of the security situation will be an essential element in the effective implementation of the UNAMI mandate.

4. The Council trusts that, based on its mandate, UNAMI will continue to contribute to engaging all members of the democratic institutions in Iraq to participate actively and responsibly in an inclusive political process. It calls upon relevant Iraqi institutions to advance in the nomination of governorate election officers on the basis of rules that are in conformity with international best practice for a transparent, inclusive, independent and impartial process. Fundamental decisions regarding the achieving of national reconciliation must be taken in a spirit of sincere dialogue and consensus-building if they are to serve as the basis for a peaceful and prosperous future for Iraq.

5. The Council welcomes the support by the participants at the High Level Meeting on Iraq in New York, on 22 September, for a broader UN role and for the International Compact with Iraq.

6. The Council strongly encourages the Government of Iraq together with all parties to make substantial political progress on the promotion of national reconciliation, which is the key to sustained improvements in security, and to curb the deterioration of the humanitarian conditions in Iraq which has resulted in an estimated 2.2 million internally displaced persons. The Council recognises the heavy burden borne by neighbouring countries, particularly Jordan and Syria, urges the Iraqi Government to undertake appropriate measures to assist Iraqi refugees and those displaced within the country and assures that the EU will continue to play its part. Rapid humanitarian action is required by the international community and the Iraqi Government if the evolving humanitarian crisis is to be contained. The EU recalls the important role of UNHCR, ICRC, IOM, supported by Member States and Community instruments (including ECHO), as well as the need for strong support to the UN/OCHA Strategic Framework for Humanitarian Action in Iraq.

7. The Council calls upon the Iraqi authorities to take the necessary measures to ensure the protection of the civilian population. In this respect the human rights and fundamental freedoms of all Iraqis, including women and persons belonging to religious and ethnic minorities, should be protected and promoted. The EU stands ready to continue its support to the Iraqi authorities in the fields of human rights and fundamental freedoms.

8. The Council welcomes the Ministerial Conference of Iraq's Neighbouring Countries to be held in Istanbul in early November. The Council underlines that the dialogue and cooperation between Iraq and its neighbours is crucial to achieve the stabilisation of the region and a peaceful and prosperous future for Iraq. It encourages Iraq and its neighbours to build on the progress made by the working groups on energy, refugees and security. The European Union reiterates its offer to assist and provide expertise in this process. In this connection it welcomes the proposal by UN Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon during the meeting on Iraq in New York on 22 September 2007 to create a support mechanism based in Baghdad to enhance regional dialogue. In the regional process as well as in bilateral relations, the EU encourages all neighbouring countries to play a constructive role in contributing to peace and stability in Iraq.

9. The Council reiterates its strong support to the International Compact with Iraq. It believes that the implementation of the ambitious programme set out in the Compact with Iraq demands strong Iraqi leadership and ownership and requires inclusiveness of the Compact process, broad involvement of the international community and active participation of Iraq's neighbours and partners in the region. Efficient co-ordination of donor efforts is of utmost importance. The Council reaffirms EU's readiness to continue developing a close co-operation and partnership with Iraq - also through the IRFFI - in accordance with the priorities indicated in the International Compact and Iraq's National Development Strategy.

10. The Council looks forward to work on this agenda being taken forward with renewed energy and vigour and to further discussions.

11. The Council strongly condemns the attack on 3 October on the Polish ambassador to Iraq, Edward Pietrzyk, which killed at least two people and seriously wounded the ambassador, who is representing the EU Presidency in Iraq."

Link:

http://www.consilium.europa.eu/ueDocs/cms_Data/docs/pressData/en/gena/96516.pdf

2.3 EUROPEAN COMMISSION

- Recommendations for Renewed European Union Engagement with Iraq
 - o http://ec.europa.eu/external_relations/iraq/doc/com06_283_en.pdf

- The European Union and Iraq: A Framework for Engagement
 - o http://ec.europa.eu/external_relations/iraq/doc/com04_417_en.pdf

2.4 OTHER

UNITED KINGDOM PARLIAMENT

Early Day Motion 224 - Treatment of Christians in Iraq

Tabled by Stephen Pound MP, 13th November 2007

That this House is deeply concerned by the mass exodus of Iraqi Christians, which has decimated much of Iraq's ancient Assyrian-Chaldean community; notes that the Assyrian-Chaldeans make up over 95 per cent. of Iraq's Christians and that this exodus has largely been caused by escalating violence against Christians from fanatical extremists, including the bombing of churches and the assassination of Iraqi Christians; further notes that there has been illegal expropriation of Assyrian-Chaldean land and villages in Dohuk province and the Nineveh Plains in northern Iraq; recognises that Iraqi Christians are a major force for moderation, who can act as a significant buffer against the spread of extremism in Iraq; calls on the British and Iraqi governments urgently to encourage and support the creation of a self-governing province in Iraq for the Assyrian-Chaldeans, linked to the central government in Baghdad, situated in and around the Nineveh Plains and including the Talkepeh, Hamdaniya and Bashika districts, and governed by the Assyrian-Chaldeans and other ethnic groups living in that area, as these lands form part of the ancestral homeland of the Assyrian-Chaldeans and are still heavily populated by them; and urges the UK and Iraqi governments to support financially the reconstruction of the region, to end the political marginalisation of the democratically-elected Assyrian-Chaldean representatives in Iraq, to assist the Assyrian-Chaldeans in reclaiming their land and villages in Dohuk province and the Nineveh Plains, and to support financially internally-displaced Assyrian-Chaldeans and the return and resettlement of Assyrian-Chaldean refugees.

Link:

<http://edmi.parliament.uk/EDMi/EDMDetails.aspx?EDMID=34326&SESSION=891>

3. OTHER DOCUMENTATION

HUMAN RIGHTS WITHOUT FRONTIERS

- Fautre, W, What Place for the Assyrians in Tomorrow's Iraq?
 - o <http://www.hrwf.net/iraq/ext/AssyriansinIraq.PDF>

INTERNATIONAL FEDERATION FOR HUMAN RIGHTS

- Iraq: Continuous and Silent Ethnic Cleansing
 - o <http://www.fidh.org/magmoyen/rapport/2002/iq350a.pdf>

IRAQ SUSTAINABLE DEMOCRACY PROJECT

- Constituting Democracy in Iraq: ChaldoAssyrians a Determinant of Sustainable Iraqi Constitutionalism
 - o <http://www.iraqdemocracyproject.org/pdf/ISDP%20Constitution.pdf>
- Threats to Iraq's Communities of Antiquity: Testimony by Michael Youash
 - o http://www.iraqdemocracyproject.org/brief_1.html
- Proposing the Operationalization of the Art. 125 Solution: Establishing the Nineveh Plain Administrative Unit
 - o http://www.iraqdemocracyproject.org/policy_brief3.html

MINORITY RIGHTS GROUP INTERNATIONAL

- Ghai, Y, et al, Building Democracy in Iraq
 - o <http://www.minorityrights.org/download.php?id=109>

4. APPENDIX

4.1 EXTRACTS FROM THE IRAQI CONSTITUTION

The following extracts have been chosen from the Iraqi constitution as they are of specific interest and concern to the Assyrian community in Iraq.¹ The list however is not intended to be exhaustive and the full version of the constitution referred to below can be found on the website of the United Nation's Assistance Mission for Iraq (UNAMI - <http://www.uniraq.org/>).

Article 2:

"...This Constitution guarantees the Islamic identity of the majority of the Iraqi people and guarantees the full religious rights to freedom of religious belief and practice of all individuals such as Christians, Yazidis, and Mandeans Sabians."

Article 4:

"The Arabic language and the Kurdish language are the two official languages of Iraq. The right of Iraqis to educate their children in their mother tongue, such as Turkmen, Syriac, and Armenian shall be guaranteed in government educational institutions in accordance with educational guidelines, or in any other language in private educational institutions..."

"...The Turkomen language and the Syriac language are two other official languages in the administrative units in which they constitute density of population..."

Article 15:

"Every individual has the right to enjoy life, security and liberty..."

Article 37:

"...The State shall guarantee protection of the individual from intellectual, political and religious coercion..."

Article 116:

"The federal system in the Republic of Iraq is made up of a decentralized capital, regions, and governorates, as well as local administrations."

Article 125:

"This Constitution shall guarantee the administrative, political, cultural, and educational rights of the various nationalities, such as Turkomen, Chaldeans, Assyrians, and all other constituents, and this shall be regulated by law."

¹ It is interesting to note that the Preamble of the Constitution fails to make mention of the Assyrians, despite being the indigenous people of Iraq and also having been subjected to numerous persecutions and martyrdoms throughout Iraq's history. The relevant sentence is written as follows: "... inspired by the tragedies of Iraq's martyrs, Shiite and Sunni, Arabs and Kurds and Turkmen and from all other components of the people..."