

Mid-East Minorities Call on UN Security Council to Establish "Interim Protected Areas"

Contributed by Administrator
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WASHINGTON, March 17, 2015 /PRNewswire-USNewswire/ -- A federation of Western- and Middle East- based NGOs representing Yazidi and Christian communities in the region met with the representatives of four of the Permanent members of the United Nations Security Council and the Secretary General in New York on Friday and remitted a memo calling for a new UNSC resolution to "establish interim protected areas in northern Iraq and Syria." These areas, according to the leaders of the delegation should be designed to provide protection by the international community, to the small communities undergoing ethnic cleansing since last June. "At this point it is a matter of survival."

The memo said "We, the representatives of the below co-signing organizations, representing the aspirations of the Yazidi and Christian (Assyrian, Chaldean, Syriac, Maronite and Melkite) communities in Iraq, Syria and Lebanon and the Coptic community in Egypt, and following the systematic acts of ethnic cleansing, massacres, assassinations, abduction, rape, and kidnapping perpetrated by the Islamic State (known as Daesh, ISIL or ISIS) against these communities since June 2014, urge you to request an immediate meeting of the UN Security Council to issue a UNSCR to stop ISIS from perpetrating ethnic cleansing as the state in Syria has collapsed."

The delegation said the "protected areas" should be for the interim, and are not designed to interfere with the long-term political solutions in Iraq and Syria or the unity of these countries. "There is a Jihadi terror threat which has massacred thousands, kidnapped thousands of women, particularly Yazidis, uprooted close to a million among these small minorities, destroyed homes and is now eradicating historical legacies in the region" said Dr. Walid Phares, prominent Middle East expert who accompanied the delegation. "As we speak, ISIS is seizing more Christian villages in Syria and another catastrophe is looming in the area. While we understand that a global effort aims at weakening and defeating ISIS, our communities may become extinct before ISIS is stopped. They need a fast and interim measure of protection before it is too late."

The delegation also asked the UNSC to intervene in Libya to evacuate the thousands of Egyptian Copts threatened by ISIS, who are hiding in homes and neighborhoods across Libya. "After the slaughter of 21 Egyptian Copts by Jihadists, there needs to be an urgent measure to insure the evacuation of these defenseless workers from Libya. ISIS has threatened to kill all the Christian Egyptians in Libya, thus there needs to be an urgent solution."

The delegation, whose leaders say they represent the aspirations of 18 million Christians and Yazidis in the Middle East and several millions in the diaspora, met with the representatives of the US, France, UK, and Russia at the UNSC and the offices of the Secretariat General.

The delegation included: Coptic Solidarity, Assyrian American Federation, Syriac National Council, American Mesopotamian Organization, World Maronite Union, Melkite Committee, Yazidi Human Rights Organization, the MECHRIC Committee.

MECHRIC is the oldest coalition of Middle East Christian organizations launched in Beirut in November 1981 by Maronite, Coptic, Assyrian, Chaldean, Syriac and other groups to represent the aspirations of these and other communities in the Near East and North Africa. For more information, contact Tom Harb of MECHRIC at 407- 383 9600; Tharb@aol.com or Lindsay Vessey of Coptic Solidarity at 801-512-1713; coptadvocacy@copticssolidarity.org

<http://www.prnewswire.com/news-releases/mid-east-minorities-call-on-un-security-council-to-establish-interim-protected-areas-300051378.html>

<http://www.iraqhurr.org/content/article/26905491.html>

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