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20/04/09

Save the Mandeans of Iraq

On Sunday the 19th of April 2009, three Mandaean jewellers were massacred by gunmen in their jewellery shops in the Altobechi area in Baghdad Iraq. This occurred during the mid-morning hours. The assailants used pistols with silencers. Two others were badly injured in this attack and are still in serious condition.

This is a continuation of ongoing attacks against Mandeans, including the killing of three Mandeans in their family's store in a busy market in the Al-Sha'ab district of Baghdad. In this incident, which occurred on the 8th of September 2008, an 8 year old boy, along with his father and uncle were slaughtered together; each had several bullets in his head. Many children have been kidnapped and many women raped with inadequate response from the police and Iraqi government.

Including the above noted crimes, the recorded incidents against Mandeans since 2003 stand at 167 killings, 275 kidnappings, and 298 assaults and forced conversion to Islam. Some include more than one member of a family.

The Mandaean Supreme Council in Iraq has tried several times to bring to the attention of the Iraqi government that the Mandeans as well as other minorities are continuously targeted and attacked, however their cries have been in vain and no true actions have been taken.

Out of a community of 50,000-60,000 in Iraq before 2003 only 5,000 remain. 85% of our community are either refugees or are seeking refuge, and are mainly in Syria and Jordan.

Mandeans, like other religious minorities in Iraq, have not benefited from the recent supposed improvement in security. The killings, kidnappings, attacks, looting, and demands for ransom are continuing at an alarming rate, while the refugees, after years of living in the harshest of conditions, are still in limbo.

We, the undersigned, condemn these serious crimes, and demand the following:

1. that an independent investigation be undertaken urgently to look into these and all other atrocities against the Mandeans;
2. that the Iraqi government act immediately to find the criminals, expose the organizations behind these crimes, and bring justice to the victims;

3. that the Iraqi Government act to establish the Minorities Security Council under international observation which instates a system of protection for Mandaean and all other Iraqi religious and ethnic minorities;
4. that the international community intervene according to international law and the United Nations Charter, to protect and secure the rights of the ethnic and religious minorities as well as the other indigenous peoples of Iraq. In particular we ask the international community to take immediate steps to stop the destruction of the Mandaean people and their culture, as well as find a collective durable solution to their desperate situation.

The Mandaean as a people are in danger of extinction in their own homeland. They call out for your help. The international community must stand up and save the Madaeans of Iraq. We ask you all to help us stop these grave atrocities and to bring peace and security to all native peoples of Iraq.

The Mandaean Society of America
The Mandaean Associations Union
The Mandaean Human Rights Group
The Mandaean Crisis International