



**Oral Testimony for the June 6<sup>th</sup> Public Hearing on the U.S. Refugee Program**

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The Jubilee Campaign would like to express our gratitude for the opportunity to make a public statement in anticipation of the FY 2008 Refugee Admissions Program. The Jubilee Campaign is committed to promoting the human rights and religious liberty of ethnic and religious minorities. One group we remain particularly concerned about is Iraqi Sabean-Mandaeans.

We have been partnering with the Mandaean Society of America since 2005. Since that time we have become increasingly concerned with the situation in Iraq. Currently, more than 90% of the Sabean-Mandaean population has been forced to flee Iraq to Syria and Jordan. We estimate approximately 2,000 families in Syria and an additional 500 families in Jordan. These families face horrific circumstances, many can't work, children don't receive education, and food and water are scarce. We are aware of several cases where women have resorted to prostitution to feed their children. There are also cases of child labor and social abuse.

These refugees are a "vulnerable population." Their ancient faith, following the teachings of John the Baptist, is quickly being destroyed through the destruction of literature, the targeting of priests, and the potential annihilation of the entire population. The Jubilee Campaign would urge the United States government to increase the number of accepted refugees and work towards a more comprehensive refugee resettlement program. We would also urge the United States government to give special attention to "vulnerable populations" like the Sabean Mandaeans. We would request that they receive P2 refugee status, as their Iranian counterparts have. This would expedite their process, thereby ensuring the protection of this minority population

**A Vital Voice for Those Suffering in Silence**

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