



The Hon. Marie Ficarra
Member of the Legislative Council



Wednesday, 18 June 2014

The Hon Julie Bishop MP
Minister of Foreign affairs
PO Box 6022
House of Representatives
Parliament House
Canberra ACT 2600

Dear Minister

I write to you with regards to dire situation facing the Christian Assyrian population in Iraq, which has been brought to my attention by Assyrian Universal Alliance and the Assyrian Australian Community. Since 2003, with the onset of the war in Iraq, the Christian Assyrian population of Iraq have suffered immensely.

Each year the situation facing the Assyrians continues to deteriorate; action from the international community must be taken in order to avoid any further escalation of this humanitarian disaster. The population of Christian Assyrians has decreased by fifty per cent in the last decade, due to the political turmoil facing the region. Hundreds of thousands of Christians have been forced to seek asylum in neighbouring countries, migrate abroad or have been killed by Islamist militants. Those remaining in Iraq live in constant fear of being kidnapped, tortured and killed due to their ethnicity and religious beliefs.

In response to this crisis, I urge the Commonwealth Government to take immediate action in offering its political support in the international community to endorse the Iraqi Assyrian calls to create a new self-administered province in the Nineveh Plain. The Nineveh Plain in north eastern Iraq has for centuries been the political, social and cultural homeland of the Assyrian Christians.

A self-administered province within Iraq that is endorsed by the Australian Commonwealth Government, the international community and the United Nations offers a viable solution to addressing the crisis and avoiding further human catastrophe. The concept of a semi-autonomous state within Iraq has proven to be a viable option in enshrining the rights of minorities and avoiding further human disaster. This has been demonstrated with the establishment of Kurdistan for the minority Kurdish population within Iraq.

Self-administration in a semi-autonomous region would ensure capacity of Assyrians to sustain themselves into the future. In addition to this proposed solution, there are many other benefits including: political, cultural and religious freedom for the Assyrian population; it would allow for the promotion of democracy and the rule of law within the region and enhance the economic development. Apart from benefitting the Christian Assyrian community within Iraq, this proposed solution would also provide protection and security for other minority groups within the region, such as the Mandaean population.

In relation to this matter, I ask the Australian Commonwealth Government alongside its international allies and the wider international community to provide assistance and support for the Assyrian community in Iraq. Assistance is needed to address the acute humanitarian needs of the displaced refugee Assyrian community within the region, through the provision of educational and medical care for the safety of the most vulnerable, including: women, children, elderly, disabled and those living in poverty. Furthermore, I request on behalf of our Australian Assyrians assistance be provided for the establishment of defence facilities and training of Assyrians in Iraq to guarantee protection and future economic and social sustainability.

In addressing the urgency of the situation, I strongly urge both you and the Prime Minister, The Honourable Tony Abbott who I know to be sympathetic to the plight of the Assyrian and other Christian communities in Iraq and indeed throughout the Middle East, to do all you can to support the proposed solution to establish a self-administered province in the Nineveh Plain in Iraq.

Yours sincerely



The Hon Marie Ficarra MLC

CC: The Prime Minister - The Hon Tony Abbott MP