

113TH CONGRESS
2D SESSION

S. RES. 530

Expressing the sense of the Senate on the current situation in Iraq and the urgent need to protect religious minorities from persecution from the terrorist group the Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant (ISIL).

IN THE SENATE OF THE UNITED STATES

JULY 30, 2014

Mr. PORTMAN (for himself, Mr. ALEXANDER, Ms. BALDWIN, Mr. BARRASSO, Mr. BLUNT, Mr. BOOZMAN, Ms. CANTWELL, Mr. CARDIN, Mr. CHAMBLISS, Ms. COLLINS, Mr. CRAPO, Mr. ENZI, Mrs. FISCHER, Mr. GRASSLEY, Mr. HELLER, Mr. HOEVEN, Mr. INHOFE, Mr. ISAKSON, Mr. JOHANNIS, Mr. KIRK, Ms. KLOBUCHAR, Ms. LANDRIEU, Mr. LEE, Mr. LEVIN, Mr. MANCHIN, Mr. MARKEY, Mr. MCCAIN, Mr. MORAN, Mr. RISCH, Mr. JOHNSON of Wisconsin, Mr. RUBIO, Mr. SESSIONS, Mrs. SHAHEEN, Ms. STABENOW, Mr. THUNE, Mr. WICKER, Mr. HATCH, Mr. DURBIN, Mr. VITTER, Ms. AYOTTE, Mr. KAINE, Mr. CRUZ, Mr. COONS, Mr. ROBERTS, and Mr. BURR) submitted the following resolution; which was referred to the Committee on Foreign Relations

SEPTEMBER 18, 2014

Reported by Mr. MENENDEZ, with an amendment and an amendment to the preamble and an amendment to the title

[Strike out all after the resolving clause and insert the part printed in *italic*]

[Strike the preamble and insert the part printed in *italic*]

SEPTEMBER 18, 2014

Considered, amended, and agreed to with an amended preamble and an amendment to the title

RESOLUTION

Expressing the sense of the Senate on the current situation in Iraq and the urgent need to protect religious minori-

ties from persecution from the terrorist group the Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant (ISIL).

Whereas Iraq is currently embroiled in a surge of violence arising from an ISIL-led offensive that began in Anbar province and has spread to key locations such as Mosul, Tikrit, and Samarra and continues to engulf the region in violence and instability;

Whereas, on June 29, 2014, ISIL leader Abu Bakr al-Baghdadi renamed the group the Islamic State and pronounced himself Caliph of a new Islamic caliphate encompassing the areas under his control, and Mr. al-Baghdadi has a stated mission of spreading the Islamic State and caliphate across the region through violence against Shiites, non-Muslims, and unsupportive Sunnis;

Whereas Iraq's population is approximately 31,300,000 people, with 97 percent identifying themselves as Muslim and the approximately 3 percent of religious minorities groups comprising of Christians, Yezidis, Sabean-Mandaeans, Bahais, Shabaks, Kakais, and Jews;

Whereas the Iraqi Christian population is estimated to be between 400,000 and 850,000, with two-thirds being Chaldean, one-fifth Assyrian, and the remainder consisting of Syriacs, Protestants, Armenians, and Anglicans;

Whereas the Iraqi constitution provides for religious freedom by stating that "no law may be enacted that contradicts the principles of democracy," "no law may be enacted that contradicts the rights and basic freedoms stipulated in this Constitution," and "[this Constitution] guarantees the full religious rights to freedom of religious belief and

practice of all individuals such as Christians, Yazidis, and Mandeans Sabians”;

Whereas the fall of Mosul in particular has sparked enough anxiety among the Christian population that, for the first time in 1,600 years, there was no Mass in that city;

Whereas over 50 percent of Iraq’s Christian population has fled since the fall of Saddam Hussein, and the government under Prime Minister Nouri al-Maliki did not uphold its commitment to protect the rights of religious minorities;

Whereas the United States Government has provided over \$73,000,000 of cumulative assistance to Iraq’s minority populations since 2003 through economic development, humanitarian services, and capacity development;

Whereas 84,902 Iraqis have resettled to the United States between 2007 and 2013 and over 300,000 Chaldean and Assyrians currently reside throughout the country, particularly in Michigan, California, Arizona, Illinois, and Ohio; and

Whereas President Barack Obama recently declared on Religious Freedom Day, “Foremost among the rights Americans hold sacred is the freedom to worship as we choose . . . we also remember that religious liberty is not just an American right; it is a universal human right to be protected here at home and across the globe. This freedom is an essential part of human dignity, and without it our world cannot know lasting peace.”: Now, therefore, be it

1 *Resolved*, That the Senate—

2 (1) reaffirms its commitment to promoting and

3 to protecting religious freedom around the world;

1 (2) calls on the Department of State to work
2 with the Government of Iraq, the Kurdistan Re-
3 gional Government, neighboring countries, the dias-
4 pora community in the United States, and other key
5 stakeholders to address the urgent plight of those
6 Iraqi minority groups seeking safety and protection
7 from persecution in Iraq;

8 (3) respectfully requests the Government of
9 Iraq to prioritize the issue of protecting religious mi-
10 norities and take concrete action to enact and en-
11 force laws protecting religious freedom; and

12 (4) urges the President to ensure the timely
13 processing of visas for Iraq's minority groups fleeing
14 religious persecution, in accordance with existing
15 United States immigration law and national security
16 screening procedures.

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