

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 Sunni Islamist insurgent and terrorist group the Islamic State, formerly known as the Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant (ISIL), as it expands its control over areas in northwestern Iraq.

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, and Ms. AYOTTE) submitted the following resolution; which was referred to the Committee on Foreign Relations

RESOLUTION

Expressing the sense of the Senate on the current situation in Iraq and the urgent need to protect religious minorities from persecution from the Sunni Islamist insurgent and terrorist group the Islamic State, formerly known as the Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant (ISIL), as it expands its control over areas in northwestern Iraq.

Whereas Iraq is currently embroiled in a surge of violence arising from an Islamic State in Iraq and the Levant

(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 Mandaean Sabeans";

Whereas over 1,000,000 people have been displaced by violence in Iraq, and reports have surfaced of targeted har-

assessment, persecution, and killings of Iraqi religious minorities by the Islamic State with little to no protection from the Government of Iraq and other security forces;

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 has not upheld 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—

1 (1) reaffirms its commitment to promoting and
2 protecting religious freedom around the world and
3 providing relief to minority groups facing persecu-
4 tion;

5 (2) calls on the Department of State to work
6 with the Kurdistan Regional Government, the Gov-
7 ernment of Iraq, neighboring countries, the diaspora
8 community in the United States, and other key
9 stakeholders to help secure safe havens for those
10 seeking safety and protection from religious persecu-
11 tion in Iraq;

12 (3) respectfully requests the addition of a Spe-
13 cial Representative for Religious Minorities to be in-
14 cluded in Iraq's government; and

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

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