



US House Approves \$10 Million for Religious Minorities in the Nineveh Plains of Iraq

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(AINA) -- The U.S. House Subcommittee on State, Foreign Operations, and Related Programs held a meeting this morning. On the agenda was an amendment to provide support directly to religious minorities in Iraq. The amendment, which was unanimously passed, was introduced by Congressman Kirk (10th district, Illinois) and states:

The Committee is concerned about the plight of religious minorities in Iraq and intends that from within the unobligated amounts provided in previous years under the heading "Economic Support Fund" for Iraq, not less than \$10,000,000 should be provided to assist religious minorities in the Nineveh Plain region of Iraq, of which \$8,000,000 should be provided for internally-displaced families and \$2,000,000 should be provided for microfinance programs.

The Nineveh Plain region of Iraq is an area with a strong concentration of Assyrians (also known as Chaldeans and Syriacs) and has been proposed as a candidate for an [administrative area](#) for Assyrians and other minorities in Iraq, as prescribed by Article 125 of the Iraqi constitution, which states:

This constitution shall guarantee the administrative, political, cultural and educational rights of the various nationalities, such as Turkmen, Chaldeans, Assyrians, and all other constituents, and this shall be regulated by the law.

The severe persecution of Assyrians in Iraq was high on the agenda of the meeting on June 9 between the Pope and President Bush. The Pope expressed his concern for the Christians in Iraq and asked President Bush to alleviate their suffering (AINA [6-12-2007](#)).

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