



## **Report on the Terror Campaign Against Mosul's Assyrians**

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Between the end of September and mid-October, 2008 over two thousand Christian families -- approximately 13,000 out of a total Christian population of roughly 25,000 people -- fled Iraq's second largest city, Mosul. They fled in response to a three-week, well-organized terror campaign targeting Christians. Terrorist acts included the murder of 13 Christians, the bombing of three homes, harassment, and the circulation of printed death threats. Mosul has been the scene of many acts of terrorism against Christians since the collapse of Saddam Hussein's regime in 2003. The most highly publicized were the murder of Fr. Ragheed Ganni and four sub-deacons in 2007 and the kidnapping and subsequent death of Archbishop Paulous Faraj Rahho in March 2008. Mosul is Iraq's most violent city, and has become the center of the Islamic insurgency against the US-led Coalition Forces and the Iraqi Government. Since the United States launched "Operation Freedom Iraq" in 2003 to replace Saddam Hussein's dictatorship with a democracy, about 40% of Iraq's one million Christians have been forced to seek refuge abroad, while many of those who remain in Iraq are internally displaced. Iraq's Christian community is threatened with extinction.

The recent anti-Christian terror campaign in Mosul coincided with dangerously heightened tension between the Arab majority (40%) and the Kurdish minority (30%) in Nineveh Province and its capital city, Mosul. Kurds support the annexation of the Province to the neighboring autonomous region of Kurdistan. They are backed by the Kurdish Regional Government (KRG) in Erbil. Arabs reject the KRG's claim on Nineveh. Both Arab and Kurds have powerful armed forces behind them, including organs of the state -- e.g. units of the national army and the police, and illegal militias and terrorist cells. Caught in the middle of this brutal tug-of-war are the small religious and ethnic minorities that have no armed forces to promote their interests. They are the Christian, Yezidi, and the Shabak communities. Together, these minorities hold an electoral balance of power and are therefore subjected to vigorous efforts by both Arabs and Kurds to use them politically for their purposes. The means of instrumentalization include violence and non-violent political action.

Christian Solidarity International

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