

Greetings,

Thank you, Mr. President, for the opportunity to allow our voice be heard

Ali Adel from Iraq speaking to you on the programs of 'We are all Citizens' for minority rights and peaceful coexistence. Today I will talk about the transgressions Christians in Baghdad face on their properties and lives by powerful political parties without judicial and security measures being taken to deter these parties.

Since more than a decade, the Christian population has faced systematic attacks throughout Iraq and especially in the capital Baghdad, including the targeting of lives and properties, which led to their emigration to the Kurdistan region or outside of Iraq, leaving their property - homes, industrial and commercial establishments - without any action taken by the security forces to stop these incidents.

Some powerful parties in Iraq have taken advantage of this situation to counterfeit property documents extending to a whole residential neighbourhood. They seized them amid the silence of the Ministry of Justice, and the security forces turned a blind eye to the prosecution of the perpetrators of these violations, in a time in which the judicial system in Iraq is concerned with returning the properties to other groups, which faced displacement before 2003.

This included the seizure of properties, according to the testimony of a member of the Baghdad Provincial Council, in residential neighborhoods in Industry Street, in addition to other properties in Karada and laboratories in Seba'a street.

The Chaldean Patriarchate in Iraq submitted to the Baghdad Operations Command the files regarding the transgressions on the properties of Christians with grievance and complaint cases. However, the Baghdad Operations Command did not act to punish the transgressors, or investigate them, and despite the issuance of arrangements by the Iraqi Ministry of Justice to take measures to preserve the property rights of departed Christians. This is an acknowledgement of the existence of the transgression, but measures were not taken to recover the property of Christians.

The details I mentioned show the discrimination against Christians. In order to stop the mass exodus and to protect life and property, we recommend the following:

First: open the previous files related to counterfeiting property documents of Christians, and prosecute the appropriators, even if they were among the people participating in the political process in Iraq.

Second: increase the representation of Christians in the security forces as the current percentage representing them is very small, despite the fact that Article 9 of the Iraqi constitution calls for balance in the formation of the security forces.

Third: provide a force to protect the property of Christians in particular and minorities, which have been displaced, in general, and involve the sons of these minorities in them.

Fourth: rehabilitate judicial officials, and the commission for accountability and justice to deal with these issues without fear of political pressure or without leaning towards powerful partisan parties.

Fifth: Abidance by the independence of the judiciary and permission for Christians and sons of the rest of the groups to assume positions of judges and judicial investigators as Article 16 of the Iraqi Constitution guarantees equal opportunities for all Iraqis.

Thank you very much