



Assyria Council of Europe

30th November 2010
Press Release

EU PARLIAMENT DELEGATION INFORMED ON IRAQ BY ACE

The Iraq Delegation of the European Parliament had invited ACE to attend and participate in a panel discussion regarding the ethno-religious minorities of Iraq.



Opening the panel, Andrew Swan, of the Unrepresented Nations and Peoples Organisation (UNPO) outlined the progress Iraq has made as a new democratic state, but said complacency was not an option when considering the plight of the ethnic minorities of Iraq.

Elaborating these sentiments and focusing on the issue of locally deriving a police force in the Nineveh Plains, Max Joseph of ACE presented a case for a truly representative Nineveh Plains Police Force. Referencing newly collected data which was distributed in a report to attendees, a critical problem regarding the representation of Assyrians in the police force of the Nineveh Plains was clear. The paper demonstrated Arabs and Kurds having a stranglehold on security in areas where they make up little of the population.

ACE demanded the discrimination in the Iraqi Police Force, specifically in the Nineveh Plains, be put to an end so that Assyrians can have fair representation within the police.

Next, of the Commission of the Bishops' Conferences of the European Community (COMECE), Piotr Mazurkiewicz, reiterated his support of the Christian Assyrians of Iraq and their right to a local administration. Focusing on the recent Church attack in Baghdad, Mr Mazurkiewicz highlighted the need for the persecuted ethno-religious minorities in Iraq to have their rights protected and their wishes fulfilled.

A representative of Open Doors, a Dutch humanitarian organisation working for Christians in Iraq, broke the running trend by criticising the notion of an administrative area for the Christian Assyrians of Iraq by commenting that it would become an easy target for extremists. However, this suggestion was roundly refuted by all those in attendance, citing the fact that the Assyrian Christians are already being targeted wherever they are.

As seen with these unabated recent attacks against Assyrian Christians all around the country, attendees, including Charles Tannock MEP had voiced his disagreement with Open Doors and supported the creation of a local administration for the Assyrians of Iraq in the Nineveh Plains.

This criticism by Open Doors also forgets the natural insecurity of a group with little confidence in an administration. Considering demographics, people naturally come together in linear groups defined by ethnicity and religion. This occurred after the fall of the previous regime with Assyrian IDPs converging in the Nineveh Plains, effectively "returning" home rather than randomly congregating.