



Assyria Council of Europe

13th March 2008

Press Release for Immediate Release

Assyrian Bishop Found Dead in Iraq

Brussels - Reports from Iraq have confirmed that the Catholic Assyrian Archbishop Paulos Faraj Rahoo of the Chaldean Catholic Church of Mosul, who was kidnapped as he left the Holy Spirit Church in the Al-Noor area of Mosul city on Friday 29th February 2008, has been found dead outside Mosul.

This recent killing is a further manifestation of the insecurity and intimidation faced by minorities such as the Assyrian Christians in Iraq and is the latest in a long line of attacks against dozens of Christian clergymen there. Many Assyrian institutions and churches have expressed the view that this recent event will further fuel the exodus of Assyrians and other minorities from Iraq, a tide which if not stemmed will lead to the complete eradication of Iraq's most vulnerable minorities.

The European Parliament in its recent session in Strasbourg has adopted a resolution on the EU's future role in Iraq and stresses the need for a renewed strategy in Iraq to, *inter alia*, help Iraq protect its minorities. This new resolution is very much welcomed but it is hoped that urgent and tangible action will be taken based upon the resolution's recommendations to the Council and Commission of the EU.

Mr. Ninos Warda, Project Director of the Assyria Council of Europe (ACE) states the following: "This recent event is a shock to the whole community and acts as a reminder of the precarious situation minorities in Iraq find themselves in. We hope that the EU, foreseeing a bigger role in Iraq, will devote sufficient time and resources to protect the already dwindling minorities in Iraq from complete extinction. In this regard, sufficient resources should be spent to develop areas which have predominantly minority populations, especially those which have received a large influx of internally displaced persons (IDPs), and provide such communities with peace of mind and stability by providing them with adequate security facilities. Only such measures will help prevent even more of Iraq's minorities from completely leaving the country as refugees."



Archbishop Paulos Rahho

It should be noted that the Assyrian community in Iraq is made up of various denominations including the Syriac and Chaldean Catholic churches, the Assyrian Church of the East and the Ancient Church of the East, the Syriac Orthodox Church and also Protestant churches.