



Assyria Council of Europe

8th April 2008

Press Release for Immediate Release

Assyrian Orthodox Priest Shot Dead in Iraq

Brussels - Reports from various news agencies and other sources have confirmed that on Saturday 5th April 2008 another Assyrian clergyman, an Assyrian Orthodox priest, was killed in Iraq. The victim is Father Youssef Adel of the Syriac Orthodox Church and priest of the St. Peter's Church in Baghdad. He was shot dead by gunmen traveling in a car around noon near his house in the Karrada neighbourhood of Baghdad. According to the Associated Press, Father Youssef was gunned down as he was opening the gate of his house, an act which is now the latest against the Christian community in Iraq. His funeral was held on the 6th of April in Baghdad.

Only last month on the 13th March 2008 was the body of the Archbishop of the Chaldean Catholic Church of Mosul found dead outside the city. The Assyria Council of Europe (ACE) urges the Iraqi Government and the European Union to take urgent action to bring to justice the perpetrators of this latest attack and make concerted efforts to protect Iraq's dwindling Assyrian Christians and other minorities. Mr. Ninos Warda, Project Director of ACE, states that, 'The EU should take steps to remind Iraq that it has a duty under international law to take measures to protect its ethnic, religious and linguistic minorities. This is the second clergyman in less than a month that has been killed in two different cities in Iraq. If such actions are allowed to continue with impunity then Christian communities in many regions or cities in Iraq may be left without any religious leaders, in effect denying them of their right to religion.' This is further affirmed by the Dutch Member of Parliament Mr. Joel Voordewind who visited the Assyrian Christians in Iraq last week and stated that there is religious cleansing taking place in Iraq.



Mourners gather at Father Youssef's funeral
Source: www.ankawa.com

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.