



# General Assembly

Distr.: General  
3 September 2014

English only

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## Human Rights Council

Twenty-seventh session

Agenda item 3

**Promotion and protection of all human rights, civil,  
political, economic, social and cultural rights,  
including the right to development**

### **Written statement\* submitted by the International Association for the Defence of Religious Liberty-Association Internationale Pour La Defense de la Liberte, a non- governmental organization in special consultative status**

The Secretary-General has received the following written statement which is circulated in accordance with Economic and Social Council resolution 1996/31.

[22 August 2014]

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\* This written statement is issued, unedited, in the language(s) received from the submitting non-governmental organization(s).

GE.14-15582 (E)



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## **United Nations And International Community To Act Immediately and Decisively By Coordinated Response To Provide Protection Due To Persecution of Christians And Other Minorities In Iraq And Syria By Islamic State (IS/ISIL/ISIS).**

Open Letter and Urgent Appeal of International Association for the Defense of Religious Liberty

Excellences,

The Secretary General of the International Association for the Defense of Religious Liberty from Switzerland, in the name of AIDLR President Dr. Bruno Vertallier gives thanks to the UN Secretary General, Security Council, General Assembly, Human Rights Council, OHCHR, U.S., E.U., C.O.E., O.S.C.E. and the international community for the on-going efforts dealing with human rights, peace-making, security, and for working to stop all forms of terrorism, discrimination and persecution related to religious liberty.

### **A. THE POSITION OF AIDLR ON BARBARIC ACTS OF ISLAMIC STATE (IS)**

1. The AIDLR strongly condemns the religious persecution in Iraq and Syria and is highly concerned that intolerance, discrimination, kidnapping of women, children, detention, killing of Christians, other religious minorities in Iraq, Middle East, North Africa - and in other parts of the world as North Korea - has reached in the XXI Century, an unimaginable and unprecedented gravity.
2. The AIDLR believes that respect for human dignity, fundamental rights, international law, and religious liberty according with one's conscience, has to represent for the international community a priority and urgency.
3. The current human rights situation requires vigilance and empathy, a common political attitude and unequivocal measures of action. If not, this kind of tragedies will have no end and the UN delegations will vote each year resolutions on the sensitive issues, which practically change nothing.
4. The AIDLR is in favor of the UN Security Council resolution 2170(2014) that states, "that terrorism can only be defeated by a sustained and comprehensive approach involving the active participation and collaboration of all States, international and regional organizations".
5. The AIDLR condemns the "Islamic State" for brutal treatment, atrocities and mass executions against Christians and religious minorities on the basis of their religion, kidnapping and sexual violence, forced displacement, killing and maiming of children, attacks on schools, hospitals, destruction of cultural and religious sites and churches.
6. The AIDLR strongly agrees with the UN Security Council in its consideration that the "widespread and systematic attacks" directed against any civilian populations because of their ethnic or political background, religion or belief" constitutes genocide, a crime against humanity.
7. Also, the AIDLR underlines and appreciates the statements, initiatives, and humanitarian interventions of different international personalities on persecution of innocent Iraqi. See it further.

### **B. REACTION OF INTERNATIONAL COMMUNITY**

#### **a). Secretary General of U.N., Ban Ki-moon**

1. The UN Secretary General Ban Ki-moon is "profoundly dismayed" by the "barbaric acts" carried out of IS fighters." He called on the international community to do even more to provide protection and condemned "in the strongest possible terms" the systematic persecution of individuals from the minorities populations .
2. What happen in Iraq is extremely shocking and show the complete absence of humanity of the perpetrators of these crimes, stated Adama Dieng the Special Advisor of Ban Ki-moon.

#### **b). President of the U.S.**

3. AIDLR gives thanks to President Barack Obama for the assistance in facilitating support to Christians, religious minorities and innocent Iraqis. According to him, “(US) begun operations to help and save Iraqi civilians stranded on the mountain. The (ISIL) terrorists have been especially barbaric towards religious minorities, conducting mass executions.” AIDLR hopes that the U.S. together with the U.N. will continue to lead the process of protection of innocent Iraqis in a practical manner.

c) Ministers and Ambassadors

4. Minister of Foreign Affairs Børge Brende of Norway stated: “We are facing an extremely grave situation and the world cannot simply stand by and watch as it unfolds. Norway shares the sense of alarm expressed by the UN Security Council concerning the situation in Iraq”.

5. Foreign Affairs Minister John Baird: “Canada continues to condemn the repugnant killing of innocent civilians, religious and minority communities, including women and children by the terror group ISIS.”

6. The Archbishop Silvano Tomasi, the Ambassador of Vatican to the U.N. rightly lamented: “We are faced with a certain indifference at the practical level with the international community. It is difficult to convince the Western powers to take a strong stance in defence of the Christians...”

7. Samantha Power, the U.S. Ambassador to U.N. in New York stated: “ISIL’s reported abuse, kidnapping, torture and executions of Iraq’s religious and ethnic minorities and its systematic destruction of religious and cultural sites are appalling.”

d). United Nations Special Rapporteurs

8. The UN Special Rapporteur on Freedom of Religion and Belief, Heiner Bielefeldt said: “Freedom of religion and belief is being denied in the most gross and systematic way possible – through the attempted extermination of religious minorities.”

9. “All possible measures must be taken urgently to avoid a mass atrocity and potential genocide; civilians need to be protected...” urged Rita Izsák, the Special Rapporteur on minority issues.

10. “We are witnessing a tragedy of huge proportions in which thousands of people are at immediate risk of death by violence or by hunger and thirst,” warned the Special Rapporteur on the human rights of internally displaced persons, Chaloka Beyan.

12. The ‘IS’ gives to the members of minorities groups the ultimatum, “convert or die,” stated Christof Heyns, Special Rapporteur on summary or arbitrary executions. “International actors must do all in their power to support those on the ground with the capacity to protect lives.”

e) Religious Leaders on Iraqi Tragedy

13. The Chaldean Patriarch of Babylon Louis Raphael Sako commented: “This is an appeal from the bottom of the heart in the search for a solution that lies uniquely in the hands of the international community and above all with the super powers. These powers confront a human and moral responsibility”.

14. Ecumenical Patriarch Bartholomew: “The situation in Iraq is especially critical and the response must be immediate and tangible. It is our wholehearted hope and fervent prayer that the God of love – worshipped by Jews, Christians and Muslims alike – may prevail over the false idols of fanaticism and prejudice”.

15. Pope Francis said: “where there is an unjust aggression, I can only say that it is legitimate to stop the unjust aggressor”. He also stressed, “The United Nations was the proper forum to consider whether there was unjust aggression and how to stop it.”

16. Dr. Isabel Apawo Phiri, General Secretary of World Council of Churches requested prayers for the Christians and all the suffering people in northern Iraq.”

17. Pastor Ted Wilson, President of Seventh Day Adventist Church stated a “great sadness and deep concern on the Christians and religious minorities subjected to persecution and killings...and called upon all Seventh-day Adventist Church members around the world to pray for the victims of this extremism.

18. Egypt's Grand Mufti Shawqi Allam condemned and described the Islamic State, as a extremist organization, shedding blood that is damaging Islam, and Saudi Arabia’s Grand Mufti Sheikh Abdul Aziz notes that extremism, radicalism and terrorism have nothing to do with Islam.

C. URGENT APPEAL The AIDLR urges:

1. International community, Islamic countries to strongly condemn religious hate, intolerance, all kind of religious discrimination, persecution and killing of Christians and other religious minorities.
2. International Community to act immediately and decisively by coordinated response.
3. U.N. Security Council, U.S. and the international community to take all appropriate measures to stop the persecution, detention, kidnapping, killing of the Christians and of other religious minorities.
4. The need of international empathy for the other’ crisis, persecution and tragedy. Nations and people tend to look more closely at crises at home.
5. The U.N. to immediately begin the preparation of a Convention on freedom of religion and belief. Also, the AIDLR asks UN delegations and governments to support the UN Special Rapporteurs in their official visits, and also to involve the NGOs with religious freedom expertise in UN missions.
6. International community to pay attention to one practical question: Why do certain tragedies snap up our attention only to lose it later, long before the crisis or suffering is over?

Conclusion

The AIDLR supports and appreciates the efforts of international community and of other international organizations that are in favor of human rights all over the world.