



**Press Release**  
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## **CSI Urges President Obama to Stop the Killing of Christians in Iraq**

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Today, Christian Solidarity International (CSI-USA) urged President Obama to respond to continuing targeted violence against Iraq's ancient Christian community. The appeal - conveyed in a letter from CSI-USA's CEO, Dr. John Eibner - comes in the wake of the murder of eight Christians in Mosul since mid-February and the consequent flight of over 4,300 terrorized Christians from the city.

Since the commencement of the U.S.-led Operation Iraqi Freedom in 2003, nearly half of Iraq's one million Christians have sought refuge abroad, while many who remain in Iraq are internally displaced. Over 700 Christians, including bishops and priests, have been murdered and 61 churches have been bombed during the past seven years, according to the Hammurabi Human Rights Organization.

Eibner recalled that during the 2008 presidential campaign President Obama raised the hopes of Iraq's Christians and other non-Muslim minorities. In a letter to Secretary of State Rice, Sen. Obama declared, "They have paid a heavy price as a result of conflict in Iraq and continue to face a high level of threat and abuse."

Obama further pressed Secretary Rice, "What progress has been made over the past year reducing the severe violations [of] these communities' religious freedom and other human rights?" (Sen. Obama to Secretary Rice, September 26, 2008.)

Eibner called on the President to support House Resolution 944 on the Protection of Members of Vulnerable Religious and Ethnic Minorities in Iraq, (sponsored by Gary Peters D-MI), especially Section 2, calling on the Secretary of State to "develop and report to Congress a comprehensive strategy to encourage the protection of the rights ... of vulnerable religious and ethnic minorities in Iraq."

Eibner's letter concluded with a plea for the President to "place at least as much priority on providing security for Iraq's powerless, vulnerable minorities as on the country's well protected oil industry."

Last Sunday, hundreds of Christians courageously took to the streets in Baghdad, Mosul, and several other towns in an unprecedented demonstration against the continuing violent persecution. Further, Pope Benedict XVI urged Iraqi authorities on Sunday "to make every effort to restore security" and for the international community "to strive to give the Iraqis a future of reconciliation and justice."

CSI has undertaken six fact-finding and humanitarian aid visits to Iraq since 2007 and co-sponsored the first Iraqi Christian Leadership Conference on Refugees last December in Baghdad.

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