



# World Council of Churches

**General Secretariat**

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His Excellency  
Mr Ban Ki-moon  
United Nations  
Secretary- General  
United Nations Headquarters New  
York, NY 10017  
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Geneva, 7 August, 2014

Dear Mr Secretary-General,

I write on behalf of the fellowship of Christians represented by the World Council of Churches to convey to you our deep concern over the fate of hundreds of thousands of Christians, Yazidis, and other religious and ethnic groups being killed and forced to flee from their ancestral land in Iraq by radical combatants from the so-called “Islamic State”.

Initial reports came to us from leaders of our member churches in Iraq and from partner organizations providing relief and development services. We are deeply disturbed by threats encountered by the ancient Christian churches and other religious and ethnic communities of northern Iraq, and by indications that hundreds of thousands of them have already fled their homes. According to the Chaldean Patriarch of Babylon, Louis Raphael Sako, there is an urgent need for immediate action to protect these people and deploy all efforts to bring them back to their homes.

The patriarch also reports that churches and church properties have been destroyed and desecrated, and sacred manuscripts have been deliberately burned by militants.

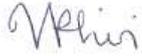
The international community recognizes that nations have a responsibility to protect their most vulnerable citizens. When a national government lacks the control necessary to ensure citizens’ rights and wellbeing, the responsibility is taken up by international bodies and their member states. We urge you to marshal all available resources to protect the people of Iraq in this hour.

I would like to take this opportunity to thank you for your on-going efforts on behalf of human rights, humanitarian services, peace-making and the reestablishment of justice in the Iraqi region of Mosul and the plain of Nineveh.

While we are grateful for what is being done already, we appeal urgently to the United Nations to establish and maintain the necessary diplomatic contacts to ensure the rights, dignity and physical survival of the diverse peoples of Iraq and its neighbours.

We want to assure you that the people of Iraq, and the leaders of the United Nations, remain in our thoughts and prayers.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read 'I. Phiri'.

Dr Isabel Apawo Phiri  
Associate General Secretary for Public Witness and Diakonia and  
Acting General Secretary