

St. Gallen, 12th August 2014

To the members of the Security Council of the United Nations

Excellencies,

The situation of Christians and other religious minorities in Iraq is totally unacceptable. The defense and protection of the Human Rights of these peoples and the survival of their communities are urgent and obvious. The International Community is called to put a stop to this tragedy with every possible, legitimate means.

We European Bishops, expressing also the sentiment of our faithful, request that the Security Council of the United Nations take those decisions that would stop these acts of atrocity as thousands of persons are dying or killed or forced to abandon their homes because of their religious affiliation.

The Secretary General of the United Nations and much of the world opinion have expressed their clear rejection of what is happening in Northern Iraq. It is urgent to take some concrete humanitarian measures to answer the plight of children, of women, of elderly and of many persons who have lost everything to escape death and who now risk dying of thirst and hunger.

In recent years much has been done to understand the responsibility of the International Community in safeguarding human rights, especially the right to life of innocent people, the right to security and the right of freedom of religion. We hope that even in the present case the International Community will be able to respond with urgent assistance for the many displaced people as well as enabling their safe return to their cities and their homes.

The tragedy unfolding in Northern Iraq, not only endangers multicultural coexistence that is part of our globalized world, but it is also a risk for Christians in a region where they have lived since the earliest years of Christianity and whose presence is appreciated and necessary for regional and world peace.

With our appeal, we join the Holy Father Pope Francis who in recent days has continuously called on the international community to bring concrete assistance to people in danger and to do its utmost to stop this infernal circle of violence.

The Catholic Church in Europe is close to all who have been obliged to escape from their homes or are living moments of fear and terror. It is concretely committed to solidarity with them through initiatives already underway. Without a decisive commitment of the International Community and the Iraqi authorities, however, these efforts will not succeed in resolving the problem.

To the members of the Security Council of the United Nations
New York

Let us hope that the Security Council of the United Nations, whose purpose is to ensure international peace and security and to promote human rights, may be unwavering in its determination to reach this goal. We ask you, therefore, to act with the necessary urgency for these, and all victims of war and violence, that are suffering and awaiting the solidarity of the world.

Yours faithfully,

† Péter Card. Erdő

Cardinal **Péter ERDŐ**,
President of the Bishops' Conference
of Hungary and President of CCEE

Angelo Card. Bagnasco

Cardinal **Angelo BAGNASCO**,
President of the Bishops' Conference
of Italy and Vice-President of CCEE

Cardinal **Reinhard MARX**,
President of the Bishops' Conference of the **Germany**
President of the COMECE

Cardinal **Seán BRADY**,
President of the Bishops' Conference of **Ireland**

Cardinal **Dominik DUKA**,
President of the Bishops' Conference of **Czech Republic**

Cardinal **Willem ELJK**,
President of the Bishops' Conference of the **Netherlands**

Cardinal **Vincent NICHOLS**,
President of the Bishops' Conference of **England and Wales**

Cardinal **Christoph SCHÖNBORN**,
President of the Bishops' Conference of **Austria**

Beatitude **Sviatoslav SHEVCHUK**,
Major Archbishop of the **Ukrainian Greek Catholic Church**

Patriarch **Manuel CLEMENTE**,
President of the Bishops' Conference of **Portugal**

Exarch **Christo PROYKOV**,
President of the Bishops' Conference of **Bulgary**

Archbishop **Ricardo BLÁZQUEZ PÉREZ**,
President of the Bishops' Conference of **Spain**

Archbishop **Ruggero FRANCESCHINI**,
President of the Bishops' Conference of **Turkey**

Archbishop **Zef GASHI**,
President of the Bishops' Conference of SS. Cyril and Methodius (**Serbia, Kosovo, Montenegro, Macedonia**)

Archbishop **Stanisław GADECKI**,
President of the Bishops' Conference of **Poland**

Archbishop **Jean-Claude HOLLERICH**,
Archbishop of **Luxembourg**

Archbishop **André-Joseph LÉONARD**,
President of the Bishops' Conference of **Belgium**

Archbishop **Angelo MASSAFRA**,
President Bishops' Conference of **Albania**

Archbishop **Mieczysław MOKRZYCKI**,
President of the Roman Catholic Bishops' Conference of **Ukraine**

Archbishop **Fragkiskos PAPAMANÓLIS**,
President of the Greek Bishops' Conference of **Greece**

Archbishop **Paolo PEZZI**,
President of the Bishops' Conference of **Russia**

Archbishop **Georges PONTIER**,
President of the Bishops' Conference of **France**

Archbishop **Ioan ROBU**,
President of Bishops' Conference of **Romania**

Archbishop **Youssef SOUEIF**,
Archbishop of Maronites in **Cyprus**

Archbishop **Sigitas TAMKEVICIUS**,
President of Bishops' Conference of **Lithuania**

Archbishop **Philip TARTAGLIA**,
President of Bishops' Conference of **Scotland**

Archbishop **Stanislav ZVOLENSKÝ**,
President of Bishops' Conference of **Slovakia**

Bishop **Anders ARBORELIUS**,
President of the Bishops' Conference of the **Nordic Countries**

Bishop **Markus BÜCHEL**,
President of the Bishops' Conference of **Switzerland**

Bishop **Anton COSA**,
Bishop of Chisinau (**Moldova**)

Bishop **Andrej GLAVAN**,
President of the Bishops' Conference of **Slovenia**

Bishop **Mario GRECH**,
President of the Bishops' Conference of **Malta**

Bishop **Aleksander KASZKIEWICZ**,
President of Bishops' Conference of **Belarus**

Bishop **Franjo KOMARICA**
President of the Bishops' Conference of **Bosnia and Herzegovina**

Bishop **Philippe JOURDAN**,
Apostolic Administrator of **Estonia**

Bishop **Želimir PULJIC**,
President of the Bishops' Conference of **Croatia**