

**Congress of the United States**  
**Washington, DC 20515**

August 1, 2014

The Honorable Barack Obama  
President of the United States of America  
The White House  
1600 Pennsylvania Avenue Northwest  
Washington, DC 20500-0004

Dear Mr. President,

We write to express our grave concerns about the ongoing genocide against Christians and other religious minorities in Iraq, especially in the Nineveh Plain. The Islamic State of Iraq and Syria — commonly known as ISIS — has consolidated control over a transnational territory that reaches from Syria deep into Iraq. Today, ISIS is waging a systematic and targeted campaign of religious and ethnic cleansing against minority groups, forcing thousands of innocent civilians from their ancestral homelands and triggering a refugee crisis that demands urgent international intervention.

In Mosul, Iraq's second largest city, ISIS has obliterated the remnants of a Christian community that is 1,600 years old. This ruthless, genocidal persecution, one example among many in the region, is a crime against humanity. ISIS' brutality has displaced 500,000 people. Reports of thefts, rapes, and murders are widespread. The situation is desperate. Shortly it will be hopeless.

Mr. President, immediate action is needed on the global stage. The United States should call on the United Nations Security Council to lead a humanitarian intervention on behalf of victimized Iraqi minorities. The entanglements of the Baghdad government have created an impossible situation for persons whose lives hang in the balance. Iraq's security forces have failed to adequately protect vulnerable minority communities. Iraq's Christian population now numbers between 400,000 – 850,000, down from a pre-war high of 1.5 million. Emigration, accelerating faster than ever before, jeopardizes the very existence of Iraq's ancient Chaldean culture.

Christianity in Iraq, as elsewhere in the Middle East, exists as a leavening influence that serves to ameliorate tensions between different ethnic and religious groups. The stability of the region depends in no small part on the preservation of this ancient tradition. We believe that it is consistent with the policy of the United States to call on the international community to provide more robust humanitarian support for Christians and other besieged religious groups. Following the unanimous U.N. Security Council resolution on humanitarian aid for Syria, and to heighten the world's consciousness about the worsening disaster in Iraq, global leaders should open channels of aid to Iraq's vulnerable and suffering minorities.

We also believe that the United States should recognize the Kurdish contribution to providing security, stability, and relief for Christians, Yazidis, and other persecuted minorities from the Nineveh Plain region. It is our understanding that the Kurdish Regional Government (KRG) has gone to great lengths to absorb refugee populations, as well as establish limited but basic security in the Nineveh Plain for remaining religious minorities. The Kurds have created a safe haven – a house of minorities – for those fleeing the terror that ISIS is spreading across Iraq. To this end, we believe that the United States should consider steps to assure Kurdistan's share of oil revenues from the central government in Iraq and to facilitate the sale of Kurdistan's oil in regional energy markets and abroad. The KRG also requires more direct assistance, especially if it is to continue aiding the refugees within its borders.

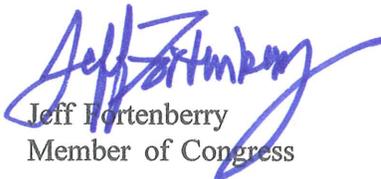
The United States has always championed basic human rights and religious liberty – both at home and around the world. Our nation, which has always sought to lead by example, provides a ready witness that these principles support the flourishing of civil society. Time and again throughout our history, the American people have spoken out for those who have no voice. As a maelstrom of violence ravages Iraq, we must empathize with the voiceless – and act upon the cherished and transcendent ideals we seek to uphold. On August 1, 2014, the House of Representatives passed a resolution urging international action.

The religious minorities of Iraq, many of them thousands of years old, are threatened with annihilation. If you were to speak directly to the situation, we believe this would be of great encouragement to the affected communities. They also need immediate international humanitarian assistance. We ask you to stand with us as we stand with them in solidarity.

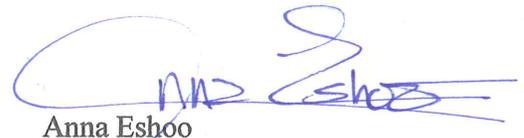
Sincerely



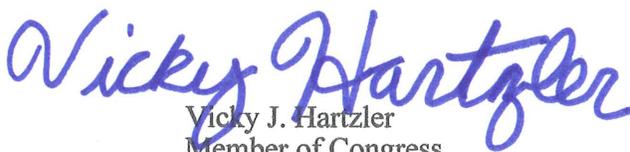
Frank Wolf  
Member of Congress



Jeff Fortenberry  
Member of Congress



Anna Eshoo  
Member of Congress



Vicky J. Hartzler  
Member of Congress



Trent Franks  
Member of Congress