



Southern African Catholic Bishops' Conference

CATHOLIC CHURCH'S STATEMENT ON IRAQ

It is absolutely abhorrent that the Christian community of Iraq, a tradition that goes back almost 2000 years, is suffering expulsion from their country and martyrdom. As Catholic bishops of Southern Africa, we beg for religious tolerance in Iraq. We assure our Christian brothers and sisters of our deepest concern and we assure them that we have not and will never forget them.

The utter destruction of ancient dioceses, vibrant parishes and faithful families because of their loyalty to faith is a crime against humanity.

We also bear in our hearts those other religious traditions of Iraq who suffer the same fate as the Christian community.

We admire many of the great religious teachings of Islam, particularly their care for the poor and the needy. We call on faithful Muslims who believe in our common humanity to plead with those driven by extremism to cease their oppression of deeply religious communities and to seek that peace which Islam itself endeavours to promote.

Given at Mariannahill on this 11th day of August 2014.

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