



Committee on International Justice and Peace

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July 28, 2009

The Honorable Hillary Rodham Clinton
Secretary of State
United States Department of State
Washington, D.C.

Dear Secretary Clinton:

The mid-July bombing of seven churches in Baghdad and of another church in Mosul has highlighted once again the ongoing suffering of people in Iraq, particularly Christians. Several people were killed and dozens were wounded in these attacks; some of the churches and a nearby mosque sustained major damage. Unfortunately, this surge in violence is an echo of attacks experienced in October 2008, when a dozen Christians were murdered in Mosul, and in March 2008, when Archbishop Rahho was kidnapped and killed. As the political and security situation in Iraq evolves and U.S. forces continue their withdrawal, a way must be found to protect the people from such attacks, especially minorities, like Christians, who appear to be particularly vulnerable.

After these attacks, Pope Benedict XVI offered his prayers for Iraqi Christians and sent a message calling “for a conversion of heart of the perpetrators of violence” while encouraging “the authorities to do everything they can to promote a just and peaceful coexistence of all sectors of the Iraqi people.” As Chairman of the Committee on International Justice and Peace of the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops, I join with the Holy Father in his prayers for a cessation of violence and for justice and peace for all Iraqis, including minorities.

We ask that the United States government encourage the Iraqi government to do all within its power to protect and defend the human rights of all, including Christians and other vulnerable minorities, and to strengthen the rule of law within the country.

Sincerely yours,

Most Reverend Howard J. Hubbard
Bishop of Albany
Chairman, Committee on International Justice and Peace

cc: Amb. Jeffrey Feltman, Acting Assistant Secretary, Near Eastern Affairs