



CNEWA Canada

une agence papale pour l'aide humanitaire et pastorale • a papal agency for humanitarian and pastoral support
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PRESS RELEASE

For immediate release

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CNEWA Launches Emergency Appeal to Aid Iraqi Christian Families in Flight

Ottawa — Catholic Near East Welfare Association has launched a campaign to rush emergency assistance to more than 100,000 thousand Christians fleeing their homes in northern Iraq.

Ordered by ISIS extremists of the self-proclaimed Islamic Caliphate to convert, pay a special tax or die, Christians of the city of Mosul — some 25,000 people — fled a few weeks ago to the Christian villages of the Nineveh Plain, including the ancient towns of Alqosh and Qaraqosh. Last night, those safe havens fell to ISIS fighters.

“The Christians, horrified and panicked, fled their villages and houses with only their clothes on the backs,” said the Chaldean Catholic patriarch, Louis Raphael I. “Many are on foot under a searing summer heat toward Kurdish cites looking for protection ... they are facing a human catastrophe and risk a real genocide. We appeal with sadness and pain to the conscience of all people of good will ... to save these innocent persons from death.”

CNEWA’s Canada National Director, Carl Héту, announced that CNEWA will rush support to the bishops, clergy and religious, “who are putting their lives at risk by providing water, food, medicines and pastoral care to the displaced.

“We are witnessing, at the hands of extremist thugs, the eradication of a cradle of Christianity in the cradle of civilization,” said Mr. Héту. “They need to be stopped.”

Christians were about one million in 2003, when the United States and its allies invaded Iraq. Fewer than 150,000 Christians remain today, and most are running for their lives.

An agency of the Holy See, CNEWA works throughout the Middle East, with offices in Amman, Beirut and Jerusalem. On behalf of the pope, CNEWA works for, through and with the Eastern churches, rushing aid to refugee families; providing maternity and health care for the poorest of the poor; assisting initiatives for the marginalized, especially the children, elderly and disabled; and offering formation and supporting the education of seminarians, religious novices and lay leaders.

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To make an immediate gift, people can visit www.cnewa.ca; write a cheque to CNEWA Canada and send to 1247 Kilborn Place, Ottawa, Ontario K1H 6K9 (please indicate it is for “Iraqi Christian Relief”); or call toll-free at 1-866-322-4441. As a registered charity, CNEWA will issue tax receipt.

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