

 **THE CANADIAN COUNCIL OF CHURCHES**
LE CONSEIL CANADIEN DES ÉGLISES

The Canadian Council of Churches—representing 25 different denominations and 85% of Christians in Canada—is deeply concerned about the continuing humanitarian tragedy afflicting Christians and other religious minorities in parts of Iraq currently occupied by ISIS.

We welcome the government of Canada’s recent pledge of an additional \$5 million in humanitarian aid and emergency supplies, and look forward to its ongoing implementation.

As stated in our broader letter on crises in the Middle East from September of last year, the immediate needs of displaced people are paramount. It is our hope that Canada will offer those in need at least temporary resettlement in Canada, joining the many Iraqis who have found safety here since 2013.

In the same letter we mentioned Canada’s Office of Religious Freedom and its role in Canada’s foreign policy. This Office allows Canada the chance to demonstrate and advocate respect for and protection of the freedom of conscience and freedom of religion. These freedoms are essential to open, peaceful, and democratic societies, particularly in a world where different cultures and faith come into contact more each day.

It is important that Canada be a leader in the protection of human rights for all people in the Middle East by working with both established and emerging state and community leaders—giving special attention to the rights of all minorities, women, and children.

We call on Canadian Christians to donate to denominational or secular aid agencies that are providing relief, and to encourage family and friends to do the same. Most of all we ask you to continue to pray for all of God’s children in Iraq.

For more information or for an interview please contact: The Rev. Dr. Karen Hamilton
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