



**Chaldean Australian Society Inc.**

**Chaldean Australian Society  
Submission  
to  
2015 UNHCR-NGO CONSULTATIONS**

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Chaldean Australian Society Incorporated  
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### **About the Chaldean Australian Society (CAS)**

The Chaldean Australian Society (CAS) is a community-based and not-for-profit organisation established in 1993 to serve the Chaldean community in NSW. CAS addresses the settlement needs to the increasing numbers of Chaldeans arriving to Australia under humanitarian entry and family reunion and the majority of them settle in Fairfield, Liverpool, Mount Druitt and South Western Sydney areas. CAS maintains the Chaldean culture and at the same time assists the engagement of Chaldeans with the Australian society.

Chaldean Australian Society serves and supports Chaldean people in Sydney and there are many concerns from our Chaldean members to the situation of their families, relatives and friends in Iraq and in the neighbouring countries (Lebanon, Jordan, Turkey, and Syria).

### **About the Chaldeans**

The Chaldeans are the indigenous people of Iraq who speak the Chaldean language, a form of Aramaic, in addition to Arabic, the official language in Iraq. Chaldeans are Eastern Rite Catholic, led by the Patriarch of Babylon and affiliated with the Roman Catholic Church. The Chaldeans form the major part of Iraqi Christians.

### **The Chaldeans in Australia**

The migration of the Chaldeans to Australia began in the 1970s. There are now more than 20,000 Chaldeans in Australia most of them in Sydney and Melbourne. In recent years there has been increasing migration of Chaldeans to Australia due to the war and events in Iraq. According to the Settlement Report, published by Department of Social Services: (4,058) Chaldean Catholic migrants settled in Australia from 1 July 2009 to 30 June 2014. In Sydney most of Chaldeans live in Fairfield, Liverpool, Blacktown and South Western Sydney areas. In Melbourne most of Chaldeans live in Hume city area.

### **The Situation of the Iraqi Christians in Iraq and Neighbouring Countries**

In the last twelve years after the 2003 events the Chaldeans as all Christians suffered and they are still suffering from persecution in their home country Iraq because of their Christianity. The situation in Iraq is still critical and still there is persecution against the Christians (Chaldean, Syriac, Assyrian, and others). Terrorist organisations (groups and members) in Iraq are targeting, threatening, torturing, and even killing Christians and consequently many Christians fled Iraq for their safety to seek asylum in countries like Lebanon, Jordan, and Turkey.

Last year, the Islamic State, a jihadist militant group, has occupied Mosul city and Christian towns and villages in Nineveh plain, Nineveh province, in north of Iraq. ISIL has occupied Tikrif, Batnaya, Tikrf, Qaraqosh, Bartella, Karmless, and other Christian habitations. Christians were forced to flee from Mosul city and Nineveh plain to the Kurdistan region or to the neighbouring countries to Iraq. The Christian community in Mosul and Nineveh plain is almost as old as Christianity itself. For the first time in the history of Iraq, Mosul and Nineveh plain are now empty of Christians.

The Christians lost their towns and villages. They lost their lands, possessions, jobs, money and a number of them have lost family's members, relatives, or friends. They lost everything for just being Christian.

It is estimated that more than 120,000 Christians fled Mosul city and Nineveh plain. A large number of them are still in critical conditions in camps, public places, schools, churches, parks, and under construction buildings in Duhok and Erbil provinces in Kurdistan region. Others were able to manage

to flee Iraq to the neighbouring countries like Turkey, Lebanon, and Jordan and also they are in very bad conditions.

In a statement on 24<sup>th</sup> August 2014 by the Chaldean Catholic Patriarch of Iraq (Patriarch of Babylon), His Beatitude Louis Raphael Sako, to the conscience of the world about Iraqi Christians' crisis, he said "I visited the camps of the displaced persons in the provinces of Erbil and Dhok and what I saw and what I heard is beyond any immigration".

To read this statement, see the following link: (<http://www.chaldeanauss.org.au/wp-content/uploads/2014/10/Statement-by-Chaldean-Patriarch-in-Iraq-Louis-Sako.pdf>)

The Christians' hope to return to their villages and towns diminishes with time. Their towns and villages are still occupied by ISIL. They lost trust in their neighbours from Arab Sunni towns and villages who have joined ISIL and looted (with ISIL) their houses and possessions. They lost faith in capabilities of the Iraqi army and Peshmerga (Kurdish forces) for protecting them and lost faith in the effectiveness of international responses to the rise of ISIL.

The Iraqi Christians from ethnic and religious minorities (Chaldean, Syriac, Assyrian, and others) refugees and asylum seekers in neighbouring countries to Iraq are in very critical conditions and in need for all types of support from the international community. It is estimated a significant numbers of Iraqi Christians are fled to the neighbouring countries. For example, according to the Chaldean parish in Beirut, Lebanon, the number of displaced Chaldean Iraqis registered with the parish has reached 2,200 families, nearly 10,000 people in March 2015.

## **Recommendation**

- 1- The humanitarian aid is required to help Iraqi Christians displaced to the Kurdistan region in northern Iraq and to those who fled Iraq to Lebanon, Turkey, and Jordan.
- 2- Accelerating the resettlement process of Iraqi Christians refugees and asylum seekers who are in Lebanon, Turkey, Jordan and Syria to resettle in host countries like Australia, USA, Canada, etc.

For further information about this CAS submission contact Dr Emad Arabo, Secretary and Administration Coordinator, at email: [earabo@chaldeanauss.org.au](mailto:earabo@chaldeanauss.org.au) and phone: (02) 9728 4170

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