



# General Assembly

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## Human Rights Council

### Thirteenth session

Agenda item 3

**Promotion and protection of all human rights,  
civil, political, economic, social and cultural rights,  
including the right to development**

### **Written statement\* submitted by the Jubilee Campaign, a non-governmental organization in special consultative status**

The Secretary-General has received the following written statement which is circulated in accordance with Economic and Social Council resolution 1996/31.

[15 February 2010]

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\* This written statement is issued, unedited, in the language(s) received from the submitting non-governmental organization(s).

## **Statement of the Mandaean human rights**

The Sabeen Mandaean community of Iraq is a small, ethnic, religious minority that is one of the oldest and only living Gnostic religions still surviving in the Middle East. This peaceful religion prohibits violence in any form. Like many religions, it emphasises coexistence with other groups; however, since 2003 this small minority has become the target of a sustained and violent campaign of annihilation by extremists.

Hundreds of Mandaeans have been exposed to murder, kidnapping, forced conversion, and rape—particularly of women and young girls. Since the Mandaean religion prohibits the carrying of weapons, they do not reciprocate these attacks. Furthermore, the Mandaeans do not have a particular area inside Iraq to relocate to for safety. In its annual report November 2009, the Mandaean human right group listed the names of 163 murdered victims, 271 kidnapped, 238 physically assaulted, and 33 forced conversions. In addition, the confiscations of businesses and homes have led the majority of the community to flee the country to neighbouring countries. Others are internally displaced. Of the whole community, only 15% remains inside Iraq. The rest have become refugees in various parts of the globe.

The Mandaeans have tried to express their concerns through the political process in Iraq; however, they have no voice in the parliament and no direct solid contact with government agencies. The police force is still ineffective and corrupt and has very little interest in protecting the minorities.

For those who are awaiting resettlement in countries of asylum, the Mandaeans have some very specific concerns. Taking into account their small number, dispersing the refugees over a large number of countries risks extinction of their culture, religion and their Aramaic language, and make the sustainability of their community nearly impossible.

The Sabeen Mandaeans in Iraq are looking for protection from the hate crime that they are facing. Mandaeans are looking to the international community to save their community and their culture from becoming extinct. The international community should send Mandaean refugees to a limited number of countries—the only hope of sustaining their religion, culture, and community.

We also ask the international community to press on the Iraqi government to take active steps for the protection of the Mandaean community, culture, and property.

We thank the UNHCR for their efforts to assist the Mandaean refugees and ask for a speedy handling of the families who are still waiting resettlement and to grant full and immediate protection for these cases.

The Mandaeans are part of the indigenous people of Iraq. They are a religious and ethnic minority that is facing annihilation. All articles of the UN declaration that apply to the protection of indigenous, ethnic and religious minorities are compatible with their situation and should be applied.

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