



Date : 23 June 2021

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**Expert Mechanism on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples
Fourteenth Session – 12-16 July 2021**

Tuesday 13 July

10h00 - 13h00: Pacific and Asia Regions

Item 8: *Draft Report on efforts to implement the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples: Indigenous Peoples and the Right to Self-Determination*

Dear Chairmen / Chairwomen

Thank you for the great opportunity

The Assyrians, as one of the oldest indigenous peoples in Iraq, today their existence in their homeland and historical lands is threatened with disappearance, as a result of the targeting and displacement they are exposed to, and due to the hard security conditions and for the political and economic instability that continue for decades, especially after 2003 until today. This led to a dramatic decrease in their number, after it was approximately 1.5 million until 2003, while today it has decreased to no more than 300,000 people.

The causes of suffering of the Assyrians and other indigenous peoples, such as the Yazidis, the Sabeen Mandeans, and many other Iraqi minorities, are not limited to the instability of the political situation in general, but because the Iraqi government and laws still do not pay the required attention and do not recognize in any way that they are indigenous peoples in their motherland, and do not recognize



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them any of the rights stipulated in the UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (UNDRIP), which compound the suffering and grievances.

The non-recognition, and without laws guaranteeing the Assyrian rights as one of the indigenous peoples of Iraq, results - not only in the failure to exercise their right to self-determination, in any form and levels of autonomy and local government in the lands they inhabited historically, but also leads to the absence of any procedures, formal governmental measures and practices, or through national, traditional and societal institutions and structures, that would contribute to protecting their existence, identity, culture, language, customs and traditions, even in the few areas and territories in which they still constitute a dense population.

Accordingly, we recommend the Iraqi government and parliament the following:

- **The Iraqi parliament to legislate a law recognizing the Assyrians as one of the indigenous peoples of Iraq.**
- **The proposed constitution to work on it in the Kurdistan Region, to includes an article recognizing the Assyrians as the indigenous peoples of Iraq.**

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Pacific and Asia Regions