Foreign & Commonwealth Office (UK)

FCO Minister concerned by persecution of Christians in Iraq and Syria

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Following increasing hostility and threats from terrorist group ISIL towards the Christian community in Iraq and Syria, Minister for the Middle East Tobias Ellwood said:

Yesterday I met representatives of the Iraqi Christian community in London and heard at first-hand some of the appalling reports from Mosul about the threats to Christians by ISIL, leading to many leaving the city which has been the home of Christians for over 1,800 years. This is the latest example of the brutality and intolerance of this group, which has claimed responsibility for numerous atrocities in Iraq and Syria.

We strongly condemn the persecution of Christians and other minorities on the basis of their religion or belief or ethnicity. The burning of churches and branding of homes is reprehensible, as is the destruction of mosques and desecration of holy sites.

This underscores the need for the international community to support Iraq in facing the threat of ISIL. The UK is providing £5 million in humanitarian aid to Iraq, working with international and regional partners. It also shows the urgent need for formation of an inclusive Iraqi government that can uphold the rule of law and protect Iraq’s minority communities. In parallel, the UK is intensifying support for the Syrian moderate opposition who have a pluralistic, democratic vision of a future Syria and are leading the fight against ISIL and Assad’s attempts to stoke sectarian tensions in the region.

Further information

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