



Rome, 14 August 2014



**A Plea for Urgent Action on Iraq  
to all World leaders and Member States  
of the United Nations  
by the Master of the Dominican Order (Order of  
Preachers), Fr Bruno Cadoré OP**

Excellencies,

None of us can feel untouched by what is happening in Iraq at the moment. What we see happening there is screaming out for solidarity and a coordinated response to stop the extreme violation of human rights against defenceless minority groups who are deprived of their basic human dignity. This is violating International Humanitarian Law and is a crime against humanity. Our own brothers and sisters are among these people who continuously keep us informed of their terrifying plight. The perpetrators are posing a serious threat not only to all the people of Iraq and of all its neighbouring countries but to all of us, as they represent a mind-set and approach to life that, if successful, will attract many more adherents who can imperil any state. While the conflict appears to be about religion, in fact it has nothing to do with religion as God is a God of life and not of death.

We are blessed to have a forum such as the United Nations where commitment exists to build a harmonious and peaceful world. However, many people in fragile situations have become cynical of its operation when their cries for help and protection fall on deaf ears. This current crisis can be an opportunity to break out of a mentality focused only on “our own national interests” to one focused on ensuring the preservation of life and human dignity of every single human being regardless of race, ethnic origin, religion, or any other identity.

We commend the efforts of those countries that are responding to the security and humanitarian needs of the fleeing people of Iraq. However, this is still not enough to ensure their survival. When a state does not have the capacity to control brutal levels of violence that the world agrees needs to be stopped (as is the case now in Iraq), then the international community has an obligation to intervene to remove the capacity of the perpetrators of that violence.

In the light of this, we call upon you and all the Member States of the United Nations

- to be seized of this crisis in Iraq today and to ensure the immediate deployment of specialist military units from as many countries as possible that have the necessary capacity to stop the ethnic and sectarian cleansing taking place, to ensure the safe return of the refugees to their homes and to bring the perpetrators to justice.
- to stop the provision of any arms to the perpetrators and to sanction those who continue to provide arms to them.
- to respond immediately to defuse the humanitarian crisis currently escalating.
- to protect the persecuted members of minority groups and, according to International Humanitarian Law, to grant them asylum without delay.
- to put in place immediately conditions for dialogue and peace talks that include all sectors of the society.

We hope and pray that you and your governments will answer to this urgent call.

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Master of the Dominican Order (Order of Preachers)

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